

## THE WEST WILTS FLYFISHERS GUILD



# WWFFG



Members of the Wild Trout Trust

Website: [westwiltsflyfishersguild.com](http://westwiltsflyfishersguild.com)

## **NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER**

November Guild Meeting

***Winterbournes - Away from the mainstream***

**A presentation by Mitch Perkins** Environment Agency.

With a degree in Zoology, a wealth of knowledge and passion for her work, Mitch gave us an insight into a fascinating subject. She told us not only how and why winterbournes exist but the unique and varied habitat they provide for a diverse and often rare range of wildlife including cave shrimp (*Niphargus*), rare beetles - *Agabus guttatus* & *Hydroporus marginatus* and Winterbourne Specialists such as the scarce purple dun (*Paraleptophlebia wernerii*) and a caddis species which can survive in dry conditions!

Two of Mitch's PowerPoint slides are reproduced below to remind members of some of the key points of her talk and photos of Winterbournes as we may see them at different times of the year:

## What are Winterbournes?

- WINTERbournes typically flow between late autumn and early summer
- Intermittent headwaters of chalk streams
- Home to a range of specialist plants & animals
- Seasonal habitat for other chalk stream species



## What makes a winterbourne?

- Flow depends upon geology and rainfall

**AQUIFER**  
Groundwater fills the spaces between soil particles and fractured rock underground.

Our winterbournes are, like most water courses, under great pressure...



Mitch concluded her talk with a plea - "Please spread the word about the importance of reducing water consumption to protect all aquatic environments...especially winterbournes!"

There was no charge for Mitch's talk so The Guild has made a donation to [WaterAid](#) at Mitch's suggestion. This charity provides clean drinking water to 34 Countries across the World.

To find out more see <https://www.wateraid.org/uk/>

*Roger*

----OoOoOoOoO----

### AVON SPRINGS QUALITY

We had set out, with good intention, to go to Manningford, but missed, or rather took the wrong turning. Chirton I believe. Nothing new there then! Amidst all the back-tracking and ensuing conversation, we decided under the circumstances it might be far better to continue along the Devizes/Amesbury road and settle for fishing Avon Springs! Obviously a bit further on than we had planned. But a favoured fishery, and one we had not visited for a heck of a while.

And so it proved. Despite being expensive at £40 for a three fish ticket. The fishing was not 'hook a duck'-type easy (as my son's father-in-law Arthur liked to aptly suggest) and we found we had to fish hard for any initial reaction from its residents. It was as John Gierach suggested, 'still just hard enough to tell yourself you sort of had to know what you were doing. In conditions miserable enough to make you feel like you deserved every fish for just having the guts to stay out there'. An awkward wind

was still present, following a night of storm and high winds, and we felt we earned each fish that (Thank God) eventually came along.

Lengthy periods of 'no-play' punctuated the quest for our unseen quarry. The water was its usual gin-clear quality. Despite the initial assurance from 'Young effing Barry' (when booking in at the shed), and the lake's clarity, we saw relatively few, re-assuring, fish in the margins. The sighting of such impressive specimens drifting past you does 'concentrate the mind' at the time, and heightens the enthusiasm immeasurably, should this be at a low ebb. We needed that lift.

To cut to the chase, Rob took a day-winning, silver rainbow of 6lb.11oz. (which he had seen in the corner margins of the lower lake, and targeted) on a small, green flash-back hares ear; whilst I got a decent final fish of just under 5lb. Again a rainbow. I say this, because of course, there are also some big browns in the water - as quite a few of our members can proudly testify, since they have contacted some very large browns during our past club visits. All my fish took a small green-eyed damsel nymph [tiny plastic eyes; not a goldhead]. I used this all the time, both on the lake nearest the booking-in shed and the top-lake. Pleased to say we both landed three fish and thoroughly enjoyed our mid-September day there. As mentioned, the owner 'Young Barry' [his father was also Barry] greeted us there, with genuine signs of friendship, - in between the adjectives! And indeed it was kind of nice to meet him again after so long.

