

WEST WILTS FLYFISHERS GUILD



Members of the Wild Trout Trust

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

MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER

Next Guild Meeting - April 8th 2015

We shall be holding a Members Open Forum chaired by Colin.

Guild Meeting 11th March

CHEW & BLAGDON CALLING -THE HANG IS IMPORTANT

black, black, BLACK... and then think what other hue or type of fly you may choose to try - as long as it's **black!** So we took Martin Cottis at his word, and on Saturday 14 March at Chew Reservoir I tied on a home-tied silver bead-head nymph - **BLACK** of course, though it did have an orange thorax - and tried this in a chilly breeze behind Denny Island, from the boat. This as a point fly is an absolutely vital position, to try to get right, for any closely following trout of course. On the one dropper used, a Cormorant was selected (black wing by definition) and this was also to have its moments.

'**Early Season fishing on Chew and Blagdon Lakes**' of course was the subject our guest speaker, Martin Cottis, spoke on during our WWFFG meeting on Wed. 11 March. He gave a lot of interesting tips about early season fishing, including essential recommendations on the (above) flies to be used. Almost in the same breath, he revealed that he does not start his own fishing on Chew and Blagdon until mid-April!! But he knows a man, or three, that does? And gets accurate feed-back. This aside, his talk was lively, very knowledgeable, comprehensive, and truly valuable to us all. Unarguably an expert in his field. Though admittedly his field is a lake??

All in all, his good advice worked. On 14 March, a limit bag came to the net. And then subsequently, on 17th March, the actual tyer of the same point fly mentioned above -

Rob Eadie - ventured out in this favoured area to try his own luck. From the boat we tried the golden, almost Autumn-coloured stretch of reeds between Hollow Brook and the Picnic Area. Rob, with his usual expertise and skill, contacted several fish before suggesting that we literally turn the boat round on its axis and fish hard in towards the reed stems with the breeze in our face. When I say close in, I mean we were dropping our flies within a foot or two of the stems entering the water. Both using our accustomed floating fly lines and fluorocarbon leaders, maybe 10 to 14ft. in length. Well, no heroics to report, but we unlocked a perimeter 'hidey-hole' or two, and were suddenly into a lot more fish, and had great sport. The warm sun on our backs. In truth, and in case of censure, we returned home with 6 rainbows only; Rob had two fish, and I took four for the table. But all good fish. A few of these weighed well over 3lb.... the best maybe a shade off 4lb.

The one enduring reflection was that it was great to be back on Chew's marvelous waters again. A brand new season ahead, in prospect, also that our success was certainly not automatic - we had to forage hard before we hit a seam. And then, as a tip perhaps, we found that many fish were following the fly close in to the boat, and by hanging the point fly, and Cormorants [red, and silver bodies both worked] mounted on the dropper, we were able to pick up a few that would otherwise have sheared off and remained entirely unsighted.

Courteney

Bank Management report at Tellisford on Sunday 22nd February 2015

The threat of early heavy rain had understandably put members off this year, plus, unfortunate injuries and other commitments meant that we were down to just three. Nevertheless we managed to make our mark on five of the priorities:

- Removing the tree blocking the footpath along the river down to Pomeroy Wood.
- Coppicing on beats 10 and 11 to let sunlight into the river to encourage weed growth
- Clearing the footpath on beat 11 of the forest of 4' high dead nettles down to the flume.
- Removing over-arching branches on beat 11 to help with back casts
- Removing trip hazards on beat 11

The rain arrived as promised late morning just as we finished the sections we were working on. We weren't sorry - two and a half hours was quite enough!

We'll need to tackle the new growth in the spring otherwise the footpath will be chest high in nettles by July. If you have a petrol or cordless strimmer and can help with that, it would greatly appreciated. Particular thanks to Andy and Jon for coming down on Sunday.

Roger River Frome Keeper



Members won't have to limbo under this obstacle again in 2015.



Brush-cutting last year's nettles so soft new growth can be strimmed in the summer.

OoOoOoOoOoO

Just in case you missed this amazing picture.....



'Ferocious as a lion'

Wildlife expert Lucy Cooke told the BBC News Channel: "This is a truly extraordinary image.

"The green woodpecker is a ground-feeding bird, but weasels normally attack rabbits. The woodpecker is not its usual prey. But weasels are fearless". "A female weasel weighs less than a Mars Bar but is as ferocious as a lion, so this is why the woodpecker would have been able to take off with it on its back."

