

The Flydressers Guild

Sussex Branch



Newsletter

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Flydressers Guild

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New Committee Members

With Roy Gurney retiring from the club, and Ian Macgregor moving out of the area, we needed to find some new committee members.

I am please to announce that both Dave Otterson and Tony Kaatze have both been co-opted onto the committee.

Following Roy's retirement, Andy Wood has taken over responsibility for Membership.

First Outing 2021

It was probably stretching the "minimise travel" dictat but my son Sam and I met up for the second time at **Springhill** fishery – the first time being March 14th 2020 , a week before the first lockdown! I wrote about that before and what a pretty location in a valley near Pembury it is. The wind was a little gusty but it stayed dry all day and with some

patches of sunshine in the early afternoon it was fairly pleasant. The pricing is a little complicated but I took a four fish take and then C & R ticket for £40 and Sam had a 4 fish ticket for £36 .I was also given access to the brownie ponds without paying the £5 extra, because the digger working on relining and embanking the old 4th pond was a bit noisy. To make the most of our time I had already set us up with 2 rods each the night before. Me with a floater and a fast intermediate and Sam a floater and a Di3. Between us I thought that potentially covered most bases from top to bottom. We started on the West side of the main lake with the wind behind our backs both trying out Damsels on floaters. Sam had a strong take after about 10 minutes but sadly lost the fish after a short tussle. There were no fish showing on the top ,so after fan casting and varying retrieves and depths for about 25 minutes I decided to change over to a fast intermediate & experiment a bit with a new pattern for me. In the lockdown I have been researching younger bank competition anglers ,particularly Rhys Wadley on Rhys Fishes (see later article) who has bank fished for Wales ,along with his father Jeremy. One of his methods is to fish a Brandling Worm (Apps style) very fast ,on a fast intermediate with a long leader. I tried this for a while but I think it is a method best suited to warmer times when fish are further up in the water. However, an alternative to this is to fish the same rig very slowly and rather deeper, which seemed to make sense with so little surface activity and only one fish taken by the one other angler on the lake. So just as this chap was showing me the fly he had caught on I hooked up close in (Yeah I know Ray!) but the fish came off quickly.



I hooked up again fairly soon afterwards and managed to bring in a small fish but lost two more

good fish using the same barbless fly. I normally have no worries about using barbless hooks but this was a wide gape hook I have not used before and it seemed too much of a coincidence. So I changed to a barbed version of the same fly and soon took another better fish. I seemed to have hit on the right technique so helped Sam change over his floater to an intermediate, as he had only had one further knock in the first hour or so.

I went off to the dam end where I had had some success in the shallower water near the reed beds on our previous visit. I went back to the floater and Stalking Damsel setup and had 2 good 2lb + fish in a 20 minute spell. So that was my 4 fish bag and lunch was due.

After lunch I decided to leave Sam to his own devices and visit the Brownie ponds. However, on the way I thought I would give the Brandling/intermediate setup a further checkout on the windward side of the lake. It proved fruitful again with a very deep, slow retrieve and a tentative and then firm take for another decent rainbow. The first brownie pond proved unproductive and at the second I got involved in a long interesting chat with Lee, the owner, about various aspects of fly fisheries and trout rearing in Sussex. I was just saying that I hoped Sam would get a fish, when a mobile call from him said "bring me your priest" (he had dropped his in the lake in the morning) so he had a fish! He was very pleased as he had changed line, fly and position and with improved casting had come up with a 2lb 12oz rainbow.

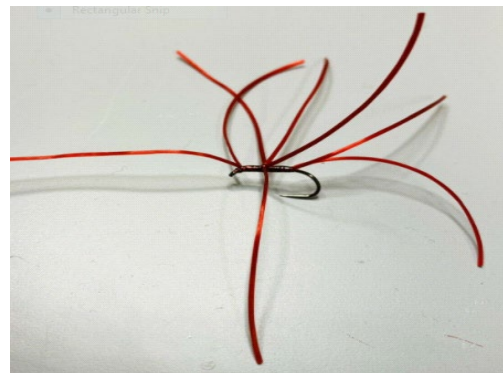
We fished on for a while without any success but Sam's catch had made it a good day for me. This is a well run, friendly fishery, with good quality fish-as you would expect from Duncton stocking. At present the pricing is quite reasonable and the addition of the 4th pond will extend the attractiveness of Springhill.

Alan Wells

Some Modern Small Water Lures.

