



## Sussex Branch Newsletter

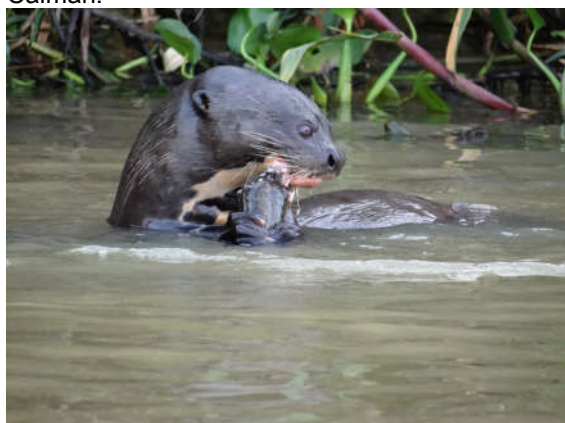


MARCH 2019

### Now for something different!



Hugh Smith, who is known to the branch for his STAAT flies, went on holiday with his wife Ali to Pantanal in Brazil, primarily to see Jaguars, last September and was lucky enough to see twelve. Hugh took his telescopic rod, but not a fly rod, staying on a "floatel" on a river. The river was full of fish of various kinds and first attempt saw his line cut through and his spinner crushed by a Caiman.



He later caught a bucket full of Piranhas using a bamboo pole with a sea hook, baited with meat, and the fish were used by the locals to make soup. Hugh would have preferred the meat! The best results were to flick the bait out high so that it landed with a good plop and it was then usually immediately attacked by a shoal of Piranhas. It appeared that the bigger the plop the bait made, the bigger the Piranha caught.

He caught three different types of Piranhas, Yellow, Black and White, the colour referring to the colour of the tummy. It was bad news if the fish came off as you swung it aboard, or you dropped one, as it would flap and jump and gnash its teeth. Try picking that up safely! It was bad enough trying to take out a large hook whilst avoiding its sharp teeth; fortunately he still has all his fingers!

There are some seriously big Catfish in the river and they taste every bit as good as sea fish. Together with local fishermen there are many predators such as Caiman and Giant Otters, and he photographed seven types of Heron, four types of Kingfisher, three types of Stork, two types of Cormorant and a few types of Hawk feeding at the river.



*Caiman, here seen taking fish!*

### SPRING AUCTION

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 at 7.30 pm sharp  
(Viewing from 6.45 pm)

At Patcham Community Centre, Ladies Mile  
Road, Brighton, BN1 8TA

About 300 lots of Fishing Tackle (Fly, Sea and  
Coarse), Flies, Fly Tying Tools, Materials,  
Miscellaneous Items and Books

**This auction includes part of the estate of  
Brian Raw**

### 2019 PROGRAMME

Please find this updated programme attached. It will be updated on the website as and when changes occur - [www.sussexflydressers.org.uk](http://www.sussexflydressers.org.uk)

## Chairman's Chat

One of the first; the Client's Brief made me wish that I had not started designing fish passes. The site is a Lock in Scotland where the Client uses the stored water to produce artificial freshets to encourage salmon and sea trout to migrate upstream when natural (non augmented) river flows are low.

As I may have said before, the flow migration window is between Q95 and Q10 (when flows are at or above 95% of the time etc) so at high flows, the Lock water would be stored. In practice it meant the flows from the Lock had to be restricted at times of heavy rain (so water is not "wasted") and flows through the pass are increased at times of low rainfall, to attract fish. In addition the body of the old pass (see photograph - bottom part of wall) was to be utilised, if possible.



**Badanlock Fish Pass**

Think about it, it is not easy. So what to do, the obvious choice was to raise the walls of the existing fish pass and convert the pass to a Type 9 Denil – the first one in the UK. To control the water levels, a hunting (goes up and down automatically) penstock (gate – see white outline at the head of the pass) could be installed. Fish would ascend the pass using their cruising speed and adopt their burst speed to dive under the gate (where velocities are high). That should do it (I hoped).

I designed on copies of the drawings of the existing facilities and so I did not see the site. Almost every day the Client 'phoned me up with some query and reminded me that he was on a strict budget and therefore cost should be kept down. I got my daily call which caused my heart to miss a beat only to be told that the pass was finished and working well. He further invited me to see him – I pointed out that I did not know his address - "no problem, I live in the castle" he replied; so much for a tight budgets !