There's something nasty in the water

Autumnwatch on BBC2 in October 2014 presented a very worrying picture of how our penchant for pill-popping is having a devastating effect on wildlife. The chemicals we're taking, pass through our bodies largely unchanged and inevitably end up in rivers. Studies so far have been on just a few species but scientists think the adverse effects found are very much more widespread.

Some of the examples given in the programme:



In 2004 a study found a third of male fish had developed female characteristics. *Oestrogen* in the pill was blamed. A quarter of the female population between the ages of 16 and 49 take the pill.



Otters ingesting Anti-inflammatories such as *Ibuprofen* are suffering severe liver damage. Humans would have to dramatically overuse *ibuprofen* to suffer similar damage. Traces of painkillers are found in tap water and according to the programme we would have to drink

about 5 million gallons to cure a headache. Wildlife is much more sensitive and as little as 1 nanogram per litre - the equivalent of a few grains in an Olympic sized swimming pool is sufficient to harm them.



Prozac makes crayfish more aggressive - resulting in females being killed.

Perch ingesting the anxiety treatment *Oxazepam* are emboldened, and leave the shoal searching for food and predators snap them up.

The popular anti-depressant *Zoloft* in the same concentrations as those found in the wild gives normally shy 'fathead minnows' the confidence to come out of hiding where they too fall prey to predators.



The British Trust for Ornithology says that starling numbers have fallen by 60% since 1980's and the RSPB now classes starlings as "a bird of high conservation concern". Starlings exposed to *Oestrogen* grow more slowly and have weak immune

systems (Journal of Applied Ecology).

Starlings are also ingesting *Fluoxetine* when they eat earthworms near sewage treatment plants. In studies starlings showed the same effects as humans do taking *Prozac* - loss of appetite and this means the birds do not survive long winter nights. *Fluoxetine* also causes female starlings to lose interest in breeding.

1 in 6 of the UK population is taking antidepressants.

The question is - what can we do about it?

RH

An old adage....

"Remember that the Wit and Invention of mankind were bestowed for other purposes than to deceive silly fish; and that however delightful Angling may be, it ceases to be innocent when used other than as a mere recreation."

Richard Brookes, 1766

FLIES IN FOCUS

Attractor Dry Fly and Nymph

When you have no idea what the fish are eating and you want to cover a lot of water, try this rig. Use an large attractor-pattern dry fly (a Klinkhammer is a good one to use in the main, but some have had brilliant success at local lakes using a Muddler) with a real attractor nymph — such as a GRHE on a dropper. You can present with two options of flies. The dry fly acts as a strike-indicator for the nymph - in that this system allows you to fish the nymph at a very specific depth- you can then vary the depth of the nymph..



Royal Wulff



The Royal Wulff is one of those great attractor fly patterns, not imitating a specific fly in nature. It is just a great fish catcher. The place to fish this fly is often considered to be in rougher river waters, but actually it is fine on stillwaters too for both trout and grayling.





Now is the start of the big black buzzer on Chew!

Possibly the most underestimated flies in the fly angler's armoury are the humble Trout buzzer flies. The buzzer imitates a midge in its nymph stage ready to emerge into an adult midge. Starting life in muddy water as a bloodworm or chironomidae which is blood red in colour, changing into the midge as an adult. When ready to emerge into a midge it ascends to the surface of the water. This is when we use a Trout buzzer to imitate this stage of the midge's life. Using small Trout buzzers does work - as a natural buzzer pupa can be just a few millimetres long. Believe it or not these little buzzers maybe just 5 to 8 mm long, can account for huge trout, the reason is simply - they think they are eating something natural !

WWFFG Insurance Cover.

The Committee has had occasion to examine the Guild's insurance cover. It has become apparent that those aged under 7 years and those aged over 70 **are not covered** for personal accidents whilst participating in Guild activities which may result in death, loss of limbs/sight or total or temporary disablement.

Furthermore, people who are not in employment **are not covered** under the Temporary Disablement section of Personal Accident cover - where up to £100 a week is paid for up to two years. People not in employment are covered under the policy for death, loss of limbs/sight and permanent total disablement whilst participating in Guild activities.

For children aged between 7 and 16 years the death benefit is limited to £2,500 and the weekly benefit is excluded.

The Broker has enquired of the insurance company providing this policy whether or not that company can offer individual policies, but the company has an age limit of 65 years so no cover can be purchased from that company.

