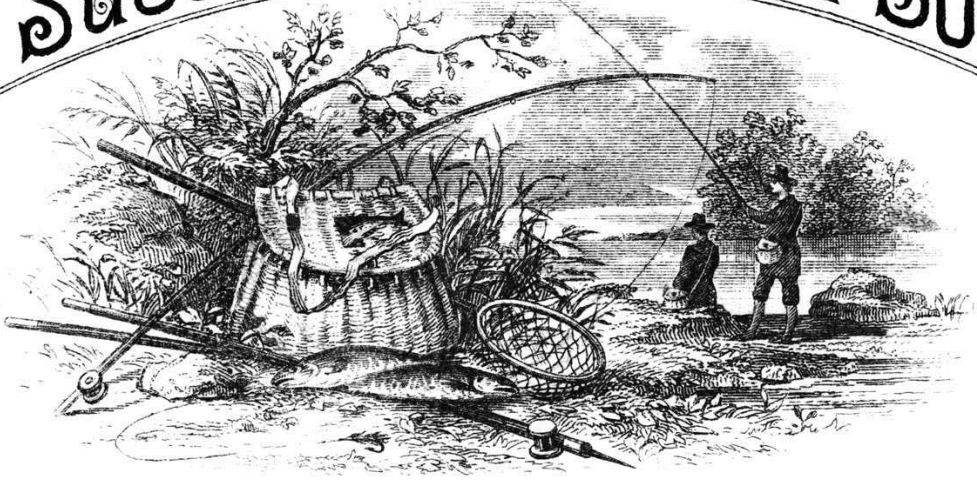


The Sussex Piscatorial Society.



Founded 1891

Sussex Piscator

Annual Magazine of
Sussex Piscatorial Society Ltd.
Issue 8, Spring 2017



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Mr. Pike

Welcome!

Well, what a terrible year 2016 turned out to be. We had political chaos in the UK and Europe, a series of horrific terrorist attacks, a bizarre climax to the most fractious US Presidential election for fifty years, a refugee crisis in Syria, the deaths of several beloved and influential pop musicians and, of course, unprecedented choking weed growth on both Wiston and Lower Buddington lakes. Still, at least it kept the cormorants away. Things weren't all that bad. Personally, as I've not tired of boasting that while I voted remain and supported Hillary Clinton, I could see the writing on the wall ... so placed a few sizeable hedge bets on Brexit and a Trump presidency. You could get surprisingly good odds if you picked the right moment, up to 10/1 in both cases, and ended up over five thousand pounds to the good. I'm going to spend the winnings on some survival equipment and a nuclear shelter. Hopefully 2017 has been better for us all thus far.

Of course, one sunny moment in everyone's calendar is when the glorious *Sussex Piscator* flops on their doormat along with another season's SPS membership details.



The late, great, David Bowie casting a fly? No. It's Photoshop. Welcome to the "post truth" era.

This year I'm grateful for more truly fantastic contributions. We have another splendid account of a year in the life of your Course Section Committee, ***Back to the Future*** written by the indefatigable **Keith Russell**. Thank you for all you do, Keith. There's part two of **John Baker's** fascinating account of life in the Trout Section committee in the 1970s and 1980s, ***Tales from the Trout Section***. Those truly were different days and I'm genuinely thankful that John's taken the time to write it up so well for those members, such as myself, who are still comparatively new to the SPS. This is turning into a classic and is one of the most enduring pieces of memoir we've yet published. The closing part three will be next year and I can't wait.

We welcome contributions from new members too, so I'm especially grateful to **Colin Duffy** for his account of an early trip to the glorious Possingworth Park: ***A New Member Takes a Punt at Possie***. I love Possie and distinctly remember the first time I ever set eyes on the water. In fact I don't think anyone ever forgets their first visit, and Colin's trip was no exception. Coarse Section stalwarts **Jon Clark** and committee member **Mike Andrews** conducted some research into the back issues of Angling magazine from the late 1960s to bring two wonderful pieces back to life: ***Carp on a Jigged Moth*** and ***Instant Specimens***. The latter is an opinion piece from fifty years ago that will still ignite discussion today.

There's also an account of last year's Autumn Social, a warning about environmental changes that seem unstoppable, and lots, lots more. Thank again to everyone who's contributed. It would be a very thin publication without you! As always, whether it be reflections on fishing trips, a memoir, a discussion of environmental issues, poetry, puzzles, general fishing tips, tackle talk, an opinion piece, a guide to one of our waters, anything you like really -- particularly coarse related articles -- I'll be delighted to include it in next year's *Sussex Piscator*.

Please email jonsleeper@btopenworld.com
Deadline, as usual, is December 31st 2017.

Tight lines!

Jon Stewart

Chairman's Cast

What a year it's been! As I write this at the end of the 125th year since the Society came into being, we can all be justifiably proud of what has been achieved since 1891. This year has been an amazing year for the Sussex Piscatorial Society.

During the year, the Society became the owner of an iconic lake that has been part of our history since the very beginning. Pond Lye was offered to us for sale and there was no way that we could have turned it down. Many Society man hours were spent ensuring that the purchase of this water was the right and proper action for the Society. Such is the reputation and potential of Pond Lye, that had it been offered for sale on the open market, the ink on the sales brochures would hardly have had time to dry before offers would have been flooding in. Along with Wellingham in 2015, we have become riparian custodians of another significant piece of Sussex that has given countless pleasure over the years to Society Members.

Other notable but non-piscatorial events in 2016 included the UK's referendum decision to leave the EU and the election of Trump as President in the USA. The outcome of both events was not predicted in considered circles and the Trump election will have no impact on the Society, other than as a source of amazement. On the other hand, the

impact of the 'Brexit' referendum on the Society could well be very relevant in terms of new or existing legislation regarding protection of the rural and countryside ecology, and the long term quality and wellbeing of the UK's water systems. Let us hope that those who will be responsible for these issues are well chosen and well respected.

I have purposefully tried to keep this Chairman's contribution as brief as I can. With the many and excellent contributions competing for space, the hard working editor of The Piscator, Jon Stewart, has changed the format of this journal in a slight but significant way. The proceedings of the Society's business at the AGM and at the Autumn Social Meeting will be briefly recorded in these pages. In addition, as a mark of respect, the names of those Members who have sadly passed on during the year will also be recorded.

I wish you all well for 2017. It's another annual opportunity for all of us to have dreams, to stay healthy, and to do something that makes a difference!

