

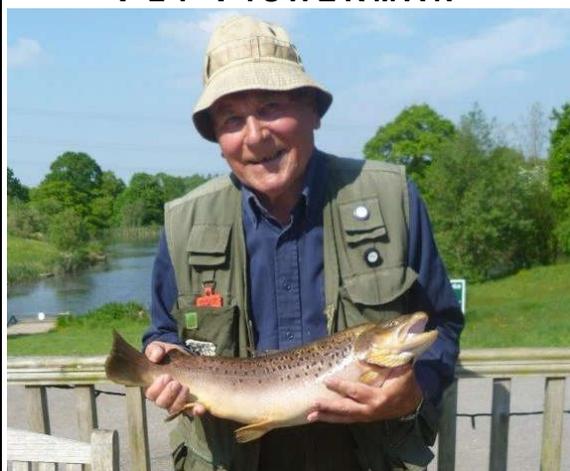


Sussex Branch Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2019

JOHN BURT FLY FISHERMAN



John – Best Brown 2018

With great sadness we announce the passing of **John Burt** after a long battle with cancer, which he endured with great courage and positiveness. John was one of the longest serving members of the Branch and is best remembered for his organisation of the annual dinner for many years as well as his quiet support of all activities of the Branch. John was the quintessential English fly fisherman; never flustered, never hurried. He always seemed to have plenty of time and 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 and on 15th May 2018 caught a 7 lb brown at Brick Farm to take the trophy for last year.

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

The Funeral will be at St Lawrence Church, Falmer Village (by the pond) Friday 15th Feb at 2pm, wake afterwards in the village hall. All are welcome, no dress code.

His family are requesting no flowers and in lieu they have nominated **The Martlets Hospice** as their designated charity.

Moorhen Magic

Back in the back end of the back end, Bill's "cabin fever breaker" came as a welcome break from the overindulgence of Xmas - though Bill would probably say I didn't stop indulging!

Although it's quite a trip from East Sussex, the traffic on a Saturday just before New Year's Eve is pretty light and the weather was much quieter than last year's howling gale and rain at the start. With only one misdirection from the Sat Nav I arrived in plenty of time to be, as Andy Wood said, force fed bacon rolls as part of the great hospitality which is the trade mark of this great little fishery.

Eventually we prised ourselves away from the lodge to commence fishing. Martyn Gray was quick to identify a hotspot in front of the lodge and soon had 3 in the bag whilst I had laboured to one on a Damsel from the opposite end of the lake. It became apparent that the last set of stockies seemed to be podded up here and it was a case of waiting your turn to cast into this area. Although overcast, polarised glasses helped identify follows and though many fish took a variety of flies on the drop, there were also fun bow wave follows as the fish stayed high in the water. In the spirit of the season those who had been lucky gave up places to those yet to catch and some directed casting from vantage points into fishy areas. So by lunch time most had at least one fish and some with three were stalking the margins in pursuit of larger quarry, which unfortunately proved elusive.

Lunch was accompanied by refined conversation about opera and theatre....sorry no.... it was the usual ribald banter about fish won and lost, the need for crotch room in waders and Bill's amazement at how much cake AW had brought with him!

Post lunch, Bill Black and I had some fun prospecting "the deep hole under the tree" which is rather like dangling for sticklebacks on a bigger scale and produced some exciting follows and snatches but no hook-ups.

Meanwhile most had bagged up from the lodge hotspot and as dusk approached I went back there, finding a casting spot kindly vacated by Bill Black. Eventually after some excellent tutelage on the roly-poly retrieve from Messrs

Wood and Smith, my fourth fish totally ignored their advice and took a Humungous on the drop. So ended a great day for me and I think everyone else, so thank you Bill for organising it and to our hosts for their usual hospitality. If you get a chance – possibly on the Chairman's day in milder conditions – to sample the delights of this charming fishery I recommend you grab it.

