



## Sussex Branch Newsletter



**JULY 2018**

### **Brian Raw**

**29<sup>th</sup> October 1945 – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018**



Brian finally succumbed to his invidious cancer in St Peter and St James Hospice after fighting to the end to keep fishing. We were all amazed at his bravery in overcoming his pain when attending meetings at Patcham. He was in recent weeks fishing his beloved Dovey in north Wales and drove to Scotland to the Findhorn only the week before the end, though he was unable to fish as wading was no longer possible. Brian seemed to find endless time to fish following his retirement from schoolmastering, though he will be fondly remembered for his tireless work with the Masonic Fishing Charity, MTFSC – here it must be mentioned the contribution made by his wife Sheelagh, to whom we offer our sincerest condolences. Ten members of the Branch attended his funeral, where ten MTFSC members formed a guard of honour with rods extended, duly dipped in respect as he was borne from the church. Brian will be greatly missed, both on the bank and at our meetings – may he rest in peace.

RG

### **Passies Pond Perfection.**

A coolish day with a layer of light cloud made for a comfortable set of conditions, only a variable gusty breeze causing a few issues, for our first Carp on the Fly day at Passies on 16th June. As is customary the day began with bacon sarnies and tea accompanied by the creak of bones. The match lake is set aside for us if we can get enough participants, which we had quite easily this year with 20 signing up for the day. In places this had weeded over rather badly but there were still plenty of open swims and the day started well with Simon Rickard landing a clonker within minutes of setting up.



2018 FLY FAIR

**18th November 2018**

As usual Wayne was pulling them in like they were going out of fashion but newbie to carp on the fly Keith Verral eventually stopped cursing long enough to take a fish on a borrowed fly. As for Bill, well his masterful casting brought forth fruit with another what looked like double figure specimen (must remember to take some scales next year) .



After a break for lunch people returned to the fray with Ray B adding to the list so that everyone had a fish by the end. Shame he broke a rod like me - but there's always the next auction!



Best fish of the day (among his 20+) fell to guest David Lear who had a great day out with his brother (not much competition going on there!) and family, landing this 15 lb+ beauty along with about 6 pounds of weed! Delightful to see his little niece fishing for little silver fish on a "sparkly" rod - well done for bringing on the next generation of fly fishers!



To anyone who hasn't tried this branch of fly fishing yet, I encourage you to give it a go as it's fantastic sport at budget prices. There are 3 more carp dates at Falkenvil this summer at only £8 a go! What's not to like? **AW**

## **AUTUMN AUCTION**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

Doesn't time fly! Yes, we are already lining up items for the next Auction which will be at our Patcham HQ as usual on Thursday evening 18<sup>th</sup> October. The catalogue is already under way as we already have some tasty lots from donated material, but more is needed.

Now is the time to ransack your den and enter your surplus items for sale.

You should get your entries in to Roy Gurney by **15<sup>th</sup> September**. Get sorting out those surplus items of tackle and clothing as well as fly-tying materials and tools.

You can download an entry form from the website [www.sussexflydressers.org.uk](http://www.sussexflydressers.org.uk) or get one by ringing Roy on 01273 581519 or e-mail [roygurney33@gmail.com](mailto:roygurney33@gmail.com) .



# JACK THE LAD

by Alan Middleton

Whilst most of the clients we guide and teach on the rivers are of a more mature disposition, we sometimes see the “younger” generation. Obviously, the cost of fishing the premier chalk streams is beyond that of most people; but there are some younger individuals, either by hard work or by inheritance, who can afford to fish these waters.

And so it was a few years ago when I was detailed to fish one of our most exclusive beats. This stretch of water is very privately owned and lightly fished. The deal is for two anglers to be accompanied by a guide on a pristine stretch of the Itchen. The river is not stocked at all. The fish are natural brown trout which usually grow to about 2lb in weight.

We were met by the owner shortly after we arrived and were welcomed into his house. Coffee and shortbread was the order of the day, followed by a talk by the owner on the history of the river and his expectations for the day.

The clients were from London. They arrived in what can only be described as a rocket from Vorsprung durch Technik. A handbrake turn on the gravel driveway announced their arrival. One of the young lads told us where in the world he had fished and it read like a travel brochure. His friend had not fished before but was very enthusiastic. Both were armed with the latest gear, and not cut price items I can tell you. They had spent several hundred pounds on the latest rods, reels and accessories.

After our chat with the owner we set off for the river. The beat was divided into two distinct sections, one being the stream which fed into what had been a mill and the other section was an area of water meadows with lots of carrier and side streams. It was decided that the client would fish the main stream and I would assist his friend on the meadows. The day was pleasant with broken cloud and not much of a breeze. Fishing the water meadows is not for the faint hearted as there are plenty of hazards to contend with - trees, bushes, changes in flow to mention the obvious.

After about two and a half hours we met up back at the car park to exchange notes. The client had not caught a fish but had seen quite a few whilst his friend had not seen a fish all morning; this was disappointing as plenty of fish had seen him! He had managed to scare countless trout in the time we had covered a good portion of the water meadows.