Tight lines!

Nic Stenhouse,
Chairman of the Sussex Piscatorial Society

In Memoriam

Those of you who attended the 2016 SPS AGM will have heard about some of the SPS members we, sadly, lost this year.

Richard McIndoe was a member for over two decades whose favourite waters were Firlie and Plashett Park.

Ian Whybrew Bond was a comparatively recent member and a fan of Possingworth.

Robin Harrison was a member for twenty-five years and a devoted water keeper at Possingworth.

Bryn Willis Owen was a member for many years, and former Curator of the Trout section who built a stew pond in his garden to supply the Society with fish.

Since the AGM we've also heard of the passing of **Harry Haskell**, who contributed many articles to the Sussex Piscator over the years. I'm grateful to Paul Browning who has written a piece on Harry's life for this year's magazine.

We welcome the opportunity to remember former members and friends of SPS in these pages, so do feel free to send in any such content.

Use the Rod and Teach the Child

Just after the war, when I was a young lad, it became possible to go fishing as we were able once again to move around the country now that the constraints on movement which the war had brought were being lifted. Being of an age when outdoor pursuits were considerably more enticing than the theorems of Euclid or a study of Caesar's Gallic Wars, I remember wandering out onto the school playing fields after school one day to see my elderly headmaster practising his casting technique with a new Hardy built cane rod which he had no doubt just acquired. As I watched spellbound I was summoned forward, immediately assuming that I had transgressed some rule and that a rod of a different nature would shortly be applied again to part of my anatomy to instil discipline. But no, I was informed by the great man that he had heard from my father that I was showing an interest in fishing and would I like to try the new rod and show him what I could do. He placed a handkerchief on the ground some distance away and I proceeded to cast as I had been instructed and managed to drop the piece of wool on the end of the line near enough to the target to attract a hungry fish had we been on the water. The mutual pleasure which this minor achievement brought to both master and pupil was to fan the flame of a burgeoning interest which has lead on to a lifetime of curiosity regarding the fish and the fly.

I was therefore interested to read in November an article by Jonny Cooper in the Daily Telegraph about a scheme set up by the Countryside Alliance called **Fishing4Schools** the aim of which is to introduce young people to the skills and joys of fishing. Cooper was attending an inter-school fishing competition in Kent and described how the teachers had brought along a group of young people to hear from Charles Jardine, who began working on the idea 10 years ago, what fishing is about. The youngsters involved were not ones who would necessarily represent their schools competitively and many of them according to their teachers did not find it easy in the classroom. These same teachers spoke of the youngster's enthusiasm and their willingness to

learn and listen in such an environment something which had not always been noted in the classroom. They learnt to work in teams, saw how arithmetic is used to calculate the winner, worked out weights of catches and entered with enthusiasm into discussions with fellow pupils and teachers. They were learning about many things without really being aware of it.



The SPS runs a day each summer for the children of members so that the young of all ages can come to the waterside, usually at Plashett Park, and try their hand at a wonderful sport. The enthusiasm of the children on this family outing shows how much they enjoy the occasion and it is to be hoped that some will develop a lifelong interest. Our Society also has a trophy which is available to be awarded each year to a young angler whose catch has been drawn to the attention of the committee. I hope that parents and friends of the young who they take fishing will encourage the next generation by putting their names forward for the trophy and bring them along to the Society's social gathering in the autumn to receive their award. As Jonny Cooper wrote at the end of his article "Fishing is a great leveller. Nobody here can determine the outcome. It's a quest for the unknown".

For information please visit: countryside-alliance.org/the-foundation/fishing-for-schools

Charles Gallannaugh, November 2016

Back To The Future, 2016: Coarse Section events, January-December.

I have usually started the events relating to the Society from the 1st January however this year I'll have to go back to late December 2015. I could not include in the Piscator of last year due to the events that may unfold and the risk of this news getting out to other perhaps interested parties. This has since proved to be the correct call as we have since found out in our dealings with some of the local landowners.

A chance call to Mr Wishart, the owner of POND LYE. He informs the Society that he is considering placing the lake and surrounding land on the market. WE'LL HAVE IT. Little did we know what would be placed in front of us over the coming months?

Events can never move fast enough so a meeting with Mr Wishart was arranged in mid-January, location a private room at a hotel in Worthing. Prior to this it was decided to obtain a valuation on near on 40 acres of land with an approximate 10 acre lake all within this area. Fenn-Wright were instructed to value the land on behalf of the Society. Curator Mike Andrews had been instrumental in starting this process. This was very fortunate as within a day or so Mr Wishart had revealed to us that he had made contact with Fenn-Wright but as they had already been instructed by the Society they could not also value on behalf of Mr Wishart. We meet Fenn-Wright at Pond Lye walking to entire 40 acres of land. We also travelled to Wellingham Lake on the same day to also obtain a valuation on the lake and land for our own requirements. This all within a fixed price negotiated by Mike Andrews.

The day of our meeting with Mr Wishart we obtained a verbal buyers quotation on Pond Lye. This was not revealed to him. Many other issues would and have since materialized that the society had to consider. Our meeting was very informal, Mr Wishart wished the Society to make him a reasonable offer which we informed him we would at a later date.

Pond Lye is now classed as a reservoir. Not yet registered but it will be. If the society purchased the lake and land we would be liable for funding any work. We decided that we ought to employ a reservoir engineer. This will

cost some serious money. However we felt in the long term we could obtain a return on this outlay. Engineer was instructed to take on the work but just prior to this our chairman Nic Stenhouse wished to view the entire site so he was fully aware of what the society may be purchasing. A Sunday morning viewing.

Nic was impressed and in full agreement that we should proceed further. It was also pointed out that we should keep all of the proposed purchase within the Society's main committee because if word got out we may end up in a bidding war of interested parties. On the Sunday tour Nic, Mike and I had almost finished our walk and as we were proceeding towards the entrance at the far north end we were approached by the adjoining landowner who wished to know why we were venturing across this almost untouched part of the site. Of course we could not reveal our full intention for the morning walk-around however we were invited to his home for tea and biscuits. Over the course of an hour or so the adjoining landowner revealed that he would be interested in purchasing Pond Lye if it ever came on the market. You can guess that we kept extremely quiet about our intentions.

