

The Flydressers Guild Sussex Branch



Newsletter

December 2025

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Flydressers Guild**

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In case you haven't heard already, Clayton Village Hall is out of action or the foreseeable future because of a leaking roof. We (the Committee) have secured a temporary venue for the next four meetings, December and January.

**The address of the venue is -
Hurstpierpoint Village Centre,
Trinity Road,
Hurstpierpoint,
West Sussex, BN6 9UY.**

The 'Club Suite' room we will be using is in a self contained part of the Village Centre, having its own facilities including toilets and a kitchen. Considering the price is similar to Clayton, it's a much nicer venue! Also, the standard evening fee gives us use of the room from 18:00 through 23:00. (I will aim to unlock the doors at 18:45 and lock up when everyone is done, whatever time that happens to be)

The main Hurstpierpoint car park is directly opposite the Village Centre with ample space in the evenings. There are no parking charges or restrictions whatsoever after 18:00. Additionally, there is street parking available very close by as well.

When you arrive at the Village Centre you need to follow the signs for the Club Suite, which is to the left of the main entrance.

One Fish Wonder!

The title refers to the fact that as Andy Wood caught the **only fish** of the day at Brass Monkeys competition, he scooped both first fish and best bag honours. Being a gent, Andy only took the bottle shaped prize so the other two prizes will go forward to our Xmas outing.

Yes it's true **that between 11 of us we could only manage 1 fish** in a curtailed pre-lunch session which came to a close just before 12.00. Although protestations about "warm and low water putting fish off the feed", might have been true enough, it was seemed likely that despite being told that around 10 were expected to fish, stocking to take account of this had not taken place. I know it is a difficult balancing act for venues with fish prices very high but there were evidently very few fish on offer. One can only book a venue on good faith and that was tested to its limit on Saturday. I must thank our participants for their good humour about this (generous amounts of cake helped) but sadly I think we must call it a day for the Brass Monkeys at this place and look for a different venue.

The discussion around this at lunch time was helpful, if only in ruling out certain locations but the committee will take on board suggestions in our meeting this month. I have checked out the current prices at various venues shown below. I have left out Brick Farm as we already have 2 events there. I think that Duncton was ruled out on the grounds of lack of space for potentially double figures of anglers. Coltsford Mill is very reasonable on price but we already have Chairman's Day there and if you are also an Ouse valley member they fish it early season as well. Chalk Springs could be fun if people are willing to stump up the cost maybe for a 2 or 3 fish ticket. Several members remembered Albury near Guildford as being a very reliable fishery and I am awaiting a chat with Des Watson to see how Ashdown fishes in the autumn, as this could offer the possibility of a combined event. I will be doing a survey of opinions at tying nights but those of you who do not attend these can let your voices be heard via email or possibly on the WhatsApp group. Meanwhile I will contact the most promising venues to assess any "deals" that may be on offer.

Fishery	2 fish	3 fish	4 fish
Chalk Springs	50	60	70
Duncton (only Birch		55	
Lakedown	42	53	64
Ashdown Forest	37	44	50

Coltsford Mill	36	44	52
Albury	42	54.75	68.20

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FDG Tying Competition.

The current Flydresser magazine has details of this year's FDG Tying competition a brief synopsis of which is shown below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Fly</i>	<i>Source</i>
Novice Trout	Soldier Palmer	FDG Bronze Awards Book
Novice Lure	Viva	FDG Bronze Awards Book
Open Trout	Blae and Black	FDG Silver Awards Book
Open Salmon	Silver Stoat	FDG Silver Awards Book
Prize Winners Trout	Grey Wulff	See 'Flies and Dressings' below
Prize Winners Salmon	Beaully Snow Fly	See 'Flies and Dressings' below
Dry Fly	Parachute Adams	FDG Silver Awards Book
Creative Fly	A fly tied with materials salvaged from outside the fly-tying world (other than the hook and tying thread).	

[42]

I would like to encourage as many members as possible to get involved, particularly as the flies selected for the Novice, Open and Dry Fly categories are included in the Bronze and Silver Awards so would not take time away from normal tying sessions. It would be great if we could get some more awards to add to our "most Gold Award tiers" in any Branch, to add to our online CV. It all helps to attract new members. Membership Secretary report

As of date, the total membership stands at 39. Of this number, 36 are full paying members of the Branch and 3 are non-paying honorary (Mike Guest, Alan Middleton & John Cooper). For reference, the figure for last year was 34+3. There are a further two people who were members last year that have not yet renewed. Therefore, it's still possible that the Branch could break the 40 members barrier this year, a figure that we last saw in 2023.

