



Sussex Branch Newsletter



AUGUST 2019

**Don't forget - our new season starts on
Thursday 5th September**

This is the first night of our weekly meetings at Patcham Community Centre commencing every Thursday at 7.30 pm.

Our speaker is **Andy Ford** – who will give us **A Competition Approach to Nymphs and Dries**

All welcome – members and non-members

STILLWATER CHALLENGE

Once again we were unable to close the fishery due to lack of entries and it did get a bit crowded at times. In the event, we did manage to raise our numbers to twelve, despite two last minute withdrawals due to emergencies.

Next year, this event will be organised by Ian Dunk, and will be a tribute to Chris Croucher, who initiated the Stillwater Challenge over 20 years ago. Let's make sure we get the maximum of 24 anglers then!

Once again the best fish of the day went to **Paul Davis**, with a beautiful 3lb 8 oz brownie; he seems to be making a habit of this! It should also be noted that Paul's catch was dedicated to Brian Raw, having been taken on a rod, reel and line from his estate; we are sure Brian was looking down with a big smile on his face!

Best bag for the day went to Tony Harrison with a total of 9lb 12oz, just 5oz ahead of Paul Davis and 8oz ahead of David Constable. Tony's bag included best rainbow of the day (2lb 14oz)

The Jim White Pairs Trophy was taken by Ray Burt and Tony Harrison with a total of 18lb 14oz with runners-up Bill Black and Martyn Gray weighing in at 15lb 14oz.

It was a great pleasure to see John Plowman back on the bank after his traumatic operation and almost miraculous recovery – suffice to say he was an inspiring ghillie for Noake Akiba who took three fish for 6lb 4oz total.

The weigh-in gave us the opportunity to thank Darren Smith for his support and hospitality over the many years of our association with Chalk Springs, and to wish him well in his move to pastures new.

RHG

Windy Falkenvil

The title is not a reference to the 12.30 lunch break but the atmospheric conditions, which were at best annoying and at worst near impossible - sadly deteriorating in terms of wind speed, if not sunniness, as the day wore on.

Ten of us braved the day when it proved difficult to entice the carp to stay on the top of the water for very long periods and when they did come up they were very tentative. The choppiness of the water made it difficult to locate "biscuit type" flies at times and the wind direction meant that free offerings were swiftly swept towards the far bank, making bite detection and striking tricky to say the least.



Andy Wood with likeliest best fish

The heavy rain the night before may have contributed to the carp's shyness. You know it's difficult when Wayne struggles to get into double figures for the numbers caught. However, with the exception of the Chairman (no surprise there) and Hugh (first time out and left at 12.30) everyone had a fish or three and one does have to say they were in tip-top condition.

Alan Wells

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yes, it's that time of year again! Subscriptions for both the Guild and Branch are due on **1st September**, and a renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. However, it is **not** necessary to complete this if your details have not changed – just let Roy Gurney have your subs ASAP!!

Chairman's Chat

Once again we put up the gazebo at Ardingly Show ground to demonstrate for Children's Day, an annual event which is, as the name suggests, is for school children only. Hordes of them came around in an almost endless stream, all of whom were mainly interested in the dressing of flies for fishing. Dave, Phil and Brian had the spiel about the life cycles of for example Dragon flies and Mayflies; by the end of the day, I almost knew the story myself!



Brian demonstrating to one of the Teachers

As usual we got the kids tying the knots in pheasant tail fibres to produce Crane Fly legs; much to the enjoyment of the children, we got the teachers to have a go too.

After clearing up all the Demonstrators were given a glass of wine and a plate of salad. As usual we overmanned the tent so that turns could be taken visit the other stands.

Once again, why not have a go yourself next year? The kids are great and are enthusiastic interested in what could be called a Country skill.

Tony W

Rays Ramblings

What a moving tribute was the piece last month by Ian Dunk on his great pal Mr C. I haven't been a member of the Sussex Branch for that long, but my observation of Chris was that he was a fine angler, illustrated as Ian said by the number of times his name appears on the club's trophies and with him taking both double figure Rainbows and Browns and tasting success in competitions at the John Watt event.

As I wrote in the last newsletter I feel privileged to have fished so many places and find it tragic that one as young as Chris is taken from us and it is a huge loss to the Branch. My philosophy nowadays is to fish as often as possible, because as Jethro the Cornish comedian used to say "Treat each day as your last because one day you will be right".

Some of you may know that I have a large collection of fishing books and when I write for the Ouse Valley Newsletter I discuss some that I have recently read. Of the three hundred or so there are some that I have never read, some that I have read once but not likely to read again and others that I read every couple of years. The idea was that when I get too old and decrepit to go fishing, I will still be to read about fishing or watch the collection of DVD's that I have. Some people have said that the fact that I can only read about fishing or watch it will make the fact that I can't go worse, but I'll have to risk that. Anyway, Skues was still fishing at ninety so I hope that unlike Chris I've got a few more years left.

One of my favourite authors is Laurence Catlow who fishes mainly on the River Eden and Upper Wharfe, both of which I have fished in the past. His favourite pastimes apart from fishing are raising pheasants for the shooting season, his Springer Spaniels, his love of beer and wine and his collection of fishing books which is the reason I got started collecting books. He has written four books but also writes for Trout and Salmon magazine occasionally. He was a schoolmaster teaching Classics at Sedburgh School until his retirement, at which time he suffered a mental breakdown and his latest book "The Healing Stream" describes how, with the help of friends and his love of fishing and of the two rivers that he had fished for over forty years, he got through it. I was once asked which was my favourite river that I had fished, and without hesitation said the Wharfe. I have been lucky over the years to have fished so many wonderful rivers like the Test, Itchen, Kennet, the Derbyshire Wye and the Dee in North Wales, but the Wharfe was where I fished my first River National and I remember tying up many of the North Country Spiders like Waterhen Bloa, Snipe and Purple and Partridge and Orange that had been successful on the North Country rivers for several hundred years and still catch today.