As I mentioned in my piece on Springhill I tried out a new pattern for me with some success there. Over the lockdown I decided to look at what some younger bank competition anglers were tying, particularly Rhys Wadley of "Rhys Fishes" and Gareth Wilson of "UKFlyFisher" both of them Welsh anglers. (I do have to add the proviso that in 2019 there was some debate on certain fly fishing forums about the slow response of the latter when ordering his pre-tied flies but as he posts tying instructions on YouTube this need not be a concern for us.)

The tactics followed by some of these anglers owe a lot to the approach of course fishing matchmen in terms of the strategising and organisation employed. Whilst this is not everybody's cup of tea, one cannot deny the high catch rates, particularly bank fishing on smaller still waters, which are now the norm for many fly anglers. Today one does not have to just take the word of the fly tier that the fly takes fish, as the supporting evidence can be seen on videos. I know these can be "doctored" somewhat to give a good impression but Rhys at least is a Welsh International so seems to be successful in what he does. In the end I think it's in the interest of the vlogger that people catch on their flies and the comments on his YouTube pages are very complimentary.



This

Brandling worm was the type I used at Springhill, which accounted for 3 fish and hooked & lost 3 more on the barbless version before I changed over. (*See discussion below) There are a number of variants shown on the linked videos.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmx_URKLgDY

I must throw in a big-up to <https://www.myfishingflies.com/> who provided some very good materials for the tying and were also very gracious when I thought I had "lost" some in the post but later found them down the back of a

drawer. They had already sent me replacement stuff which they did not expect me to return or pay for when I owned up! High quality customer service.



I did fish the Incredible Cat even though I had some problems getting the small tungsten dumbbells and had to make them myself.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAl3p3OatYM>

I did have no great success with this and the Black Mamba I have yet to try out but they both look promising lures to me.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gPJR7ihaoU>

Anyway they are all fun to tie.

*It was interesting that I lost 3 fish which seemed firmly hooked on the barbless version of the Brandling. This was a large short shank Fulling Mill #8, which does have a wide gape but I kept up constant pressure and thought I did not force the fish too much. I would be interested to know people's thoughts on playing fish on barbless hooks and where I may have gone wrong. It may have just been bad luck but I am wondering if I need to lift into the fish a little harder to set the hook, particularly as the takes were fairly soft and slow on the day or if there are particular wrinkles to playing on barbless hooks?

Tight Lines

Alan Wells

Moorhen Trout Fishery

Meon Valley Fly Fishing

Welcome back!

We are pleased to say that we re-opened on 12th April as planned, and it's lovely to see people catching fish again. It brings us so much pleasure to see so many familiar faces again, and we must say a big thank you for all the kind comments. So to all our wonderful fishermen and clubs that have already rebooked, we say a big thank you and welcome back!

How will things work?

We are operating as before with a booking system (email or phone), a closed kitchen for the time being, and a drinks urn outside. We are still guesstimating the weight of the fish and not using the fridge, so please bear this in mind on a hot day!

We are also holding our prices again this year and will remain closed at the weekends, apart from club days, when the fishery will be open just for you. Our credit system is working well, and don't worry as we have extended the dates.



Get me!

Mark and his busy bees did really well during the summer, but we sold out of our delicious honey very quickly, so won't have any more until August (hopefully!). However, I am now making candles from beeswax which you can buy in the shop!

Please remember to keep your distance from the hives when you visit!

Frank Darrah Pairs Thursday 13th May Bewel Water

Alan Wells is arranging this year competition and is still struggling for competitors on this (as always I'm afraid) as there are some clashes of dates with those who are multi-club members- always an issue in May.

Specifically he is short of one boat partner so have we any late comers who can do this?

Please contact Alan if you are interested on 01273689054 or 07795523608.

A Request from Bob Thomas

Having had had a very good day at Dever Springs, catching my 4 limit with a size 10 coral colour fly, a small green bead, a couple of turns of coral sparkle and a coral tail of marabou, as I have had to give up tying because of shaky hands, is there someone who could make some for me please, I would like some with different coloured beads, gold head, silver or whatever, they don't have to be complicated, mine never were. I would be very grateful, and would pay whatever. Thank you.

Bob's email is bobthomas100@yahoo.co.uk

Lakedown Revival.