The Reservoir engineer came to view Pond Lye as arranged and then produced a written report detailing the exact specification we would have to follow to bring Pond Lye up to reservoir status. Reservoirs are listed in bands, A – D, and Pond Lye came under the risk of "loss of life and property": Band B. The dam crest will have to be raised, the rear face upgraded with a more gentle slope and two areas back filled, some trees removed from the dam's back face, a new main overflow and secondary overflow substantially upgraded.

We now also are informed that a supervising engineer will need to be employed and a hydrologist to calculate flow rates in a 1 in 10,000 year flood event. Even more unexpected cost. However all of this we would expect to reclaim by either a reduced purchase price or selling the report to another who may purchase -- even Mr Wishart if he decided our offer was not sufficient. Whoever owns Pond Lye will HAVE to get this work done.



Should we be fortunate to purchase Pond Lye our long term aim is to secure the future of THE SUSSEX PISCATORIAL SOCIETY, the possible creation of additional lakes within the 40 acres. This would both benefit the Coarse and Trout Sections of the Society whether it for fishing lakes or collateral for any future purchases in another location.

Now being proud owners of our own lake at WELLINGHAM we knew that some additional work within the 3 acres was required. First a new car park. Fortunately some chalk for a car parking base became available at £1 per ton so a large quantity was instantly purchased and delivered. This will remain on site until weather conditions improve. Standing water after a few weeks' rain will hold up construction of the car park. The adjoining landowner was not impressed at all with the pile of chalk, stating that it spoilt his view, however he was informed of the instructions of our ownership and that a car park must be constructed on site. He then tried to purchase part of the land for his own use. This was instantly refused.

PLASHETT PARK bottom lake had the first work party of the year. The main aim was to net as many Pike, Bream and Carp as possible that had entered the lake from the adjoining middle lake. This was achieved with moderate success. The bottom lake also received a stocking of Perch around mid-February. Although some Perch were known to be present it was felt that an additional kick start was needed to get breeding stock for future generations. The vast majority of the current stock is no more than 3 to 4 inch fish. In addition to this a de-stocking of Bream was carried out on Plashett middle lake on a later date. It was noted that there were very few Rudd and Roach present, pure indication that Bream had overrun most other species.

A small work party was organized at FIRLE to increase the size of the car park with a reasonable turning circle created. Vehicles appear to be larger in size nowadays with more members using vans to transport their fishing tackle. Hard-core was purchased and delivered. A large quantity of earth removed from one bank with an excavator, then the hard-core spread around the newly excavated area. Thanks to the generosity of two members

this task was completed within a couple of hours on a Saturday morning.

Initially for security reasons our punts at BURTON MILL POND are removed at the seasons end in mid-March. Furthermore a revamp was required after months open to the weather. New runners, seats and timber surround required on one punt. Our water keepers volunteered to take on this work over the 3 month close season. A tremendous gesture. Thank you.

We next had to arrange a visit the National Trust at Scotney Castle. This is to negotiate a new lease for SHEFFIELD PARK. Perhaps our easiest negotiation to date. Wish they were all just like this. We inquired about the fishing on the R. Ouse adjacent to Sheffield Park. We were informed this may be considered but not until work on the redundant river meanders had been completed, some considerable time in the future. However we were invited to take a stroll down the river, accompanied, to see the planned renovations.

We had decided that PRIMROSE LAKE was no longer a viable venue due to the number of members fishing this water for the rent we had to pay. There was also a dam leak which the owner was unwilling to repair, in addition to the run off from adjacent maize fields, and the constant threat of having a 100 or more duck descend on the lake from the local shoot. We had tried to separate the lake and river from the lease but the landowner would not accept this so unfortunately we would part company come mid-June. Hopefully in the not too distant future a replacement could be found.

Further silt samples were taken from PLASHETT top lake. There are plans to increase the size of the area up into the northern arm which had silted up over many years of neglect. There is just talk of starting this during the summer months of 2016 then finished it in 2017. We'll see how this project develops.

Time now to make a start on the new car park at WELLINGHAM LAKE. Chalk was spread over an area 18m by 12m plus the short roadway in off the access road. A one-way membrane placed underneath the chalk.



After spreading and flattened the chalk it was topped with road planings and rolled. Next to consider is the road fence. A fantastic gesture from a Society member. He will donate the entire length of fence complete with the installation. We considered this to be around 150m. A few weeks of planning, then the fence was erected. Now finished it looks superb. We decided that a metal gate and posts black powder coated to match would be more appropriate than a timber gate to finish this off. Posts and gate were installed in one evening and a Saturday work party. Many compliments received from both local residents and members.

The Society's Annual BBQ and Junior's Day events were held, for the first time both together, at Plashett Park. The Junior's event started at 10am with near on 40 juniors attending. The main BBQ started around 2pm for all other members and guests. Outside caterers were used for the first time which proved to be a great success. In all there must have been 175 attending. The day was dry which is always an added bonus and the general feedback was that all members and guests enjoyed the day.

Back to POND LYE. The ongoing meetings with various interested parties had taken up many hours. Survey work then drawings for the new spillway and dam crest had been completed so next stage was to obtain some quotations via contractors to complete the work. This we required so we knew roughly how much we could expect to spend on this major operation and also reflect on the offer we

make to Mr Wishart. An SGM consultation meeting was arranged at the Steyning Centre to disclose to the membership of our intention to buy Pond Lye. All the facts and figures we had available would be placed in front of members so they knew exactly where their money would be spent. No vote would be taken as the decision to buy had already been decided within the SPS Committee. The meeting was extremely well attended with positive approval of our intended purchase.

Next we arranged a meeting with Mr Wishart to make our offer. Same hotel as early January. In the time between Mr Wishart stating to us that Pond Lye was to be sold and up until the consultation meeting, we had kept him fully informed and up to date with the progress being made. We made our purchase offer. Mr Wishart wished to consider it. He promised a decision before his pre-arranged holiday in a couple of weeks' time. True to his word a letter received by our Chairman Nic Stenhouse confirming our offer had been accepted. Instructions to our solicitor were immediate to proceed with all that's required to make the purchase. Finally on 30th September 2016 POND LYE became a Society owned water, our first purchase in over 125 years. A massive step in the history of the Society. Our first tasks will be to engage all of our closest neighbours, the Flora and Fauna Group, Public Footpaths, Natural England and Ancient Woodland as well as Parish and County Councils, to get them on side so that the planned works and changes that will occur are all explained in detail and fully supported.