Only last year I was fishing at Frensham, a catch and release water in Surrey, and the fish were being particularly difficult, but by using a size sixteen Waterhen Bloa I was able to outwit quite a few and when I got home I tied up several more for when a similar occasion might arise. That happened this year on another trip there and again they worked. The only downside is that they are rather delicate and the hackles get ripped by the trout's teeth so that I have to tie more. Still it gives me something to do and it beats mowing the lawn!

Ray Burt

BRANCH FINANCES

As highlighted at the last AGM, the loss of income from reduced membership, iFISH (which is unlikely to be revived in the near future) and the strong possibility that income from our auctions will be diminished in future years, we must take steps to safeguard our financial viability.

The above activities have over recent years strengthened our balance sheet; however, we are currently spending more than we collect.

Tighter control over cost of outings will also be made, ensuring all events are self-funding and may also have a small premium to cover engraving costs, etc. Similarly, a review of social events will be made as these are often subsidised, which is fine for those who attend, but at the expense of those who don't!

The Committee has reviewed many things and, amongst other things, reviewed subscriptions, which have remained unchanged for some 20 years. For this coming year (from September 1st) these will remain unchanged, but it is likely that it will be proposed at the next AGM that the Branch subscription will be raised from the current £12 to £15 – still fantastic value for what you get!

Please note that this does not mean we are penniless! We have a substantial reserve at the present time, but it is prudent to consider these matters now, rather than leave it till too late.

Your Committee is reviewing all aspects, but it would most helpful if members let us have suggestions they might have - do contact us via fdgsussex@gmail.com or write to:

FDG c/o Roy Gurney,
29 Capel Avenue,
Peacehaven, BN10 8NB .

AUTUMN AUCTION

Thursday 17th October

Doesn't time fly! We are already virtually full of lots for the next Auction, which will be at our Patcham HQ as usual on Thursday evening 17th October; and the catalogue is already under way. Consequently, if you haven't already sent your entries in it is likely they we will have to decline them for this auction as there is not a lot of space left!

If you have entries, these should be sent to Roy Gurney but if they are unable to be included this time then we should be able to include them in next Spring's auction.

You can download an entry form from the website www.sussexflydressers.org.uk or get one by ringing Roy on 01273 581519 or e-mail fdgsussex@gmail.com .

Mike Blaber

We briefly noted the sad passing of Mike in our last Newsletter, but were unable to give any details due to the late arrival of the news.

Mike, an architect, was a long-standing member of the Guild and Branch, though we did not have the pleasure of seeing much of him in the last few years. In addition to his love of fly-fishing, he was an accomplished water colour artist. Mike was a very successful and popular angler, helping many members new to the sport. The theme of the service was his angling skill.



Later in life he was an accomplished crown green bowler. The service was attended by eighty five people which is a recognition of his popularity.

One of his last requests was that his fishing and fly-tying gear be donated to the Branch, and this is one of the reasons our auction is nearly full!

Your Chairman and Editor attended his funeral on 29th July.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

Friday 4th October 2019

We need two volunteers to collect from Patcham and erect the gazebo at Ardingly for the Autumn Game Fair. Please contact Tony Woolnough at tonyfishway@gmail.com or 01273 483833 ASAP

**From Your Secretary:
The New Tying “Season”**

Dear members

Having been involved in the development of the Sussex Branch tying programme for numerous years I am pleased to enclose a copy of the latest for the 2019 / 20 tying season with this newsletter.

With the help of the instructors we have reinvented the programme to help you to get tying, sharing techniques and snippets of information. There are two evenings where tables are open to do whatever you want – try some more difficult patterns or spend an evening filling those fly boxes.

You will note that each level is catered for by two instructors to provide flexibility and differing methods for all. New for this year is Alan Middleton’s tying challenges using unknown or little used techniques.

We hope you find the new programme interesting and enticing to get those fly tying kits dusted and ready for the first tying night on the 12th September.

Regards
For and on behalf of Sussex FDG

Paul Bond
Secretary

**Demonstrators required on
9th September for the
CHIDDINGSTONE AUTUMN
FAIR**

This event is to be held on the 9th September at Chiddingstone Castle on the border with Kent, and we have been invited again to show our skills (?) and generally interest likely anglers and tyers and the public in general.

We need two volunteers to man the stand, so this is a chance for you newer tyers to have a day out and show the flag. You don’t have to be a prize-winning tyer – just show what you can do and talk to the punters.

A tent and chairs are provided by the organisers, so only the table and front panels are required – however it would be wise to take chairs just in case there is a problem. These are stored at Patcham and can be collected and returned on Thursdays before and after the event.

Tony Woolnough cannot do this one this year but he hopes some (new) members may well be interested. Please contact him ASAP by e-mail tonyfishway@gmail.com or call 01273 483833.



Bob heard big flies caught big fish. Enter the mega mop fly.

**Contributions for the
Newsletter**

It is a continual battle for the editor to get new contributions from YOU – the members. Our regular contributors do sterling service, but readers are always looking for something new – YOUR story of an outing, big fish, lost fish, funny events – you must have a tale to tell!

Reports on Branch outings are all very well, but there must be some tales to tell of other outings or visits to pastures new. There are some venues which are unknown to many and if you have found that ideal spot – tell us about it!

One last point – the editor is not getting any younger and a successor should be found fairly soon – anyone interested?

**Published by the Sussex Branch of
the Flydressers’ Guild**

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