



WEST WILTS FLYFISHERS GUILD



Members of the Wild Trout Trust

Website: <http://wwffg.t15.org/>

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

Guild Meeting November 13th

The BART Presentation

Ian Mock kindly and quietly gave us his presentation on BART (the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust) and enlightened us as to what this fishing-lead organisation is attempting to do. Ian is the Chairman of BART. I had this strong compunction to call him Lionel for some strange reason? Set up on a full charity basis, it is a donation-only concern. Pay him (the organisation) his petrol money and he undertakes to come out to the waterfront to see any perceived problem affecting our fishing. EA grants are secured where possible to carry out remedial work to help improve waters [working with

land-owners; water quality monitoring; fencing off cattle access to rivers and the like]. But 'Times is 'ard!' and the EA are facing budget cuts in both staff and project expenditure. So where does that leave us; we fishermen. The writing is on the wall [*Banksy*]. What ? You want me to draw you a picture. The River Frome comes in the Bristol Avon catchment, so the formation of BART some 18 months ago is vitally important to the Guild. Especially as UK River Trusts (like BART) will be key players in the Environment Agency's newly emerging strategy - to meet the EU Water Framework Directive 2015 targets and beyond. All in all, ensuring 'good ecological status' of our rivers.

BART is establishing local 'BART Beacons' to be the eyes and ears of a particular river or stretch of water, and is working in collaboration with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust to run river invertebrate monitoring courses. Water quality, the success of invertebrate life and colonisation being obvious indicators of river health. The recording and registration of these results, over time, will become increasingly important and vital to securing sound evidence of any deterioration in our rivers.

Already there is a 'Friends of the Somerset Frome Trust'. Among these - landowners, fishermen, dog-walkers, runners, Nature enthusiasts - all of whom are being encouraged to give steady feed-back and observation of their local area. 'We are in precious need of allies'; 'friends' looking after our rivers, said Ian. BART are aiming soon to start a project on the Wellow and Cam. They hope to get Lottery money to help to do it. But in the final analysis, if we care about our rivers, all this has to be a self-help enterprise. It is to **all** our mutual benefit if we want clean rivers. We have to get involved. Even if we are unable to help physically, we can be the BART's 'eyes and ears'! I feel a cartoon developing.....

Blagdon Bill

LOOKING AHEAD..... No Meeting or Newsletter in December.

Wednesday January 8th 2014 - Guild Meeting - Our Popular Annual Very Fishy **Quiz Night** with Richard and John.

AGM - Wednesday February 12th 2014

Sunday February 23rd 2014 - Bank Clearing (Bank Management) on the River Frome. Meet Roger and Jim at 9:00am at Tellisford Bridge.

FLY TYING....We are booked in at the Shaw Hotel for the last three Thursdays in January ie. 16th, 23rd & 30th Jan 2014.

The Flytying Forum, this is both for Members with very little knowledge and those who enjoy tying and who can share their techniques. Among others, 'flytyer extraordinaire' Andy Greatwood will be on hand to help and encourage. All materials will be supplied.

(If you have a tying vice please bring it along).

There will be a small fee of £1 pp to cover room hire.

There is nothing more exciting and which gives a greater sense of achievement, than to catch a fish on your very own home-made fly!

All interested Members please register with Jon Jonik - ifjonik@gmail.com



SKITTLES EVENING

The Guild's Skittles Evening was held on October 11th, at the usual venue - the White Hart, Atworth. Whilst the attendance was down on previous years, the 12 or so who did turn up had a very enjoyable and relaxed evening, especially as the hard work of 'putter-uppering' was carried out by young Tabby from the pub.

The pub grub was great, and some of us even managed two helpings!

The bottles of wine for 'top man' and 'top lady' were won by the dynamic duo of Jon Jonik and Sarah Wilson, and a large box of sweets for the 'top team' was generously passed around the room.