Pond Lye, our first Society owned water. Thank you to all who made this possible

After the non-renewal of the lease for Primrose Lake and the River Cuckmere we had endeavoured to replace them both. A section of the Pevensey Haven had been viewed but unfortunately a rental fee could not be agreed. We had tried very hard to obtain a section of the River Cuckmere above Michelham Priory but progress was almost non-existent.

Fortunately a conversation with another landowner proved positive. After viewing and agreement of lease and rent we acquired about 1000yds of RIVER CUCKMERE on the opposite bank to the section we had been trying to obtain earlier in the year. Just a few hours labour to clear some 30+ swims in bramble bankside growth was all that was first required. We would look at additional areas when the frosts and floods had flattened some

rather very overgrown downstream river bank.

Over at BURTON MILL POND we had temporarily lost the use of our punts due to the construction of new landing stage area for the mooring of a wheelie-boat. What we were first informed should only take a few weeks turned out to be almost three months. Not good timing as the weed die back this year had made dam bank swims extremely difficult to fish.

However we did make progress with the now approved 6th swim to the east of the viewing platform. Small trees and extremely heavy bankside growth were removed over a couple of days. When the low growth of vegetation comes back this swim will be very attractive. This 6th swim would be open to fishing once the annual reed cut had taken place in late November (see below).



It had been decided to vacate our stock ponds mid-autumn. The cost of feed, health checks, access, movement of fish and labour, it became less beneficial to us than just purchasing any stock requirements from reputable fish dealers. However the learning curve over the years these ponds were in operation will never be lost.

Mid November and the Society's Autumn Social attended by approximately sixty members. This year our speaker was the Society Treasurer explaining the structure of the finances, how your money is spent. Trophies were awarded and the rest of the evening members could chat about everything connected to fishing whilst consuming the buffet food washed down with a drink or two.

Early December and a major pollution incident on the Plumpton Mill Stream. Although the Society does not have any fishing rights on this stream it has affected the Bevan Stream which in turn runs into our section of the RIVER OUSE at BARCOMBE. The Environment Agency were out in force trying to contain this pollution but many fish have perished along with all the other species that rely on good water quality. We were informed at least 1200 fish had perished. We are very fortunate that our water-keeper on the Ouse at Barcombe was first to see the pollution developing at its source informing the EA instantly.

A committee decision to be made on whether to renew the permits for the Hampshire's RIVER AVON and RIVER KENNET on the Wasing Estate. Only a handful of members making fishing trips to these venues. Not easy fishing but can be very rewarding. The outcome? Definitely, providing they are on offer again with no massive increase in subscription.

No doubt most members may wish to know is how the Society's waters have fished this past year. The vast majority of members I have contact with have reported excellent catch returns on most of our lakes and rivers. Those who have spent the time trying different waters, methods and tactics appear to be the most successful.

Although perhaps not a vast amount of time was spent maintaining the Society lakes or rivers it has been an extremely busy year. Numerous meetings, be it with Society Committees or with outside interested parties. This has taken the bulk of our time, mostly all centred around the purchase of Pond Lye. We expect next year to be exactly the same, Pond Lye at the centre of the work load. Already this December work has started on some of the trees that have taken root and are encroaching the lake surrounds and need to be removed. A number of work parties are already arranged early in 2017.



*The reason Carp anglers require a barrow.
To carry vast amounts of food.*



Superb Common



River Avon Chub

The year of 2016 proved to be massive in the history of the Sussex Piscatorial Society. Personally I have always felt the Society should have ownership of water rather than rent. We now own two lakes. We realise some waters will always be rented, a fact of life. Provided change of ownership does not arise and our membership adhere to rules and regulations that are set out in our lease

agreements we should be able to secure fishing on all of these other waters for many years to come. All we ask now is that the majority of our members stay with us for the coming years and work with us to ensure we have the finances and manpower to carry out all of our major projects through. We'll all reap the rewards together.

Keith Russell

Dates for your Diary 2017

Annual General Meeting

The **126th AGM** of Sussex Piscatorial Society will be held on **Wednesday 17th May 2017** at **The Steyning Centre**, Fletchers Croft, Steyning, BN44 3XZ.
Bar & food from 7.30pm. Meeting starts 8pm. *All SPS Members welcome!*

Children's Day

Children's Day will be held on **Saturday 10th June** at **Plashett Park** (nr. Rose Hill on the A26) 10am-4pm
Please see SPS web site for more details.
All Members and children welcome!

Autumn Social

The **2017 Autumn Social Meeting** of the Sussex Piscatorial Society will be held on **Wednesday 15th November** at **The Steyning Centre**, BN44 3XZ.
Bar & food from 7.30pm. Meeting starts 8pm. *All SPS Members & friends welcome!*

Harry Haskell

Our Chairman has asked me to write a few words on the fishing life and achievements of Harry Haskell.

Harry lived all his life in Sussex and had a deep understanding of the rural landscape, more than any other angler I've met. In many respects the approach he took when fishing was very much along the lines of a trout angler when chalk stream fishing for wild trout, this careful and considered approach didn't go without its rewards!

You didn't need to do a great deal to impress Harry; simply keep out of the skyline, walk gently around the water's edge (preferably as far back as possible) and talk and behave quietly!

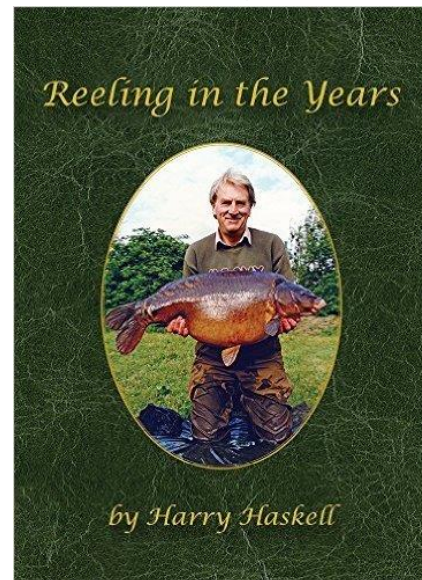
In 1968 along with another SPS stalwart, Pat Hill, they both set up The Sussex Specimen Hunters Group with Harry as Chairman and Pat as Secretary. Membership was open to all, information had to be shared but was to be confined within the group. This group lasted some 20-years and so began a lifelong friendship with the two men. Pat caught his first 20lb carp that year and Harry caught his first 20 the following season. Both fish were caught at the Worthing Piscatorial's Laybrook fishery.