AW

David Walker

Receives the Albert Horne Memorial trophy from Chairman Tony Woolnough



Alan Wells

Receives the Jonathon Glover trophy from the Chairman



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FLY-TYING COMPETITION

A reminder of this year's patterns

Novice **The Double Badger #10**

Intermediate **The Royal Wulff #10**

Open **Paraloop Olive #14**

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

Chairman's Chat

Well this is unusual, even for me. A fish pass we designed in the Irish Republic which is so big, the locals call it the "Whale Pass"; it is the largest in Europe. The pass is in the form of a number of rock weirs, in all 132 m long with sides up to 5.0 m high. The length is due to the slope of 1:20, i.e. the difference in height of the water at the obstructing weir x 20. The pass has no facilities for adjusting the inflow or fish counting. Our recommended design was for a bottom baffle fish pass with resting pools, a fish counter and a low tilting gate at the upstream end to adjust the water intake as necessary. This option would have been built at a slope of 1:7 plus resting pools, i.e. under 50 m overall. Our design would have been less than half the cost of the "Whale".

The problem was the pass required the approval of Inland Fisheries Ireland and they wanted a rock ramp – it's only public money after all. We warned them that rock ramps are difficult to design both hydraulically and structurally – to no avail.

The lesson is that we don't design passes for fish but for the Approving Authorities.



The Whale Pass, Bandon.

On my next trip to Ireland I think that I had better make sure that I am well disguised !!

Tony W

RETURN OF TROPHIES

Would all holders of **ALL** trophies please return them by 14th 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.

Brass Monkeys

Alan Wells has had some problems with his e-mail server (who hasn't?) and asks if anyone who has **NOT** received details of the above to contact him at wellsywells@btinternet.com and let him know. He will resend and also make sure his e-mail contact list is up-to-date.

Ray's Ramblings

In the late eighties and early nineties there was an invitation-only competition held each year at Dever Springs sponsored by Wilcon Homes, but in 1992 this arrangement changed and anyone could enter the eliminators that were held across the country. I put my name down for the Chalk Springs event held in May and out of the twenty or so anglers managed fourth place and a spot in the final that was being held at Ringstead Grange, a thirty acre fishery near Kettering. The format of the competition for the 72 anglers taking part was that you would fish ten pegs around the lake - five in the morning and five in the afternoon - spending thirty minutes on each peg, and points would be awarded for position in each of the two sessions based on numbers of fish caught, with the lowest overall points winning. I had one good peg in the morning and managed to get nine fish, as well as being broken twice and losing another fish in that thirty minutes, so that by lunchtime I was in first place earning one point.

In the afternoon I fished five different pegs on the opposite side of the lake. Being a catch and release match, things obviously got tougher and it was not helped when, on the third peg, I hooked a fish on a dry fly only for it to come off. I was still blank as I went to the last peg in front of the lodge but my luck changed as I managed to get three fish before the end and this put me in fourth place in the afternoon session and, with a total of five points, top rod overall - well ahead of the next competitor with twenty two points.

The following year, 1993, the competition was sponsored by Airflo and I again fished the heat at Chalk Springs, this time coming third, so qualifying for the final which was being held at Bushyleaze in Gloucestershire. This time six pegs were fished in both the morning and afternoon sessions.

In the morning I caught four fish and lost another two on my first three pegs and ended up in ninth place. In the afternoon I had one good peg and got five fish and lost one to give me a first place but the poor result in the morning meant I could only manage fourth place overall.

That same year I fished a few times at Dever Springs and on one of those days lost the biggest trout I am ever likely to hook. It was a very windy day and although the water was clear, because of the wind it was difficult to spot fish in the big lake, so I went and fished the smaller Spring Lake, where it was more sheltered. I soon caught a rainbow just under 4 lb and a brown of over 4 lb and then looked for something bigger. Two other anglers passed me and enquired whether I had seen "Jumbo". I took this to mean a larger than average fish and had to admit that I had not. However, soon after they had passed on a huge fish appeared and for once I put the fly right in it's path and it sank

just in front of it. I saw the mouth open and close and struck. On feeling the hook the fish then ran the whole length of the lake despite extensive pressure and buried itself in the rushes by the entrance gate and smashed me. I reckon that fish was well over 20lbs and although I took two more rainbows of 11 lb and 9 lb that day and a few weeks later one of over 15 lb I can still clearly remember seeing that huge fish take the fly and the ensuing battle.