Malcolm

Rivers Meeting Thursday 7th November 7.30pm Shaw Hotel

Nine members attended, so our discussion was able to draw on considerable Guild expertise which included the stocking practices of other fisheries.

The Mole & Yeo: -

This year nine members had fished 10 days and caught 30 fish. This was down on 2012 probably due to the low water not encouraging those seeking seatrout or salmon.

The West Country Rivers Trust (WCRT) has responded to the Guild's request for finance to carry out bank management work including fencing repairs. A site visit to the Mole with Malcolm was done on Wed 20th November. Members were thanked for their bank management work earlier in the year and 2014 sessions are arranged.

The River Frome -

Five members had made a total of 13 visits catching 12 brown trout- though that did include some superb 13"/14" specimens and 19 coarse fish (on fly).

Disappointingly and worryingly none of the 300 stock fish were caught. One member coarse-fished on three occasions catching 22 fish (inc 14 chub) and four brown trout.

The Environment Agency carried out their triennial electro-fishing of the 70 Metre stretch upstream from Pomeroy Wood bend on 13th September. The meeting discussed the possible reasons for the lack of any of our 2013 stocking in the returns. Whilst the river had been low and fishable for most of the year (unlike in 2012) there had been a fairly heavy rainfall a few days after stocking, resulting in a significant rise in the river level and heavy sediment colouration so the stock fish may have been overwhelmed. It was pointed out that the Frome is classed as a mixed fishery.

The bank management day Feb 24th 2013 had been very well supported, with 11 members helping and major improvements being carried out. The aim of the 2014 bank clearing day, will be to complete the work recommended by Richard Cripps on his site visit in February.

The meeting discussed at some length the factors which may have impacted on our 2013 stocking - pollution, flood, otters, mink, poachers ? Who knows? There are as many opinions as there are anglers.

It was agreed to recommend to the Committee at the November meeting that as a 'pilot' we should stock rainbow trout around 11"/12", spread over multiple stockings (in co-ordination with Fullingbridge) as the fish are likely to be more resilient and this would encourage more members to fish.

It was agreed to continue using the Anglers Return in 2014 for all Guild waters.

The Environment Agency is being re-structured, its role changing to that of managing a network of Catchment Partners and co-ordinating plans to improve rivers in their areas. A series of consultation meetings is being held, Malcolm Bond is chairing the Avon catchment (River Frome) meeting in Taunton on Sat 23rd November. The date and venue of the Devon and Cornwall (Mole/Yeo) meeting has yet to be arranged.

As part of monitoring the water quality on The Frome to get evidence for future reference, it was agreed that the Guild should be involved in The Wiltshire Wild Life Trust's River Monitoring Scheme and take advantage of the training they offer.

Roger



DEVON RIVERS REPORT from Derrick Jones

Dry! According to my diary we had a couple of spates as the season started in the middle of March until the beginning of April and no more until the season ended. The fishing slowly deteriorated as the rivers got smaller, lower and slower. By the middle of May we were hearing reports of diseased fish in the lower Taw catchment and some other north Devon Rivers - attributed to the unusually cold late spring and low flows. With the odd glorious exception, the trout fishing I experienced was rather slow, the river bed coated in horrible brown algae and the fish seemingly congregating in the heads of pools. I had some decent night time sea trout fishing in the lower rivers and of course a few sea trout (and salmon) crept up into the upper reaches, but were largely stale by the time they arrived.

The season closed at the end of September and perhaps predictably by October the 3rd, the river Mole was in raging spate and has been as such more or less ever since. Good news for all of those fish queuing up in the estuary and for future progenies I hope. My completely unscientific survey suggests that the seal population did well out of the fine weather and seal sightings made well up river, were reported in the local press. The rivers have been too high and coloured to get out and about yet to see what is going on, it seems to be turning drier here at last and I will hopefully be able to get out on the rivers and see some fish getting ready to spawn.

So another fantastic Iceland adventure saved my trout season this year, let's all hope for a better domestic season in 2014!