Harry is best known to Society members as a carp angler, the number of fish he caught at Firlie would make your eyes pop out. (A few of us do know that number!) He was equally competent at fishing for roach. I have a hunch that this was Harry's favourite fish, and I suspect that he would regard his 3lb 1oz Hampshire Avon roach as his finest capture! He also enjoyed fishing for tench at a complex of Kent gravel pits, barbel on the Hampshire Avon and Dorset Stour, river pike and also at Ardingly (Harry was at one time a holder of the Ardingly pike record), along with a spot of sea and trout fishing.

In recent years Harry quietly enjoyed his fishing in a Sussex syndicate, the lakes being a perfect match for his approach to carp fishing. In the winter he would often fish for roach with his friend Mick Cragg.

His analytical mind was applied to angling products and inventions such as the combi and medusa rigs, many products for Kryston such as their original tungsten putty and buoyant

cloning hook baits. He also came up with an idea of a swinger bite indicator with adjustable sliding weights, developed at Weir Wood Reservoir to combat the strong undertows when roach fishing. Much of this is covered in his recent memoir *Reeling in the Years* (2013).



Harry felt the natural surroundings of any water and environment was of more concern than bankside convenience to the angler or catch-returns. This often involved both local and national angling officials on diverse subjects ranging from intentional discharging of fishing leads, tree and bankside cover removal, the over-use of fish oils in angling baits, carp diseases from re-stocking and KHV, and historic accuracies of wild carp!

His last campaign, along with his neighbours, surrounded the planning application of a proposed caviar farm near his home. The proposed water extraction of the local stream would have had a dramatic impact on the sea trout spawning areas of the upper Sussex Ouse. Sadly, he didn't get to hear of the successful outcome of their campaign.

In September of this year Harry was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) - a rare and vicious form of leukaemia. He developed pneumonia before being admitted to a hospice, where I understand he was still very much himself in trying to light his pipe, out of sight of the nurses! He will be missed by his friends in the angling fraternity who will have many happy memories of a wonderful angler and the truest of countrymen. *Paul Browning*

Weed Clearance at Wiston and Lower Buddington



Weed growth has always been a significant problem at these two lakes. However, the nature and severity of the problem (for Trout fishing) changes, with the type of weed, the environment, the climate and the management techniques adopted for both the weed and the fish stocks. Both these lakes are relatively shallow, have clear water for much of the year and are surrounded by active farm land, which all contribute to strong growth of aquatic plants. In recent years, warm weather, mild winters and a reduction of the water flow through the lakes, have also resulted in an extended growing season, culminating in the overwhelming growth we saw in the summer and autumn this year. The necessary stocking and feeding of the stock, also adds to the nutrients in the water.

Past management of weed at these two waters has at times involved water colouration to suppress growth and draining the lake over winter in the case of Wiston. Although both these methods have been effective to some extent, there have often been unwanted consequences in subsequent years, such as

strong algal growth or even insufficient weed growth for a healthy aquatic environment and good oxygenation. Manual removal and chain cutting, involving valiant efforts by both officers and working parties, can only realistically provide local and very temporary relief from the weed.

The nature of the weed in the two lakes is often different. In Wiston this year, floating Hornwort was the dominant and very visible problem, covering almost all the lake, making use of the punts very difficult and fishing almost impossible. Local removal was attempted, but as expected the weed simply expanded to fill the available space. There was also a strong growth of Canadian Pondweed at the western end of the lake. At Lower Buddington, the dominant weed was Canadian Pondweed, often with a covering of Blanket Weed. Hornwort was also present, but to a lesser extent than Wiston.

This year it became apparent that professional help was going to be needed, but that was also the case at many other fisheries, so it was relatively late in the year before we



the Truxors in the case of Wiston. The contractors were also able to clear the edges of the swims at Lower Buddington. It is estimated that 50 to 60 tons of weed was removed from the lakes over the 4 days.

The lakes are now clear and at the time of writing have recently been stocked. We should now have excellent fishing over the winter and need to wait to see how the weed responds in the spring. Plans are in place for pre-emptive management of the weed next year and the Truxors have been booked to return in May to control early-season growth. However, it remains to be seen how the weeds respond to the clearance and we have the inevitable climatic uncertainties. We also need to maintain a healthy balance of plant life to avoid the oxygen depletion events that sometimes occur when the water starts to warm up in the early summer. This type of work is very expensive and needs to be planned and budgeted for ahead of the potential problem, but we do now have a good idea of the short-term effectiveness and are able to plan as much as possible to keep the lakes fishable next summer.

David Hole

could arrange for specialist firm Aquatic Solutions from Rugs, to bring two Truxor amphibious vehicles to the site. These machines are dual-hulled platforms with caterpillar tracks on each hull. A diesel-fuelled hydraulic power unit is mounted on the platform, on slides which allow it to be positioned to counter-balance the loading of the vehicle. A variety of cutting, raking, digging and pumping attachments can then be mounted to suit the task in hand.

Two Truxors worked for 4 days cutting and raking, to clear Wiston and Lower Buddington, assisted by local contractors, Danny Flynn Services using an excavator and dumper to move the weed and create an access point for



A Year in the Life of a (new) Water-keeper

For as long as I can remember I have always loved moving water, even if it was only in the bath! But I think it was messing about in the stream at my grandparents' farm in Yorkshire was when I really got the bug. We used to build dams, catch tiddlers and generally muck about. So when 50 or so years later it became clear there was a need for a new water-keeper for the Cheriton beat of the upper River Itchen (Cheriton Stream) I jumped at the opportunity. A bona fide excuse to mess about in a river again! - but this time with a real purpose.

I'd fished Cheriton a few times and helped at work parties when Phillip Ellis was the water-keeper. I'd been enchanted by this small jewel of a stream close to the springs at the head of this Itchen tributary. Only between 2 and 4 metres wide and gin clear with fabulous riparian weed and a head of wild (very wild!) brown trout. So, I thought I knew what I was taking on, but it has proved far more interesting/challenging/instructive/frustrating and rewarding than I had envisaged!



Clearing a fallen tree

The year started with a pre-season visit to the river with Philip. Only to find a large tree down across the stream and already backing up the flow to the extent it was over-running the bank. Great start! A working party was quickly organized and a hardy band of volunteers along with Pat Moyle (our part time professional river keeper) and his trusty chain saw descended on the river and the tree. A morning's hard graft saw the tree cut into manageable lengths and branches removed. We then formed some groynes using the tree trunk lengths to deflect and energise the flow and hopefully start to scour some additional pools to provide good winter cover for more mature fish to hold in. A later work party

installed additional groynes. All this necessitated liaison with the farmer who has grazing rights on the surrounding fields along with seeking the Landlord's agreement.