I had heard rather mixed reviews of the state of play at Lakedown, so thought the best way to come to a conclusion was to fish it myself. I did get some tips from Des Watson who had fished it recently as my previous experience was some 12 years ago. This was in the era when the top lake was a specimen lake and I treated myself to a £60 birthday present and had a great day with an 8 lb 4 oz rainbow and a 9lb 8oz brownie among my bag. The approach has changed somewhat with a few trophy fish spread around the lakes but most fish being in the 2lbish bracket. I opted for a 6 fish ticket, which at £50 is about the going price these days ,though you do pay £1.50 admin charge if you book online. There are enough ticket options to suit different depths of purse but as I was not sure when I would get out again, I went for the confident option, buoyed by Des's suggestion that there were plenty of fish stocked.

The car park is only a short distance from the lodge but those with disabilities can park immediately outside it. I would say that wheelchair users could

access parts of the first 2 lakes with little problem but 3 and 4 would be more difficult. There are toilets separate from the lodge and a hut with chairs suitable for a lunchtime gathering part way down the west bank of Lake 2. I planned to try to get a bit more of a feel for the place this time ,so headed for the dam end of Lake 4 with the notion of working my way back through the lakes towards the lodge as the day went on.

Anyway, the day started well with a few fish showing near the dam on Lake 4 and I took a fish



on my 4th cast on a floater with a Stalking Damsel. A rise to my left prompted a move slightly along the dam and another fish was taken after some nips on the same outfit. I thought I would experiment now with a Di 3 and a Brandling Worm, as fewer were showing on top. This seemed equally acceptable however, and by 10ish I had another 2 fish in the bag. As a couple more anglers were coming along I decided to vacate the area and investigate other points on the fishery to slow things down a little.

Lake 3 is an interesting one with the more northerly end being quite narrow and tree/reed lined and inaccessible on the eastern side



The water was very clear and in this sheltered section, quite still. I cast as close to the overhanging trees on the far bank as I could and a soft pull was encouraging, as I felt the fish hadn't been pricked, just come short. Sure enough next cast on a slow twiddle saw number 5 come to the net. At this point lake 3 is perched above lake 4 and provides great views to take in the excellent design of the fishery and spot the very varied birdlife. A chat with another angler who had yet to take saw him take up the promising spot on the island on lake 4 I was aiming for.



So I decided to have an early lunch overlooking the cascade from lake 3 into 4. After lunch I tried in this quite promising pool with a deep buzzer but to no effect here or in the southern end of the narrow section of lake 3. I am never confident with just a single buzzer, feeling that a team gives you more options and better presentation but the rule here is **single fly only on all lakes**. So noticing a rise in the more open end of lake 3, I changed back to a bead head Damsel and after losing one, took the best fish of the day, around 2lb 6oz at around 1.20 pm for my final trout of a very pleasant day.

So to conclude I believe Lakedown is now a very good, well run fly fishery. The revised stocking policy and attempts to make it more accessible, means it is a more inclusive fishery. Whilst the average stock size may be lower than in the past, that is offset by there being plenty of fish & keeping the prices within a competitive level. In chats with

regulars, the fish seem to be equally spread amongst the lakes and I believe that, as long as you are willing to vary your approach, you should catch fish here. It has the added advantage of being a truly beautiful location, where the vegetation is managed to facilitate fly fishing but not to the detriment of the wide range of wildlife. I will certainly be returning & hope to negotiate with Jamie to allow a club event here.

Alan Wells

Chairman's Chat

You may recall that I spoke of my Client on the Isle of Wight carrying out a scheme to release 60 sea eagles as part of a re introduction project. We suggested that the eagles would immediately leave the I of W and make way to the mainland and take fawns, pets and lambs. Well I under estimated the spread of the eagles and the Client underestimated the toll of lambs which would be taken. Tacking has revealed that the eagles have reached the whole of GB, including the I of M and many countries in Europe.



SEA EAGLE'S LUNCH

Farmers in Scotland and especially those on the outer isles are losing as many as 20% of their lambs. Many efforts have been tried to discourage the eagles including, balloons, lasers scare crows etc. Nothing has worked to far.

Apparently eagles wait behind a sheep giving birth and take the lamb as soon as it has dropped. Another method adopted by the eagles is to "gang up" of large lambs and adult sheep, kill them and eat them on the ground.

So eagles can kill sheep but dogs cannot !!! I am sure that there would an outcry if a farmer shot or poisoned an eagle.

Watch this space for more interesting articles.

Tony W