Guild Day, Grayling Fishing the Wylie

November the 10th started with a fine weather forecast, which appeared to be spot on for a change. All the gear stowed in the car the night before, two rounds of poached eggs on toast stowed in the tummy and it was off to pick up my fishing partner Maurice. With Maurice duly loaded and on board, it was follow the Tom-tom to Eastleigh Lane to meet up with our guide Richard Cripps. Slightly miscalculating the arrival time we were well in advance, so Maurice, a very keen country life man, thought it would be nice to have half a hour of "The Archers". He was concerned about Dan, and apparently Meg has had mastitis but is back to five litres a day. We were relieved.

Richard arrived and joined us in the car to advise us on what, how and where to fish, always good to take on board what Richard has to say. The ten o'clock pips on the radio - yet we were still the only fishermen there. We decided to give any latecomers a few more minutes, but close on ten past ten, it was time to 'grab a grayling'. Richard took us to where we could park to

enable us to fish the upper and lower Eastleigh beats (I think I am right), marvellous - we had the whole stretch to ourselves. Richard gave us more expert advice, where to go and how to get there he then bid us farewell and we were on our own. We decided to fish the lower beat in the morning, stop for a bite to eat, then fish the top beat after lunch.



What a superb day for both of us, catching 10 to 12 inch grayling - three or four each, two or three very fine looking browns, one of which Maurice caught was around two and a half pounds - a fine cock fish (see photo), all duly returned. Our decision was to fish upstream nymphs of various types, Gold head GRHE, Red beaded Diawl Bach and a few others, I was fishing an amateurish 'French leader' fashion and Maurice something similar, the fish were lying in deepish pools some no bigger than a table top but they held fish and we caught, so all in all a super day, super weather, good company and well worth it, thank you Richard.

Gerry T. & Maurice



e-mail from America:

An Angler who lives at Lake Conroe (50 miles north of Houston) saw a ball bouncing around strangely in the lake and went to investigate. It turned out to be a flathead catfish that had apparently tried to swallow a basketball which became stuck in its mouth!!

The fish was totally exhausted from trying to dive, but unable to, because the ball would always bring him back up to the surface.

The Angler tried numerous times to get the ball out, and eventually managed to deflate it and thus release the hungry Catfish! See picture overleaf....,



(The January Fly-Tyers please take note!)

What did the policeman say to the Parrot ? You're nicked!!

A police officer is celebrating after he caught the biggest freshwater fish in British waters, but only after he spent 10 minutes reeling it in.

Constable Matt Bryant was on a two day angling break when he hooked the carp, which is nicknamed 'The Parrot'.

It is the biggest freshwater fish in the country, tipping the scales at 62lbs 4oz - or about four-and-a-half stone.

The 25-year-old has spent nine years trying to land the common carp which was given its nickname because of its narrow mouth, which resembles a bird's beak.



He caught 'The Parrot' at the Wasing Estate Fishery in Berkshire, which has a 10-year waiting list for anglers due to the size of its coarse fish. Mr Bryant, from Winnersh, Berkshire, said: 'There aren't many lakes in Britain that have 60lbs carp. 'I caught the Parrot at 1.30am in the morning. I knew it was a fairly big fish but it only took me ten minutes to net it'. Mr Bryant called the lake bailiff who came out to witness the weigh-in . 'He asked if I wanted a beer afterwards but it was 2am so I thought it best just to have a cup of tea.' 'The Parrot' has been tipped to go on and set the record for Britain's biggest freshwater fish of all time. That achievement is currently held by a mirror carp called 'Two Tone' that died in 2010. Its record weight was 67lbs 14ozs.

(Although catfish are generally bigger than carp they are not indigenous to Britain and don't count as a British record). *Daily Mail*



The WWFFG Committee wishes Members and their Families

A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a Healthy and Peaceful NEW YEAR !

Happy Fishing and Tight Lines for 2014 !.....BOB.

