



## Sussex Branch Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2020

### FEBRUARY SPEAKER(S)

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020

We welcome our own **Roy and Sally Page** who will give us an illustrated talk about their travels and fishing in the USA with lots of pictures (Sally's great photos have graced our pages on more than one occasion)

**Everyone is welcome – members or non-members alike £3 ticket includes entry to raffle too!**

### FLY-TYING COMPETITION

A reminder of this year's competition – get tying!  
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"**

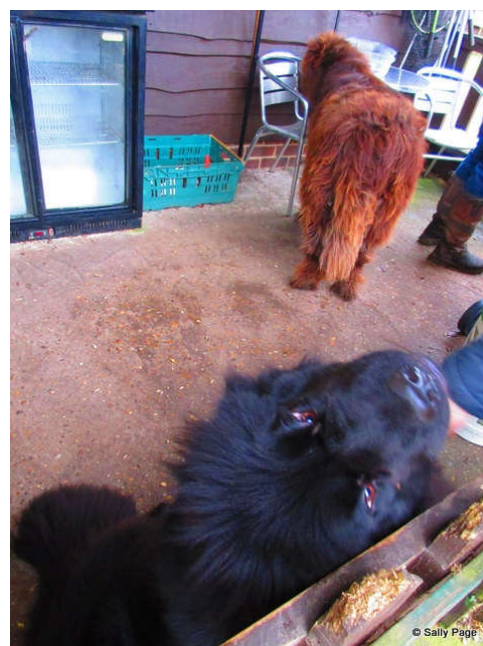
Saltwater/Pike      **Grey Mullet**  
**PATTERN - see Summer 2019 "Flydresser"**

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.

### The End of the Year Show



December 29<sup>th</sup> saw a gathering of 14 members to fish at Moorhen in our now seemingly annual "Twixtmas" outing. We were fortunate to have dry, if overcast, weather though the underfoot conditions were rather slippery in places. This was not surprising considering the amount of rain the area has had over the last few weeks. Indeed, Wendy had to close the fishery on some occasions as the lake levels were so high as to be dangerous. As usual our hosts welcome included copious bacon rolls and coffee/tea and from some sniffs and licks.....



As the fish seemed to be concentrated in the main basin, we had a brief chat to encourage anglers to move on as soon as they had caught a fish so that people all had a fair go at catching.

Ray B seemed to suggest that AW got to a favoured spot with “unseemly haste” but there were still others who caught before him! Anyway fish came steadily through the morning and by lunchtime everyone had at least one and quite a few had bagged up.

Lunch beside the lodge’s comfy wood burner was made all the more cheerful through birthday cakes provided by Roy Page and Tony Ryan who celebrate a day either side of this event.

The lead in the competition for the best fish prize (from AW’s wine cellar) changed hands fairly frequently during the day. Nick Price took an early lead with his fish of 4lb 14oz only to be overtaken by one of 5lb 7oz for Sally. However, Tony Harrison’s 5lb 14oz took the day. It has to be said that the general stamp of fish was very impressive, with quite a few beating the 4lb mark.

So a pleasant end to the 2019 season, which has been a successful one in competition terms for the Branch and I hope our events have given some excitement and fun to members during the season. Next up is Brass Monkey’s on March 1<sup>st</sup> – so keep hold of those “Xmas deco flies” and a Happy New year to all our readers.

**AW**

## Storing materials

Here are a few tips on organising and storing your tying materials. How many times do you turn up on a Thursday and cannot find the materials for the pattern being tied? Well you have to have a plan!

As I instruct, I always put the materials for the pattern in a bag at home, together with threads and tinsels; try not to bring everything along.

I first start categorising everything - dubbing, capes and feathers, deer fur and so on, and keep them in bags, labelled.

As you move on and build up your collection you will need to sub-divide; e.g. all the different dubbings. Use tins or plastic boxes. Craft shops usually have suitable boxes and it is useful to have one for threads and tinsels.