RB

Paul Lawrence

Our speaker for December was Paul Lawrence, who ran the clinic at IFish.



He entertained us with some excellent tips and tricks in fly-tying and made light of some of the most exasperating techniques such as weaving bodies.



Coffee Break

SPRING AUCTION

THURSDAY 21st March

Make a note in your diary to bring along all the friends and acquaintances you can to our auction, which includes more items from Brian Raw's estate and many more desirable lots.

Catalogues should be available by the end of February and can be accessed and downloaded from our website www.sussexflydressers.org.uk when ready. Hard copies can be obtained from Roy Gurney at fdgsussex@gmail.com or phone **01273 581519**

Recent Survey

The initial results of the questionnaire recently sent to members have been a little surprising, if not flattering! It seems that overall members are well satisfied with most aspects, though some very helpful suggestions have been made as to how improvements could be made.

The most surprising was the comparatively low standing of "Social Events" in your estimation, and we would appreciate further suggestions how these can be improved. For instance do you want the re-instatement of the annual dinner which was discontinued a few years ago due to lack of interest? Tell us what you really want.

The average score overall was 8.8, but if the score for social events is taken out it rises to 9.0 (so we must be doing something right!) and even that includes 8's for the rod raffle and shows, both of which will be scrutinized closely by the Committee.

Surprisingly, the venue scored 9.8 despite the parking difficulties – we are still looking for an alternative venue, but it is not easy to match what parking we have with central position and cost.

More details will be published in later newsletters, after detailed consideration of points raised by the committee.

DEMONSTRATIONS AT SHOWS, ETC

One of the slight surprises from the answers to the questionnaire was the suggestion we might do more shows (although another was to do less!) when we seem to have difficulty in raising enough volunteers to man the stands. It may be that members are under the impression that high standards of tying ability are required – that is absolutely not the case! What is required is an ability to show what you can do to members of the public who can't!

Our flagship event is the South of England Show on 6th/7th/8th June when we need four volunteers on each of the three days – the Thursday, Friday and Saturday. For this, you get free entry to the Show (the ticket price is about £20!), lots of time free to do the rounds of the Show and the opportunity to meet interesting people visiting the stand (which is alongside the Salmon & Trout stand with coaching available to improve your casting!). Help with erecting the stand on the preceding Wednesday and its dismantling after is also needed. Please register your interest with Tony Woolnough or Roy Gurney in the first instance – Tony has for many years done all the hard work in organizing, but is now having to hand over to someone else due to other heavy commitments.

For other shows we will endeavour to appoint an organiser as necessary and details will be in subsequent newsletters – watch this space!

Branch Equipment

The Branch has several items of clothing, caps, "beanies", etc available for sale, emblazoned with our logo. If your size is not in stock, we can usually get them within a couple of weeks – prices will have to be confirmed for new items as we have to rely on our supplier getting the best deal possible from their wholesaler.

We can also obtain Guild items such as binders for "Flydresser" and the Peter Gathercole books. **David Painter** is our Equipment Officer and will display some of our stock on tying nights, and the catalogue of items will be updated shortly.



SPEAKER – 7th FEBRUARY IAN MACKENZIE

Ian makes a welcome return to demonstrate his latest twist on fly-tying and relative matters. Ian is the ex-CEO of Fulling Mill and is now a regular on the fly-tying circuit

2019 FISHING PROGRAMME

the programme lovingly produced by Alan Wells is attached/enclosed, together with application forms to be completed and sent as soon as possible to the organisers involved..

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