The water quality, bordering the Avon there, is so clear that there was a very odd 'apparition' in the top lake worth mentioning. Casting to the far side, I could plainly see my damsel nymph coming round in an arc, I guess a foot or two beneath the surface. A steady figure-of-eight retrieve. A little mesmerised by this, and despite the ripple action caused by a stiff breeze, quite suddenly from the background I noticed a huge (in fact **monstrous**) straggly spider-like creature chasing and rapidly nearing my fly. Like a giant squid I suppose in full flight, to describe its horror and intent. I felt an instant sharp pull as it engulfed my hapless fly. The line tightened and lo! After a spirited tussle a 3oz. perch came to hand! A tight 'tarantula-shaped' shoal of small perch hunting in a pack, pursuing my damsel morsel! Looking all the world like a combined beast from Hell. ...Should have gone to SpecSavers? ..another Perch chase required perhaps? We'll see.

Those old fishermen! I can hear the reader thinking. They're slow-moving, **delusioned**, crabby and some of them even talk to themselves! But old

fishermen can catch trout. I've been studying to become one of them for a long time now, and there are those who'll tell you I've (already) made it?..... In Gierach's own view, and talking about himself, 'I may not always catch a lot of fish, but just last month I was accused of talking to myself. I said we all talk to ourselves, - we just don't all move our lips. Anyway, I may be making progress, but I think I have a good decade to go before I'm a bona fide old fart'.

But back to the fishing, the focus of our attention. Something that resonates from his pen and is offered wisdom to us all is the whole reason behind why we care to go fishing at all. Like our moment at Avon Springs, maybe it was one of those days when we'd gone fishing just to make sure it all still worked; and it did. Sometimes that's all it's about. As an aside to this, however; deeper and far larger in importance than a small-print addendum, he suggests **the first thing** you learn is, no matter how hard you fish, you can't catch them all. **The second thing** you learn is, you'll be a lot happier if your definition of good fishing depends more on poetry than body counts. My Amen to that.

I wish you all good fishing, and in the words of an old admired Irish blessing 'May the fish you catch be never smaller than the holes in your net'. Good luck to you all out there.

*Courteney Fish*



The photos show Courteney Fish enjoying the fishing with the late John Sturgess (well, it's not ALL fishing, a bit of grub and the Kelly Kettle too!) And a view of the Hampshire River Avon at Avon Springs. **I would like to Thank Courteney for his entertaining writings over the years.** He has made my editing task a lot easier!



## Rivers Meeting Thurs 2nd Nov 2017



### River Mole/Yeo:

**Returns 2017** - 5 members sent in angler returns. 30+ Brown Trout and 3 Sea Trout.

**Habitat improvement** - carried out on the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March, continuing the work carried out on The Yeo at Bish Mill in 2016. It is planned to continue this work in 2018.

**Rental review** - further to dialogue with members at the Sept and Oct Guild meetings, an in-depth discussion took place to plan the best way forward for The Guild's future relationship with The Mole & Yeo. It is felt the rental of approx. £1,000 per annum, in total, cannot be justified given the small number of members who fish.

A range of options were considered to provide members with the opportunity to continue to fish the Mole, bearing in mind how few have done so over recent years. The lease renewal is due at the beginning of February 2018. Jon and Malcolm have developed a list of potentially interested individual anglers and angling associations in the South Molton area over recent months to look at joint funding and access options. Jon and Malcolm were thanked for their work and initiative on this on behalf of members.

It was agreed we should renew the lease for another year but in conjunction with others, to reduce the cost to WWFFG.

Members would be asked their views at the Nov Guild meeting.

*Post meeting note* - at our November meeting the above plan of action was agreed.

### River Frome

**Returns 2017** - six members submitted angler returns making 14 fly-fishing visits catching 2 brown trout (up to 14"), 11 rainbows, 11 chub and 2 perch - all on fly.

**Habitat improvement** - in response to members requests for improved access significant work was carried out in The Spring, all of which have been publicised to members as and when they were done - handrails and steps at 5 key points on beats 1 to 9 (Pomeroy), barbed wire sheathing, bank and soft growth clearing on three occasions in The Summer.