It was noted the riparian weed had grown significantly before the start of the season, due to the mild winter. So, a "haircut" was organised for the weed before the season started. With hindsight we should have perhaps cut harder, but weed cutting is always difficult to gauge. Too much cutting and water levels can drop to a level which is undesirably low and with low flow rates sediment can be deposited. Too little cutting and we run the risk of the river being inundated with too much weed and being even more challenging to fish.

The weed cutting is governed by the EA and in conjunction with the Test & Itchen Association agreed weeks are set for cutting and clearing-off during the season at roughly monthly intervals. However, it is amazing how much weed can grow in a month!!

Regular work parties were held and we did battle with the dreaded water parsnip that has grown inexorably from the edges of the stream to narrow the flow along with the bankside reeds. (My grateful thanks to the guys and girls who turned up to help out.) Whilst the water parsnip provides great cover for the fish from avian predators, it also gives the trout ideal cover from fly fishers! So, again we have tried to walk the tightrope to try and get the balance right.

We have also attempted to keep the millstream relatively free flowing by cutting back the reeds, as we have an obligation in our fishing agreement to ensure water flows through the mill-race under the mill.

However, the ranunculus has been great and we have seen good numbers of trout. The EA fish count further downstream at Vernal Farm for 2015 was the best ever recorded. So, this is a trend that we want to see continue. We are striving to ensure we provide a whole-life cycle environment for the trout. Good for the trout and good for fishermen!

To this end we undertook gravel cleaning in six or so places after the end of the season to help to maximize trout recruitment. The likely



Cleaning gravel to maximize trout recruitment

locations of the redds were highlighted during a visit by Andy Thomas of the Wild Trout Trust. Andy was complimentary about the condition of the river and the Society's stewardship over recent years.

The next initiative is going to be to install some bank revetments where the river has become over-wide and is losing some of its impetus. By pinching the flow it will accelerate. If the flow is too weak it falls below the critical rate required for ranunculus to grow and as every good river fly-fisherman knows ranunculus is one of the best riparian weeds for invertebrates. However, we are awaiting a permit from the EA for these works. Hopefully the 12 pages of forms and annexures (and the fee!) will have given them what they need.

Over the close season there will be further tree work to avoid the river becoming too shaded in places. Although there is an initiative to keep rivers cool. This involves trying to strike a balance at 60/40 approx. tree'd to open banks. So, we will again try and strike a balance.

Along the way during the year I have liaised with Cheriton Volunteer Group to understand the Cheriton villagers' concerns about the river and to learn what they are doing in their conservation efforts, so we can work together. In return, they are trying to get the message out to the villagers that weed should only be cut during the weed-cut weeks. Hopefully in this way it will avoid too much weed coming downstream and causing hang-ups in our beat outside the agreed weed-cut periods.

I attended a great Habitat Management workshop organized by The Test & Itchen Assoc. with assistance from the Wild Trout Trust, also a Members' Day which included a series of fascinating talks, covering subjects such as diverse agricultural pollution of rivers and the work being done to minimise this in Hampshire and an interesting lecture by Dr Cyril Bennett on the (adverse) effects of sediment on invertebrate life in rivers.

During the year we have seen 19 member visits to the stream and 2 guests. Between them they have caught and returned some 39 trout. Most fish have been jewels of 8 – 9 inches (20 – 23 cm in new money) with a couple over a pound!

It would be good to see more members fishing this delightful little river. To lose yourself between its banks for a few hours and explore the different meanders it takes across the water meadows. Who knows you might see a kingfisher, egret, heron, or barn owl, or even brook lampreys cutting redds in the stream bed – magical. You might even tempt one of the sparkling, bejeweled brown trout to come to hand and marvel at it as it flicks its tail and slips from your grasp back into the clear water. You will have touched something rare and beautiful.

It's been a fascinating year to date - and it's not over yet! - trees to prune, reeds to cut – a water-keeper ALWAYS has something that needs doing!! But as long as I am doing it in or next to a river I'm happy. Tight lines!

Chris Mitchell

Tales from the Trout Section (Part 2)

“Tales from the Trout Section” relates my personal experiences as SPS Trout Section Secretary – from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s. This is the second instalment, part one was in last year’s *Sussex Piscator*. My ramblings are dedicated to good friends, who shared many of these experiences, but are sadly no longer with us – Bert Bedford, who was Curator and shared with me responsibility for managing the TS (Bert was later the SPS Chairman); Peter Truman, a legend in his time; Gordon Rippin who many current members will remember (former Secretary and Treasurer of the SPS); and his son Malcolm.

To recap ... I joined the SPS Trout Section in 1970. There were just two waters: Wiston, which the SPS had fished since 1926, and Possingworth, which we’d used since 1936. To put things in perspective, in 1970 there were about 50 members paying a sub of less than £20 with the Wiston rent about £50 and Possingworth about £200. Here are more memories...



Bert Bedford, former SPS Chairman

Trout Section Boats: When I joined the SPS, most of the boats were (and still are) aluminium. They were made by a member who had a sheet metal business in Brighton (his name escapes me). These are excellent boats having low maintenance and very long life. I confess that I prefer wooden boats as they are smoother and quieter. I particularly

liked an old wooden boat at Wiston that was long past it’s “sell by date” but still usable thanks to Bert. He painstakingly kept it going for years by applying layers of hessian to the underside and coating with Synthaproof – a bitumen based emulsion.