*Tony W*

## ARE YOU INTO RUBBER?

**By Peter Winder**

I have been using rubber for some time and I would like to tell you the advantages:

1. Rubber nets are shake-dry so after landing a fish you can put the net on your back without getting wet. Rubber does not hold fish slime.
2. No hook snagging – a thing we have all had happen. Hooks do not get caught in rubber - a big thing when using droppers and when lure fishing with trebles. In catch- and-release waters there is less damage to the fish.
3. For reservoir fishing you can buy a rubber coarse net head to attach to a long handle.
4. The new ranges are no dearer than cotton nets.

Rubber nets are available from Lagoon Bait, Kingsway, Hove, phone 01273 415879 or for those who can't get to the shop they have a mail order service e-mail [lagoonbaithove@gmail.com](mailto:lagoonbaithove@gmail.com) or via their website [www.lagoonbaithove.co.uk](http://www.lagoonbaithove.co.uk) . Replacement nets are available from Snowbee at [www.snowbee.co.uk](http://www.snowbee.co.uk)

## 2019 FDG ELINOR BANK COMPETITION

The Guild's 5th Elinor bank competition is being held on **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019**. The entry fee is £38 – full details at [fishing@flydressersguild.org](mailto:fishing@flydressersguild.org) .

## Ray's Ramblings

I was recently asked by Bewl Bridge Flyfishers Club member Phil Thompson, who edits Bewl Angle Online, if I had any photos of Mick Dwyer, a member of both the Bewl and Tunbridge Wells clubs, who sadly passed away last Autumn. I looked through my cuttings and found two - one of which was a Ruddles Regional Championship at Bewl Water in July 1987 and another of the International on Lough Conn in Ireland in 1994, when we were both in the team and I was captain. In that match I was very fortunate that on one of the five practice days that I fished I was out with Jeremy Herrmann and he gave me a fly on which I caught two fish that day. The day of the match I was drawn with Ronnie Glass, who now writes a monthly advice column in Trout and Salmon magazine, and our boatman was Frank Reilly, himself an Irish International. Ronnie won the toss as to where to go and elected to go down to the Coleman Shallows, an area I had fished in practice with Jeremy Herrmann, and Frank Reilly had also

been our boatman on that occasion. The Coleman Shallows, though, was nine miles down the other end of the Lough and even with a powerful outboard motor it took us forty minutes to get there. However it produced a fish for me shortly after starting on the fly that Jeremy had given me and later in the day two more fish further up the Lough to give me a total of three.



The team photo of that match shows Mick Dwyer, fourth from right in the back row (with the bushy hair), Jeremy Herrmann, sixth from right in the back row, and myself kneeling in the centre. With the photo was a cutting which recorded that Ireland won the match with 21 fish and England were second with 16 fish. The top four rods for England were Chris Howitt with two fish, including a good one of 3lb 12oz, followed by Lee Sennington with three fish, myself with three fish and Bob Worts with two fish. Mick Dwyer was the only other angler in our team to get two fish but just failed to re-qualify for the next International on Lake of Menteith in Scotland.

The cutting goes on to say that the difficulty of the fishing was demonstrated when neither Russell Owen of Wales nor double Brown Bowl winner Jeremy Herrmann caught a fish. Jeanette Ford, the first lady ever to fish for England in the Home Internationals, beat them both with one fish.

However I fished another International in Ireland in May 2000 that was worse than that and I'll tell you about it in a future Ramblings.

**Ray Burt**

**Here is the full tribute to John Burt by Alan Middleton:**

## **JOHN BURT FLY FISHERMAN**

John was the quintessential English fly fisherman; never flustered, never hurried. He always seemed to have plenty of time; always had the time to speak to you.

He was ever the traditionalist. Fly fishing to him meant fooling the fish with an imitation of what it was feeding on. He did not subscribe to pulling half a canary through the water at 90 miles per hour. He would sometimes resort to an Invicta size 12, but that was the upper limit of his arsenal, but he did catch a lot of fish.

My involvement with John in the Flydressers' Guild usually revolved around the annual dinner. For a good number of years John organised this with unerring efficiency. About Christmas time he would attend the weekly meetings and the infrequent committee meetings. He would quietly go about the membership just reminding them that the dinner would take place on such a day and at such a venue.