If the members of the Guild who are excluded from the insurance cover feel it necessary, they should make their own enquiries to purchase additional cover.

Mike Harris, Chairman.

A story from Courteney Fish.....

Fishing for Wild Trout - a Winter's Tale

It was cold. Bitterly cold.

The two rugged old men looked a long while at the water. As if they expected this alone would bring forth its secrets. Though they knew its nature well. Knew it was a hard and unforgiving place. The rare success encountered there was hard-won, and just as unpredictable. And this was Winter. The winter of January, 1962. They had ahead of them the best part of the 'warmth' of the day to try for a few of the resident wild trout. Warmth being a somewhat relative term. The gauge they carried showed barely one degree Centigrade.

A chill, harsh, Arctic-born North Easterly constantly ruffled and battered the grey waters of the lake. There was little comfort or shelter to be had. The chill edge of the wind hit their faces and urged them to sudden movement. Stiffly, they walked to a lone wooden shack nearby where they would set up their rods in preparation.

On went floating lines - they used little else - and the customary leaders. Six weight lines to combat the strength of the raw wind, tapering to 7lb. leaders, to turn the fly. A single dropper was tied in to some 10 to 14 feet of tail material. A favourite hopper was placed reverently on the point. A thin and frail-looking pheasant tail; or a green Diawl Bach-type midge pattern followed, tied on the dropper. Sometimes, dependent on conditions, they would reverse this order.

The younger of the two men had meanwhile set the fire-kettle in position on its grid. Far later, they would return to its much-needed warmth. Once all was assembled, both men trudged to the water's edge with the rods. It was icy chill. The scream of a distant buzzard came, suddenly, borne on the wind. They moved slowly. Words were unnecessary, and would have been lost on the wind anyway. As if by telepathy, but more by custom, they went, each their own way, round the huge lake. Following their separate routes, they watched as the waves and spray lashed its iron-grey concrete sides. Their eyes seldom strayed from the choppy surface, staring intently into the restless water, searching for tell-tale movement.

Some hours went by, but yet they had no chance of fish. In honesty, each had fleetingly thought of the waiting fire-kettle and its warmth. In desperation, the older of the two decided to play a hunch and try a far corner of the lake a way up-wind, where in earlier years he had found some sport. By instinct he soon approached the very spot. Very cautiously, and at some distance from the shore, he surveyed the far quieter surface. Between the smaller waves, and at first, infrequently, his eyes caught a less than natural movement on the surface. It was a rising fish, surely? Wasn't it? And then again. The water moved. Reflected light from a small surface splash. It was a feeding fish! He cursed profanely under his breath with his luck. And then another rise. And yet another, a way further over. As he watched, and steadily, the water came alive under the movement of a full-blown hatch. 'A damn rise!'.. he muttered to himself. 'Stay calm!' he reminded himself in his excitement. Still standing well back from the shallows, where the fish were showing, he cast as lightly, and as well, as he could near the last movement. Before the fly could sink under its own weight, the slightest bulge appeared under his claret hopper and, far too quick for his eye to see, his fly was sucked beneath the wave and vanished. He instinctively tightened; the fish was already taking line, and a fish was on! The next few moments were action-packed. Frenetic. The line tore off his complaining reel. He was out of control, but what an addictive feeling, he thought, as he smiled involuntarily. This way, that way, the fish powered off beneath the waves. His sorely tested line sang in the raw wind, close to its breaking point. His nerves now on a knife-edge, all he could do was to repeat to himself 'I want this fish.., I want this fish.....' as if to a bystander. Madness is close to this moment. He hung on as if his life depended on its capture, giving line only when it seemed foolishness not to.

After what seemed a lifetime, a beautiful spotted brown trout came to his eager net. Vibrant and wild, he had not the heart to kill this wonderful creature that had brought him such immeasurable joy. A fish of some three and a half, or four pounds lay in the shallows. He deftly slipped the hook and let it sink; watching as it swam slowly back into the depths. His hands, once half-frozen, relaxed into a warmer glow; and he felt good. Such is the nature of adrenalin he mused. And he put out another gentle cast on the surface, where a few fish were still showing much against the odds of the recent commotion. He hoped yet for a few more.....

Skittles Evening - Friday 10th April.

Please contact Malcolm to book

HAPPY FISHING.....BOB..... I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

PS. Here are a few one-liners....

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

When chemists die, they barium.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection; urine trouble.

Broken pencils are pointless.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

All the toilets in New York's police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro - what a rip off!