**Invertebrate and Water Quality Monitoring** - this continued throughout the year with good numbers of caddis, mayfly and olives indicating a good ecosystem and plenty of fish food. Gammarus etc also found.

Testing for phosphates and nitrates - phosphates are at very low levels but nitrates are at high levels and reported to the Environment Agency and BART for follow-up.

Thanks to John Sheppard for leading on this for the Guild and feeding the data into the Environment Agency's national database. This monitoring gives a crucial insight into the health of The Frome.

### **Planning for 2018:-**

**Bank clearing** - Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February to clear debris & rubbish deposited by flooding and remove trip hazards.

Further access improvements such as hand-posts at Pomeroy Wood

**Stocking in 2018** - two stockings of 150 10"/12" rainbows - July and August subject to weather and river conditions. Approx. cost £675 for the two stockings.

**Proposed coarse fishing rule change** - it was agreed that to encourage young anglers, members should be asked at the November meeting to agree a rule change so that youngsters under the supervision of a rivers member should be permitted to fish the currently 'fly-only' stretch from the Packhorse Bridge to The Flume when the coarse season overlaps with the fly season. Ease of access to the river and closeness to parking will make it easy for members to take young anglers coarse fishing. Coarse / Rivers members themselves would not be granted this permission.

*Post meeting note* - members agreed to this rule change at the November meeting. It will be formally voted on at the AGM at our February 2018 meeting.

### **Note for your 2018 diaries -**

**Next year's Rivers Meeting will be on Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.**



On fishing line.....



THE BAD NEWS.....

Scale of 'nitrate time bomb' revealed -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-41945650>

THE GOOD NEWS.....

Here is a site that gives you 21 sensible tips to improve your fly-fishing  
[http://flyandlure.org/articles/fly\\_fishing/21\\_tips\\_to\\_improve\\_your\\_still\\_water\\_fly\\_fishing](http://flyandlure.org/articles/fly_fishing/21_tips_to_improve_your_still_water_fly_fishing)

**The Guilds Christmas Hamper Competition** this year was held at 'Manningford Trout Fishery' on 3rd December 2017



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

The heaviest bag and winner of the Superb Christmas Hamper was Jon Jonik who had a three fish bag totalling 13lbs 13ozs.

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - The Heaviest Trout of 4lbs 11ozs. was caught by Gerry Barnes who wins a good bottle of 'fishing plonk'.

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - David Griffiths - 9lbs 12ozs wins a box of crackers.



*Presentation of the Christmas Hamper*



*Guild Competitors*

*Second Prize*

## A MORNINGS FISHING AT MERE

Our Senior Guild Member William Arney was invited by Colin to accompany us on a mornings fishing at Wood Stock Trout Fishery at Mere. We picked William up at 8:30am, he was on sparkling form regaling us with 'Fishy Tales' us as we drove through thick fog. The weather forecast said it would disperse quickly during the morning - but of course it didn't. On arrival we were the only ones there, so we had the lake to ourselves. After tackling up and tying a green Montana to Williams's line we set off around the mere.

As per usual we found the fishing hard going. Well some learned authors say you would be wasting your time fishing in fog. I could just about make the outline of William who was fishing next to me when I heard a huge splash. A few expletives came to the surface and I thought William had fallen in off the slippery bank. Thankfully he hadn't, just a huge Brownie breaking the surface near him!

Presently, the three of us caught our first fish of the two fish ticket (£30) and decided to have an early lunch back at the fishing lodge. We had hot soup and sandwiches (I did like the look of Williams Cornish Pasty) while he kept us entertained with stories of his salmon fishing adventures in Victoria Island, Canada. After quite a while sitting in the warmth of the lodge we decided to try for our second fish. William caught his two Rainbows as did Colin and I. Nice looking, hard fighting fish to over 4lbs. including a very silvery flanked Blue Trout on a 'peacock daddy' being retrieved across the surface with a brisk 'figure of eight' action. The fog never left us but we had a great days fishing and enjoyed. Great Company to boot!