Do keep it all separately in labelled, sealed plastic bags to keep out mites that will destroy everything.

Hooks are not so easy but some manufacturers supply hooks in clearly labelled boxes; do not mix up sizes. With any feathers you are given from the wild be careful and put in a microwave for a short period to kill bugs and consider using Naphthalene (moth balls).

In summary, organise your materials so they are easily located and label everything!

**Phillip Ellis**

## JIM SMITH (Jim the Fish)



**Jim the Fish**

We were unable to give a full obituary for Jim in our announcement last month although he was so well known to anglers in the Ouse and Adur catchments that was almost unnecessary. Full obituaries have been published in the *Argus* and on BBC’s *South Today* and all who have fished at Barcombe in the past and the Ouse more recently will have met him as he patrolled his beloved river bank, in his role as Bailiff for the Ouse Preservation Society and the Ouse Valley Anglers.

Jim’s funeral on 28<sup>th</sup> January was at Isfield Church.

He will be sorely missed.

## An Angling Life - Chapter 1

by *Phillip Ellis*

Those of you that know me will know I spend a lot of time on the chalk streams, and other members may wonder why I am not fishing with you at Guild events by the lakeside - or indeed do I fish? Here is a brief summary of my fishing life of some 60 odd years.

I started with my father in the 1950’s on Worthing pier casting out a line with a lob worm hoping for the bell to ring on the rod indicating a fish. I then took up coarse fishing when I was 11 on the formation of a local club encouraged by the local fishing shop. This was in the days when everyone had a copy of that wonderful cartoon book “Mr Crabtree Goes Fishing” by Bernard Venables; we all had a copy and it only cost 25 pence at the time. It told us all we needed to know.

Favourite location for me was Patching Pond, getting there on my bike for many years up until my late teens and then, with a scooter, I was able to get to the rivers Adur or Arun from where my love of river fishing comes.

After being away at college, I found less time for fishing and then on the club committee helping run the club with its increasing number of fisheries. I also found myself sitting on EA fisheries committees from the 1970's that saw me show interest in fishing for trout. I first took up fly tying with classes run by the late Ray Cannon in Lancing, moving onto the Guild in Brighton some 30 odd years ago.

It must have been the early 1990's when I started fly fishing at Duncton Mill, then owned and created by a lovely man, Ned Kelly, who helped me and the members a lot to get going.

I then joined the Sussex Piscatorial Society which has trout lakes in Sussex, together with coarse fishing, and again I quickly joined the trout section committee where I still sit. The society had taken on a short stretch of the upper river Itchen at Cheriton that was not well managed just before I joined. At the time I had an office at the nearby Winchester army barracks, so I was able to take on the river as a Water Keeper.

Slowly over a period of 10 years we improved the fishery with the help of members and a paid river keeper, Pat Moyle. He and I built up a working relationship and he introduced the society to a stretch of the Itchen near Winchester for winter grayling fishing and 2lb fish were common. This then developed into a day each week for trout fishing in the summer that still continues.

Sadly in 2019 the society gave up Cheriton Mill as it was not being fished sufficiently to justify the management costs and has now been taken over by Portsmouth Services, a Naval fly-fishing club.

During this period my interest in lake fishing diminished but interest grew in river fishing and with the dry fly. I also had the opportunity to take a course leading to becoming an instructor just before leaving MOD in 2005.

On early retirement I had two choices - either to become a casting instructor or as a consultant. Consultancy work won, with little instruction income that in any event does not pay as well. At the same time, I became involved with the Salmon and Trout Association, eventually becoming a trustee, when it became STCUK, for 12 years.

**PE**

*(Chapter 2 follows next month)*

## **RETURN OF TROPHIES**

Would all holders of **ALL** trophies please return them by 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (earlier this year as the end of season gathering is on 2<sup>nd</sup> April) 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.

The need for a new "Trophy Keeper" is urgent – volunteers please step forward and help!

## **Ray's Ramblings**

Last month I wrote about some of the waters that were no longer providing trout and grayling fishing so I thought that this month I'd look at some that we can still fish.