Year after year the membership would gather together for what was the social event of the calendar. The event would go like clockwork, unbeknown to the majority that it did not happen by accident nor by magic. It was like a well-oiled machine. very few people were aware of the hours that John had put in to make sure there was a high-profile guest speaker, that the raffle prizes were collated, the menus selected; not to mention the negotiations with the manager of the venue.

Once I knew that John was arranging the dinner then I had nothing else to do but to turn up on the night and enjoy the evening, confident that all the necessary arrangements had been made in advance.

John did this with no fuss or hysterics, even when I knew that dealing with temperamental hotel managers could be fraught with stress. John just seemed to glide along serenely, almost oblivious of deadlines and timescales. He never seemed irritated by the responses he got from members who could not decide who to sit with at the tables, who forgot to order their wine before sitting down to eat, who had not brought their trophies to be presented to the new winners in time to be engraved.

I will remember John as the implacable figure who always quietly in control and someone you could rely upon. He was a stalwart of the branch but never put himself forward.

We are poorer at his passing but richer for his friendship.

**Alan Middleton** (former Chairman)

## **FLY-TYING COMPETITION**

A reminder of this year's patterns

Novice	<b>The Double Badger #10</b>
Intermediate	<b>The Royal Wulff #10</b>
Open	<b>Paraloop Olive #14</b>
Salmon	<b>The Executioner #10 double</b>
Saltwater	<b>Cockroach #1/0</b>
Pike	<b>The Leveller</b>

Three identical samples of each fly should be submitted by **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019** to **Brian Hendry** or **Alan Middleton** or to Roy Gurney if they are not around.

## **John Burt - A fishing tale** *by John Plowman*

I am sure many of you, like me, were saddened to hear of the death of John. During my time as chairman he was always there with a kind word and could be relied upon to take from me the job of organising the annual dinner. Sometimes I would meet him as he walked around Arlington reservoir with his lightweight set of tackle and small flies catching successfully. On one such occasion we got on to talking about fishing from the boats and he regaled me with this story:

*"I had been fishing from some time when I decided it was time for a coffee break so I foolishly put my rod down on the spare seat in the boat while I bent down to retrieve my flask from my bag. In a moment my rod had gone as a typical Arlington rainbow headed for the deeps!*

*"There was nothing to do but to row back to the jetty and collect my spare rod and reel and start again. I knew where the fish were so rowed out and started fishing again. After a long while I felt a slow drag on my line and when my retrieve had finished I realised that I had snagged the line that had gone over the side. Knowing that the line was knotted to the reel I began the slow process of pulling in my line plus a lot of backing into the boat doing my best to avoid a tangle.*

*"Eventually the rod tip appeared and finally I had both rod and reel in the boat. So now all I had to do was carefully start winding, making sure I kept to a minimum the tangle that was in the bottom of the boat. First the backing and then the line proper returned to the reel but there was now some resistance in the water and finally a swirl a few yards out confirmed the fish was still hooked.*

*"The trout was successfully netted!"*

RIP John. You will be missed.

**John Plowman**

## **APRIL 7<sup>th</sup> SPEAKER** **Stuart Croft**

STUART CROFT makes a very welcome return following up his previous fascinating talks on his favourite Caddis flies and related species – what will it be this time? His flies for imitation are also as fascinating as the story of the insects.

## **RETURN OF TROPHIES**

Would all holders of **ALL** trophies please return them by 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019 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.

## **A date for your diaries** **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019**

We will be holding our Spring Auction on the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> March at our regular venue – Patcham Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton, BN10 8TA. You will be able to view fishing and fly-tying lots from 6.45 pm and the Auction itself will start at 7.30 pm sharp. One of the benefits of our auction is that you can handle the lots in which you are interested, as opposed to making decisions based on photographs and description on-line.

Once again we are lucky enough to have the services of Mike Humphreys, President of the main Flydressers' Guild and also an auctioneer for most of his working life. For many years, Mike has driven the round trip from his home in Hertfordshire to help us, and in truth without his help and support we would not be able to run our auctions.

Those of you who managed to attend the AGM will be aware of the contribution the two auctions make to the branch finances. Not only do they enable us to maintain our membership subscription at £12 for the best part of 20 years, but they also enable us to engage speakers of the highest quality and finance a number of initiatives which we would not be able to pursue were we relying solely on subscriptions for income.