*William striking into a nice four pound Rainbow*

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November saw a welcome return to the WWFFG 'Ladies Night', in all but name.

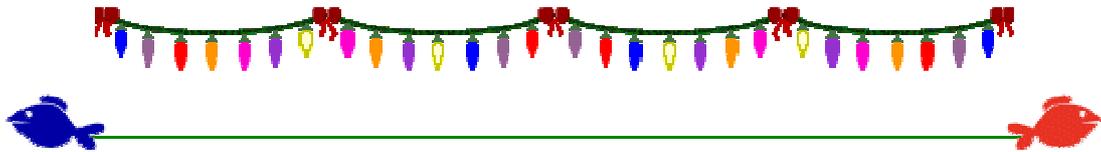
The Shaw Hotel dining room looked its festive best, really decked out with a Gala Christmas theme, for which Thanks go to Sarah for making it look so special and welcoming. Thank you too for our individual Ladies gifts and beautifully decorated tables.

The Photo Competition was fun and a close run event.

The Dinner was very good, the Table Quiz was won by 1 point.

Gerry's 'Grand Table Raffle' was Great as always.

All in all a Super evening to start the Christmas Season.



The Winner of the **Photographic Competition** is Robert Eadie  
2<sup>nd</sup> place Jon Jonik  
3<sup>rd</sup> place Me again!



*'Stourhead on a Summer's Day' taken from the Grotto.*



THE GRAND RAFFLE WINNERS drawn at the Guild Dinner

1<sup>st</sup> prize - £100 Fishing Voucher to Tim Pullen

2<sup>nd</sup> prize - £50 " " to Jon Jonik

3<sup>rd</sup> prize - £25 " " to John De Cesare

### **Why not have a go at helping to run our Guild?**

We are still short of TWO Committee members - currently it is just Alan Kerr and Roger Henderson. As we had no volunteers to take on the role of Treasurer Jon stepped into the breach when Stephen Keys stepped down and Jon also acts as Chairman. So we are very short-handed. The Constitution says the Committee should consist of: 'Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and 4th Committee Member'.

**If you would be willing to give a few hours to help organise the Guild please let Jon Jonik know - email [jfjonik@gmail.com](mailto:jfjonik@gmail.com) or Tel 01380871919.**

### **LOOKING FORWARD.....**

No Guild Meeting in December.

**NEXT MEETING** at the Shaw Hotel is **Wednesday January 10<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Instead of the annual January Quiz Night the Committee has decided to promote our fly-tying evenings to 2 sessions which will be held within the **January and February Guild Meetings.**

**Ray Buckley-Humphries** and **Andy Greatwood** will be on hand to guide us into the 'art of flytying'. Ray has mentioned that he will start by showing how to attach a foam body to the Daddy-long-legs fly, which fly-tyers know can be rather tricky! Worth learning because this fly is a 'killer'.

Andy will have a separate table in the room for beginners. Do come along, even if you don't have tying gear. There is always a spare vice, hooks, feathers and tying materials to be had.

Nothing more satisfying than catching a fish on your own tying!



*I have been editing the Newsletter since 2001 and at last have decided to hang up 'my fishtails' and hand over to one of our Members to have a go! Hope you have enjoyed the read over the years!*



**The Guild President, Vice Presidents and Committee would like to wish You and Family a Happy Christmas and a Healthy, Happy New Year!**

## HAPPY CHRISTMAS....BOB

PS. Nothing to do with fishing - I bet one or two of you have been watching 'Strictly Come Dancing' on the telly.



'Don't tell me, let me guess - you've been watching Debbie McGee on Strictly Come Dancing.'

INNER PEACE.....

I am passing this on to you because it definitely worked for me today and we all could probably use more calm in our lives.

Some doctor on TV this morning said the way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you have started.

So I looked around my house to see things I'd started and hadn't finished -

I have managed to finish off a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Baileys, a bottle of wum, a package of Prungles, the remainder of both Prozac and Valiuminun scriptins, the rest of the chesescke and a box of chocolates. You have no idea how bloody fabulous I feel right now. Please send this ornament to the person you are in need of inner peace.. And tell me how you are!!