During 2019 I decided that, due to the heavy traffic on the roads, I would not be going on so many long trips. This was a shame because two of the waters that I've fished in the past and have provided good fishing to nymphs and especially dries I no longer went to - these being Draycote and Eyebrook. Another I didn't fish was Grafham, where late season offers really good fishing for the shrimp feeders.

Yet another was Elinor at Aldwincle, near Kettering. Apart from the excellent fishing with nymphs on the washing line set-up, there was the added attraction of a six fish day ticket with catch and release for just £19 for OAP's. One of the last occasions I fished there was in November 2018 with the Tunbridge Wells club when I had eleven rainbows, the best going five and a half pounds. Previous to that I fished the FDG bank competition with Martyn Gray and the late Brian Raw in April 2017 and on that trip I had ten rainbows. The fishing there is really excellent and that is due to the fact that the water is stocked every week by Ed Foster, who runs the fishery, and a lot of the fish caught are returned, so it's always well stocked. Pity we don't have a water like that nearer.

So instead I concentrated on waters nearer home like Powdermill, Arlington. Chalk Springs and Duncton Mill. I did fish Bewl a few times when club trips were held there and although it fished well early on from the bank, boat fishing later proved tough, although I understand that the boat fishing in November and December was really good.

At the time, though, I was fishing mainly at Brick Farm and Coltsford Mill, where at the latter on one occasion Martyn Gray had four fish for over 19lbs and I had a rainbow of 7lbs 8ozs. Then just after Christmas I fished Moorhen twice and on both occasions it fished well and I had fish over 4lb, the best going 4lb 11oz.

This winter I have not done as much Grayling fishing as usual. One factor has been the increase in cost at Wherwell that I mentioned last month and another is again the amount of travelling involved, so that most times I am doing as much driving as fishing each day. Results so far have not been great so I had a look back through my diaries for the last four winters and found something rather surprising.

During the winters of 2016/17 and 2017/18 on the Test, Itchen and Avon, I averaged over twenty Grayling a trip, but in the winters of 2018/19 and 2019/20 so far I have averaged just six Grayling. I've said in the past that I'm sure angling pressure has had an affect on catches but wonder if some other factor accounts for this



drop - like me getting past it (I thought I'd say that before any of you did). But then the February copy of *Fly Fishing and Fly Tying* dropped through the door and there was Charles Jardine saying "In the South just about every river is recording lower numbers of Grayling this year. There's some big ones and a few smaller fish, but a great swathe of those middle year classes seem to be missing. Fishing pressure? Predation? It's hard to know what the cause is". I remember several years ago when I fished at Compton that the Grayling were decimated when a flock of Cormorants moved in. So the two causes suggested by Charles seem the most likely. I just hope the trend doesn't continue cos as I've said before they're my favourite fish.

**Ray Burt**

## **MARCH SPEAKER** **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**We welcome ANDY LUSH who will tell us of his experiences with Barbel fishing in Spain and Carp fly fishing on local venues.**

**Everyone is welcome – members or non-members alike £3 ticket includes entry to raffle too!**

### **Arlington Startup.**

It is always a bit of a quandary for me at the start of the season at Arlington. As someone who was used to termly dates in 36 years of teaching I am drawn towards the anticipation of a starting date and it also harks back to the more restricted timings of the brown trout season from my youth.