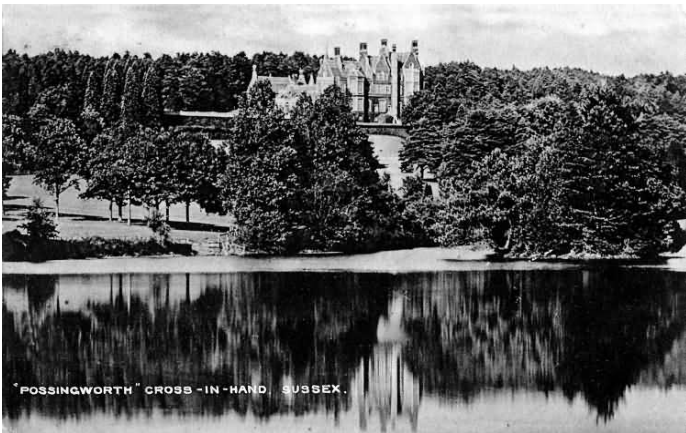
A company in Huntingdon was offering fibreglass boats at reduced prices and Peter Truman and I drove up to collect four using the fish tank trailer. But we had not thought through exactly how we were going to load and secure four boats for the long journey back (two punts and two dinghies). With some difficulty, we precariously loaded all four and thanks to Peter’s ingenuity, they all survived the journey. Possingworth and Wiston had a dinghy each : these were favoured by anglers who liked to fish alone, sitting down – and also because they were quiet and manouverable. In those days, there was more fishable water behind the main island at Wiston and I had many fish there approaching stealthily in the dinghy, including several large browns sight fishing with a leaded nymph. Unfortunately we lost both dinghies. The one at Wiston was stolen and the one at Possingworth was crushed in the great Storm.

One of our members (Paul Pennington) who fished regularly at Wiston, always with a Peter Ross, was over 80 and had only one leg. On one occasion, he leaned over to reach his thermos and fell in ! Fortunately there was a member fishing in another punt who came to Paul’s rescue.

Before we built a landing stage at Wiston, the boats were moored to trees and it was always a bit hairy getting in and out. Occasionally a member would lose his footing and land in the water !

Possingworth before and after the Great Storm of 1987: Possingworth was a very beautiful lake before the storm – and still is. But it was changed dramatically in October 1987.

Previously, the lake was almost completely surrounded with mature rhododendrons growing right up to the water's edge. There were many large Redwoods, some well over 100 feet tall including six on the dam. At the north eastern end, there was a channel leading to a magnificent Victorian boathouse; and where the channel widened into the lake, there was a beautiful ornamental wooden bridge - over 30 feet long - sitting on brick and concrete pillars. The lake was about two feet deeper than it is now, giving a maximum depth of well over 20 feet. Mature browns used to run up the feeder stream to spawn and occasionally small browns were caught by the members - clearly the offspring of these spawners. I understand that small browns are still occasionally caught which is a puzzle as all browns stocked now are infertile triploids.



Historic Possingworth House and Lake, 1905

Our landlord was an elderly gentleman who lived in Waldron - Mr Pugh. The Possingworth Estate had some years previously been split up and sold to several individuals, including Mr Pugh, who bought the fishing rights and a large parcel of land including most of the lake perimeter. The entrance for members was via Warren Lane and Warren Close to the east of the lake, with a long walk down to the lake. The oars and record book were kept in the boathouse. The boats had previously been kept in the boathouse until the channel silted up after which they were moored at a landing stage on the east side during the season and kept in the boathouse during the winter.

The Great Storm had a devastating effect. Many mature trees were lost including all the Redwoods on the dam. The dam was breached in several places. Sadly, the Victorian boathouse, ornamental bridge and landing stage were all destroyed. Our dinghy was crushed by a fallen tree but from memory, I think the punts were not damaged. The EA informed Mr Pugh that the lake should be drained for safety reasons. But we came up with a clever plan that was agreed by the EA.

This involved connecting a rigid 4" diameter vertical PVC pipe 10 feet tall to the rear of the drainpipe that ran horizontally through the base of the dam - we had this pipe "in stock" from the syphoning operation at Wiston. It was connected via a right angle bend to the drainpipe and secured at the top to a very conveniently positioned fallen tree. We had thus effectively created a "monk" allowing water entering the lake to exit via the top of the new pipe, at the same time maintaining a constant water level. We were left with about 3 acres of water up to 10 feet deep and a good stock of overwintered browns. "Bank" fishing (ie standing on the previous lake bed) was enjoyed for 3 months. The EA then came down and removed the remaining fish by netting and electro fishing. These were transferred to our recently acquired stew pond at Ashington. From memory, there were about 150 browns, the best being three and a half pounds. Sadly most of these were lost when a large dose of sewage came down the feeder stream to the stew pond. The lake was then drained completely which gave me the opportunity to search for my Hardy St George reel which had some years previously been whipped overboard by the anchor rope - before I had even set up my rod! Needless to say, I did not find it.

Well into his 80s, Mr Pugh did not have the heart to embark on the major task and expense of clearing up the mess left by the storm and restoring Possingworth. He put the property on the market and it was fairly soon sold to a solicitor. I never knew the price but guess this was well below market value before the storm. I was able to negotiate a new agreement but the rent was substantially increased. Then our worries really started !

First the new owner put in a planning application to build holiday lets with a small sewage plant discharging into the lake! Needless to say, the local residents were up in arms and lodged a powerful objection. Our objection was largely based on the detrimental build up in the lake of nitrate and phosphate from the sewage plant that would occur and the serious ecological effects this would have. He did not get planning consent. Then he tried again, this time saying he was going to plant a vineyard and his planning application was for a manager's house. Fortunately this too was turned down and he decided to sell. However, give him his due, whilst these applications were being prepared and processed, he shelled out a great deal of money to clear up after the storm and to restore the dam. The EA insisted that the water level should be lower than the previous level – by about 2 feet.

I did not meet the next new owner. He was a financier based in London and all negotiations were through his secretary. He was quite happy to give us a new agreement with virtually no increase in rent. But we had to agree to a condition: that he and his friends would sometimes use the lake for jet skiing at weekends! If we wanted to keep the fishing we would have to bite the bullet and agree to this condition, so we did. However, the new owner never came down to jet ski and after a few months we learnt from the Daily Telegraph that he had been found guilty on a major fraud charge and was in prison. So Possingworth was up for sale again – the third time in less than 5 years.

This time, we were fortunate with our new owner, Brian Pearce, who had long term plans that were entirely compatible with fishing. He had most of the bank and the large island cleared of rhododendron and scrub and rebuilt the ornamental bridge that had been destroyed in 1987. He kept a quad bike on site which he used to get around his property and, in his early days, occasionally flew in by helicopter. Sadly Brian Pearce is with us no more and his children, who have inherited, have decided to sell the property. Hopefully we will be able to negotiate an agreement with the new owners and continue fishing this beautiful water for another 80 years.