So, if you enjoy tying flies, or fishing, or both, as is the case for most of our members, I can guarantee that you will find lots of items interest. With about 300 lots up for auction, we are dependent not only a really good membership turnout, but also on the help of all our members telling their fishing and fly-tying friends about the auction, and encouraging them to come along. Nothing beats personal recommendation, so once again I ask for help and support to encourage both members and non-members to attend. For the last two auctions there have been major road (and rail) accidents on auction night, so hopefully it will be third time lucky, with no travel restrictions.

On behalf of the auction team and the Branch I would ask that as many of you as possible make a real effort to come along to support both the auction and the Branch, and hopefully bring along your fishing and fly-tying colleagues. Two thirds of the lots belonged to our much missed friend, Brian Raw, and are being sold on behalf of his wife, Shelagh, so this is your chance to purchase some of Brian's lots for something to remember him by. As most of you know, Brian was a stalwart Branch auction supporter and never missed one.

The auction team and I look forward to welcoming you to the auction and helping in any way we can. Finally – thank you for your help and support in spreading the word.

**Tony Harrison**

## ARLINGTON ADDITIONS.

Although there have been occasional difficult days, early season has generally been pretty positive at Arlington, with some impressively large fish coming out. I have stuck with 4 fish tickets as my time has been limited but with a bit of persistence, I have got my bag 3 times. Whilst the main line of attack has been sinkers with Boobies or weighted lures, floaters and sink tips have also taken a fair number of fish with Damsels, Cormorants, Nomads and even Buzzers being successful flies. The Bay, as usual, has been the focus for most anglers but a few fish have come in from the Willows area.

There has also been something of a game of leapfrog going on with potential candidates for the club's "best fish from a Sussex Reservoir or water" already showing. First off there was Ray Love with a fine 4lb 4oz rainbow, then Ray Burt and Andy Wood took over with 4lb 13oz and 4 lb 14 oz fish respectively. However, since Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February Andy Wood now leads the field having subdued a lovely 5lb 10oz fish (see below)



The weather has been so mild that even John Plowman has been tempted to fish before March and was suitably rewarded with a full 6 fish bag on Friday. To quote John - "Fishes 4 and 5 were of exceptional quality taking my line almost to the backing but only weighing just over 2lb. each."

Amazingly Andy's is not the heaviest fish to come out so far, as someone has already weighed in with a 6lb plus rainbow. However, Tom the ranger tells us there is still a very large "golden coloured" brownie lurking in the reservoir somewhere. Wouldn't it be great if an SFDG member pulled that one in the match against Eastbourne and District! Not that I'm competitive or anything.

**Alan Wells**

## iFISH 2019

Sadly, iFISH 2019 is following the fate of iFISH 2018 and will **NOT** be held this year. This decision has been made reluctantly, but lack of firm support by exhibitors, who are faced with a proliferation of shows (many of which are around the time we intended), meant that we would have to face making a loss on the operation.

## BASS FROM SUSSEX BEACHES 2019

Most of the beaches have exposed sand at low tide and bass feed in shallow water.

Visit your local beach over the bottom of the tide to find the features, use a #7/8 rod, floating line, waders and simple Clousers or baitfish imitations. You can catch them in a foot of water.

Listed below are this year's suitable tides; check times from your local tide table.

April	5 to 10.	17 to 24	
May	3 to 9	16 to 22	
June	2 to 8	14 to 20	
July.	1 to 8	17 to 19	30 to 31
Aug	1 to 7	15 to 19	29 to 31
Sept	1 to 6	13 to 18	26 to 30
Oct	1 to 4	12 to 18	24 to 31

Tight lines

**Brian Hendry**

## MEMBERS' SURVEY

The results of our recent survey, painstakingly overseen by our overworked chairman, showed a surprising (?) satisfaction on most points. However we received only 15 completed surveys – less than a quarter of our membership – we hope some of you who didn't complete it will do so now and let us have your views.

A full summary will be sent to members later, when we may have a second wave of replies, but the overall score so far was 8.8 out of 10, with only Social Activities scoring below 8 (at 5.6) – we will have to work on that!

The venue scored 9.8 – seems the parking is the only item of discontent, but not too much!

It seems we need to give more information on our fishing events for the benefit of new members and perhaps we can do this by an article in the next newsletter.

All suggestions and comments will be discussed and, where necessary, implemented by your committee.

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

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