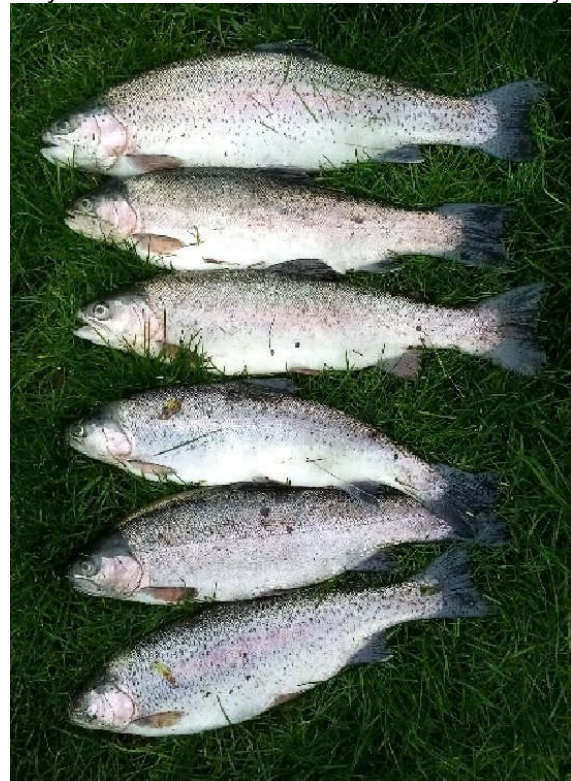
However, as Arlington's season starts in late January, one has to take into account the wonders of the British weather - do you really want to start the season frozen to the bone or drenched through? The forecast said cold, overcast but dry with a light breeze - so one quandary solved. Then there's the time of day. Do you have a leisurely breakfast (as did Ray Love) and start in warmer temperatures but then risk arriving when all the best spots in the Bay have gone? In the end, circumstances acted to make decisions for me to some extent.

Having been awoken at 12.00 am by someone trying to deliver a takeaway to the wrong address (choice response given!) and again at 4.20 am by the sounds of a major fire in Woodingdean, I slept in. So arriving at about 9.00 am there were already about 10 anglers taking up the prime spots so I was pushed further along the Bay.

First task of the day was to respond to a request to help a guy suffering from macular degeneration to undo a tangle, so he could

continue fishing his current rig. Perhaps the fishing gods would smile on me for showing such kindness. **They certainly didn't for the next 2 hours!**

I tried a floater with an intermediate sink tip for a short period, with only a couple of taps on the Taddy, before succumbing to launching the Boobies! Even these did not do the trick and then a somewhat freakish occurrence forced me to change position. A large slick of dense blue green algae moved gradually westwards along the shore of the Bay, making it virtually impossible to fish flies in the "soupish" concoction. Greg says he has rarely seen this type of bloom this early in the year before, so I hope it is not a sign of things to come. Anyway I moved further East and found clearer water and some obliging fish. After taking one on a Coral Booby, I was reminded that orange is often a good colour in cloudy water and tied on an orange Nomad on a slow sinker, as I had a feeling the fish had come up in the water a little. I was proved right and took my next five fish on the same fly, losing 2 more amongst them and was done by 12.40 – a game of two halves as they say.



Top fish in the photo was 2lb 12 oz - so the general stamp was not very large. There have been a couple of 3lb+ fish taken but I hope that Martin has managed to keep a few larger fish back for us, despite his imminent westward migration.

*Alan Wells*

**PS.** Nigel Duckworth asked me to send his best wishes to all who remember him at the Guild.

## Chairman's Chat

A bit further than the Isle of Wight this time – Romania. As you can see, this is a very steep and high (3m) dam on one of their major rivers. More information is difficult – it is in Romanian! So what are the options? Bypass channel, Alaskan Steep Pass, Rock Ramp or Bottom baffle, to name but a few?

A bypass channel would be 60m long and 10m wide and involve substantial land take, plus cutting into the shoulder of the dam by over 3.0 m which would, of course, need a temporary cofferdam – all very costly.

A bottom baffle would require 21m of channel plus two resting pools of about 4m each, making a total of, say, 32m with the intakes and exit structure, plus a large temporary cofferdam – again very costly.

A rock ramp would have to be the width of the river, 28m long and contain three resting pools; the structure would require a very large quantity of rock and probably a temporary haul road. Rock ramps, despite being simple structures, are **very** difficult to design both hydraulically and structurally.



**Romanian Deflection Weir**

The good news is that an Alaskan Steep Pass does not require a resting pool for this height of dam and therefore the structure would be about 10m long by 1.5m wide – obviously a more economic solution.