With the current membership, financial modelling, forecasting cost vs revenue, indicates that the Branch will generate a modest surplus of ~ £100+ during the current financial year.

While it is very encouraging that so many new members have joined this year, it has only just managed to backfill the previous year's natural decline in numbers e.g. 3 members passed on last year and several did not renew.

A previously unknown main Guild provision for early payment of subs became apparent this year. This meant the Branch was able to save £3 per head (£90+ in total) by paying the main guild element of subs by 1st October. A further saving was realized on postage cost (~£20+) by instructing the Guild to mail membership cards direct to members, ending the previous process of having them sent in bulk to the membership secretary for reposting to individuals.

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Reflections on '25

As with most years, I suppose, 2025 was a year of losses and gains. We sadly lost Phillip Ellis a long term servant of the club, he and the irrepressible Harry Atkins will be sorely missed. Alan Middleton,

a true legend of the FDG and fly fishing in general, has had to hang up his waders and fly-tying tools but I will still try to get you to come back and tell us some of your stories one evening Alan. There are also some of our current members who have had health setbacks, which we hope will only mean temporary absence. We also seem to have lost our “home” for the last few years in the shape of Clayton Hall but it may mean we have found a more comfortable venue for the future in Hurstpierpoint.

This year’s gains have been the addition of 8 new members of the club who have swelled the ranks of John Plowman’s novices and the return of Ken Pearce to the realms of our “vintage” dressers. This has also increased the numbers attending our fishing events, which again have seen ups and downs, some of the latter reflecting the longer-term impacts of climate change on our sport. So ,we look back at 2025 with mixed feelings but I feel the club is in a good place and look forward to the tying and fishing prospects of the New Year and wish everyone a Merry Xmas in between.

Tight Lines

Alan

Xmas Outing-Brick Farm.

The day dawned brightly... sorry it seemed like a nice way to start but that is a work of fiction. There was very little brightness and sadly it got worse as the day went on. The picture below sums up the sartorial preparations-prizes going to Cliff (far left) for his impression of a trawlerman and Tim (in shorts) for extreme optimism in thinking Brick farm is in the Tropics!



However, early doors the fish were playing ball at least. Andy and Steve Matthews had bagged up within a matter of minutes and Stag seemed to be the most productive lake for once. Simon H was doing well on Spring and Simon R took up his usual position at the dam end of Brick to good effect. I had my first there in about 10 minutes and then of course took another hour to get the next one! I joined Martyn back in the lodge and decided against going out for another fish, unlike some who endured a steadily increasing level of rain, some with results, others without. The results are shown below but what mattered most was the shared lunch and banter which ensued. At least I could take home some sweets for the Grandkids, after getting fleeced in the 2-man auction for a rod caddy! There you go it's all for club funds, thanks to Peter's kind donation. Thanks also to Lorraine and Mark for looking after us so well during the course of the day, with endless cups of tea, encouragement and a lovely lunch. Here's to the next season.

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Results for Xmas Competition

Name	No of Fish	Bag Weight	Best fish	Smallest fish	Position
A. Wells	2	5lb 8 oz	3lb 4oz	2lb 4 oz	2
A. Wood	2	5lb	2lb 8oz	2lb 8 oz	3
P. Winder	0	0	0	0	12
J. Plowman	1	2lb 4oz	2lb 4oz	2lb 4oz	11
B. Black	0	0	0	0	12
S. Mustchin	1	3lb	3lb	3lb	9
T. Hook	1	2lb 8oz	2lb 8oz	2lb 8oz	10
H. Dodsley	2	4lb 1oz	2lb 3oz	1lb 15oz	8
S. Matthews	2	4lb 11oz	2lb 6 oz	2lb 5oz	6
S. Nanson	0	0	0	0	12
M. Grey	2	4lb 13 oz	2lb 9oz	2lb 4oz	4
T. Woolnough	0	0	0	0	12
C. Brown	2	4lb 12 oz	2lb 12 oz	2lb	5
S. Rickard	2	5lb 8oz	3lb 1oz	2lb 3oz	1
S. Horsley	2	4lb 7oz	2lb 5oz	2lb 2oz	7