The day included a paid for lunch at the local hostelry so off we set in the pocket rocket. On the way I was informed as to how many hundred horse power were under the bonnet, how many seconds it took to break the speed limit and how few miles it got to the gallon. We arrived at the

pub, just about in one piece, shaken and stirred. Over lunch I was told that the two of them renovated properties in London for celebrities, usually at great expense.

Lunch over, we were back on our way to the fishing. We approached the car park at some ungodly speed where a swirl of gravel was thrown up as we executed a perfect hand brake turn only to drive over the brand new rod one of them had purchased the day before. So now one of them had to use my slightly inferior tackle.

We decided that we would fish together so I could help both of them to catch a fish. Wandering up the bank I noticed a very good trout rising near the opposite bank. As the river was only fifteen feet wide it was well within the range of their limited casting ability. I set one of them to catch this fish explaining were to cast his fly and what to expect. Despite his best efforts he was unable to cover the fish so his friend decided he would have a go. After a few fruitless casts he eventually got the fly in the right place and the fish duly obliged; a perfect head and tail rise. Unfortunately he struck as though it was a 200lb marlin and we missed the fish.

I consoled him and said that, if we had not pricked him, he might come back on to feed if we waited patiently. Sure enough after about 15 minutes there he was again just casually taking flies as they passed him. Once again I issued guidance as to how to catch him. He was close to the far bank and not far from the reeds which lined this stretch of the river. I explained not only to lift the rod when the fish took the fly but to exert side pressure on the fish to keep him away from the reeds.

After another twenty minutes of inconsistent casting we eventually got the fly in the right place and the fish once again obliged. He was so excited that he lifted the rod but did not put any side strain on him. The fish dived into the reeds never to be seen again. He was mortified; I was delighted, not because he had lost the fish but that by following my instructions we had fooled a very good fish. The fly was the right one, the cast was the right one, the strike was the right one, but we did not land the fish.

The afternoon proceeded well with both of them catching a brace of good trout each. They went home delighted having caught fish in difficult circumstances; the owner was delighted as they had not emptied the river of fish. I was delighted as no one had fallen in nor impaled themselves with a fly. The last I saw of them was through a cloud of dust and gravel as they sped out of the car park and back to the sanctuary of the West End of London.

**AM**

## Letter to the Editor

### Wet, wet, wet!

Dear Roy,  
I have just been enjoying your latest news letter – thank you.

Your comment at the end of your Arlington report struck a particular chord and I wonder if it would be useful to recount my experiences:-

**Lesson no.1.** After leaving school I went back packing round Wester Ross with friends, I had a new nylon anorak which had a polyurethane coating on the inside. It was waterproof for a few days, but after a few days of folding and creasing the coating cracked and leaked.

**Lesson No. 2.** In the light of that experience I bought a heavy waxed cotton jacket from an angling mail order company and it **was** waterproof – but not suitable in summer as it was too hot and didn't breathe. A light weight version was cooler but couldn't carry enough wax to keep the water out.

**Lesson 3.** When I took up fly fishing again five years ago I bought a "waterproof" Hoggs Jacket with a DWR coating. After a while water will soak through.

**Lesson 4.** (Now to the positive bit!) After consultation with hiker friends etc. the only fabric in which I have complete confidence is Gore-Tex – if it has taped seams. I bought Army Surplus shell jacket and trousers for about £35 each on ebay. They are pretty basic and not the best fit but they **are** completely waterproof. I would expect that the Simms range of Gore-Tex jackets made specifically for fishing would be the very best and the wrist seals to stop water running down your arms as you cast ought to help - but they come with a hefty price tag!

There are other fabrics out there, but the manufacturers seem to be pretty cagey about the technical description of their offerings - plenty of rhetoric and attractive marketing but no hard facts. Logically if big brand companies like Orvis are making waders out of these materials they *ought* to be durably waterproof, but when I phoned Patagonia's importers in the UK, for example, I could get nowhere with technical specification for their jackets, and the fact that they only have a 12 month warranty does not inspire confidence!

Perhaps other members would like to cite their experiences – for instance, I notice that there is a company called Halkon Hunt in Doncaster which makes what looks to be a high-spec Gore-Tex jacket to order at a good price. Do any club members have first hand experience of them?

Kind regards,

**Richard Thomlinson**

## Chairman's Chat

Another one for the archive. As you see this is a flow measuring weir which has just been refurbished.



The job is to write an Options Report i.e. identify a number of ways of counting fish swimming over this weir and produce estimates and lists of advantages of the various counting systems. Thankfully we do not have to price installing counting facilities.

As I may have said before, there are four systems, namely:

**Resistivity** where the fish forms part of a circuit which registers a count.

**Infra red** which is a number of horizontal beams

**Sonar** i.e. side scanning beams of sound

**Environment Agency system** of movement

censors attached to a video camera

Only the first will work at this site, so job done and I have not even worked out a price for the job yet – don't tell the potential Client.

**Tony W**

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