If we were given this project as a commission we would produce a report including outline drawings of the three options together with budget estimates. In this case we are giving advice only, to one of our contacts.

Our recommendation would be based on the provision of the most economic option which fulfils the biological specification, is safe to build and maintain, and be visually acceptable – what do you think?

*Tony W*

## SPRING AUCTION Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

It has been some while since we had availability for members to sell some of their surplus tackle and fishing items as we have already been full at this point and have even had to turn down requests for entries.

We do have to limit the number of entries in some categories to prevent “flooding” the market and to maximize returns for those lots on offer.

**In this auction we already have sufficient fly-tying material and book lots and would ask you not to submit entries for these. However we would be delighted to sell your flies, fly-boxes, fishing tackle including nets, fishing bags, fishing clothing, fly rods, fly reels and fly lines.**

Being a fly-fishing organization, most of the demand at our auctions is for fly fishing related items, but good quality sea and coarse fishing tackle can also sell well.

You can download entry forms from our website [www.sussexflydressers.org.uk](http://www.sussexflydressers.org.uk) or e-mail Roy Gurney on [roygurney33@gmail.com](mailto:roygurney33@gmail.com) or phone 01273 581519 for .doc or hard copies.

Entries are on a first come/first served basis so please don't leave it till the last minute as we have to produce the catalogue in good time.

**TH/RG**

## 2020 FISHING PROGRAMME

The provisional programme, lovingly produced by Alan Wells, is on the last page of the newsletter, and entry forms are attached or enclosed, and which should be completed and sent as soon as possible to the organisers involved.

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

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**Visit our web site**

**[Sussexflydressers.org.uk](http://Sussexflydressers.org.uk)**



## The Flydressers' Guild - Sussex Branch

# Provisional Fishing Programme 2020

(Competitions and Outings Co-ordinator Alan Wells - contact: 01273 689054 / 07795523608 [wellsywells@btinternet.com](mailto:wellsywells@btinternet.com)) (Contact details for individual event organisers can be found on the booking forms on the website.)

DATE & DAY	EVENT	ORGANISER
March 1 <sup>st</sup> (Sun)	Brass Monkeys- Hazel Copse	A Wells / S Rickard
April 4 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	Match v. Hastings F F – Powdermill Reservoir	Alan Wells
“ 18 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	Match v. Sussex S & TC - Duncton Mill	Tony Kaatze
“ 26 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	FDG Bank Competition - Elinor	Self- book with FDG <a href="http://www.flydressersguild.org">www.flydressersguild.org</a>
“ 26 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	Charity Pairs- Bewl	Ray Love
May 14 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	Casting Clinic – Stanmer Park - 6.30- free to all- just turn up!	Alan Wells
“ 17 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	Frank Darrah Pairs Competition – Arlington Reservoir	David Painter
“ 28 <sup>th</sup> (Thurs)	Branch Evening at Arlington Reservoir	Alan Wells
June 20 <sup>th</sup> (Sat) TBC	Carp on the Fly – Passies Pond, Lancing	Alan Wells
July 5 <sup>th</sup> (Sun )	Stillwater Challenge – Chalk Springs	Ian Dunk
Aug 22 <sup>nd</sup> TBC (Sat)	Carp on the Fly – Falkenvil	Alan Wells
Sept 19 <sup>th</sup> (Sat) TBC	Carp on the Fly – Falkenvil	Alan Wells
“ 29 <sup>th</sup> (Sat)	John Watt Competition – Draycote	Chris Nunn
Oct 11 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	Branch Trophy Day – Duncton Mill	Peter Winder
Nov - 2 dates TBC	Grayling Fishing -Lower Itchen	Andy Wood
Dec 6 <sup>th</sup> (Sun)	Branch Christmas Outing and Lunch – Brick Farm	Peter Winder
Dec 28 <sup>th</sup> (Mon Bank holiday)	End of the Year Show- Moorhen	Alan Wells