Possingworth Lake, 1949, before the great storm. This picture shows the old bridge and substantially more trees

We lost a full season's fishing in 1989 and had a lot of work to do before we could restart fishing in 1990. We negotiated a new way in from the B2102 through the Chelwood's gated entrance and parked our cars here (this had many years earlier been used as the SPS entrance). Later, after the trouble started with travellers, we kept the oars here and a mobile phone permanently on charge to ring the police. A new landing stage had to be built on the north west bank together with an oars locker (the oars were later moved up to the entrance when traveller problems started). The oars are now kept in an armoured locker by the landing stage.

Memories of working parties: I have many memories and here are just a few snippets.

When I joined the TS, Wiston was significantly reduced in size by the extensive growth of reed mace. The reeds extended beyond the old landing stage (which no longer exists) – at least 10 yards – all the way along the south bank. We had several working parties over a couple of years to pull reeds, but the bulk of the effort came from four of us who spent several Saturdays on our own doing the job – Bert, Gordon Rippin, Doug Turner and myself. We had to drop the pulled reeds (roots as well) in the punts from which we were working and this was mucky work. The punts soon filled up and there were several near misses when the overloaded punts threatened to capsize.

The cattle drink by the western end of Lower Buddington was for many years unfenced. Sunk into the concrete of the small dam of the

cattle drink was the entrance to the pipe feeding water from the spring fed stream to Wiston. This ran underground for a considerable distance before discharging into the ditch feeding into the lake. As long as the cattle drink was unfenced, the entrance to the pipe was vulnerable to blockage. On many occasions, I had to strip off and remove blockages on the grid that was almost a full arm's length in. But on one occasion I was unsuccessful and after repeated attempts it was clear that the blockage was more serious.

Bert and I found a very long cable half buried in the ground to the south west of the lake (we thought it had once been part of a fence) and spent a long time trying to push this up the pipe from the lower end – but without success. There was only one thing left – dig down along its length to expose the pipe. So a working party was arranged. About ten of us started at the cattle drink end working towards where the pipe discharged into the ditch. After what seemed like several hours, we found where the pipe had been fractured – only a short distance from where it discharged into the ditch ! If only we had started at the other end. We later realised that the damage had been caused by heavy vehicles going up and down the track removing dead elm trees. The Wiston Estate had a large number of elm trees, all of which were killed by the Dutch elm disease. However, the disease affects trees only when they get to a certain size and plenty of young elms are still around in the hedgerows. Some years after the elm trees had been killed and removed, there was still a line of healthy small elm trees along Mouse Lane.

Many of the working parties at Wiston involved tree work and there was always a bonfire. One of our members (Bertie Barrett) usually turned up but I had the distinct impression that he didn't like hard work as he always ended up looking after the bonfire. On one occasion when we had a break for coffee and sandwiches, I searched in vain for my bag. Bertie was adamant that he had not seen it and I had to scrounge a drink from another member. The following week I found the remains of my thermos in the ashes of the bonfire !

As a goodwill gesture to our landlord at Possingworth (Mr Pugh), we undertook to repair the beautiful ornamental bridge. The structure was made of wood and sat on concrete and brick pillars. Some of the wood, including the planks on which we walked across, were rotten and had to be replaced. Also some of the wood in the ornamental side structures was rotten and had to be replaced. But the main problem was that some of the bricks and concrete of the pillars had been washed away. To deal with this problem we had to lower the lake level so that bases of the pillars were exposed. The bricks that we needed were mostly there but had to be recovered from the mud. This was my first experience of bricklaying and quite enjoyable. We extended the life of the bridge by a few years but sadly, it was completely destroyed in the Great Storm of 1987.



Possingworth Lake and replaced bridge, today

The channel connecting the Victorian boathouse with the lake was silting up badly and it became increasingly difficult to get the boats in each autumn. So a working party was arranged to open up the channel and fix rigid plastic sheets on either side to try and stop the mud sliding back into the channel. Again we had to lower the lake level. Trying to shovel out almost liquid mud and fixing the plastic sheets with stakes was back breaking work but we eventually achieved some success. Fortunately, this job did not have to be repeated as we didn't need to use the channel after the Great Storm which completely demolished the boathouse. The boat landing stage which is in use today was built after the Great Storm.



Bert Bedford, with barbel

Epic tales of moving fish: Bert, Peter and I had some interesting and occasionally hairy experiences moving fish – but we never lost one ! Here are a few tales.

In the early days, with very small fish and short distances, we had no proper equipment for moving fish. Bert and I had some small rainbows of about 4 – 5 inches which we had anaesthetised in order to clip their dorsal fins, prior to moving them to Possingworth. The purpose was to check their growth rate, survival and catch rate. We took them from Horsham in a dustbin of cold water with no aeration and stopped at intervals to check that they were OK (if they had not been, I don't know what we would have done !). One of our stops was at Scaynes Hill where we became worried about the state of the fish. So we decided to make a "pit stop" at Piltdown Pond where we changed the water, after which the fish were fine and all alive and well when we reached the waterside at Possingworth.

We heard through the grapevine that the Compton Chamberlain fishery on the Nadder had some surplus rainbows of about 1.5 lbs going for a song and we decided to have 50 for mid season stocking of Wiston. We were still fairly inexperienced in moving fish and were using my camping trailer with a galvanised ex cold water tank and very crude aeration from a 12 volt tyre inflator. This quickly overheated and, when carrying fish, had to be jammed in the part open passenger window to be cooled by the slipstream. We didn't leave Horsham until after Bert and I had come home from work on a weekday evening (I had travelled home from London by train) and had to drive to the other side of Salisbury to collect the fish.

When we arrived at the fishery, the tank was two thirds loaded with water and the fish added. The trailer seemed to be very heavily loaded so we took out some of the water. Just to be on the safe side, I drove slowly down the drive from the fishery, with Bert watching the

trailer from behind. On his advice we offloaded a little more water and set off for Wiston. We stopped after a couple of miles to check that all was OK and to our great concern found that the trailer axles were overheating. But then the heavens opened and it started to pour with rain and didn't stop all the way to Wiston. The rain was a godsend as it continuously cooled the trailer axles.

We thought all our troubles were behind us – but after not so many miles, a roadside branch removed the aerator from the passenger window and it was deposited in pieces on the road. Out came the foot pump (normally used for inflating a blow up bed) and Bert kept the fish alive whilst I found the bits of the aerator and reassembled them. With the aerator now working, we set off again for Wiston. But the aerator completely gave up the ghost before we arrived and it was back to the foot pump. We arrived at Wiston long after dark and took the cover off the tank. Our fish were all alive but it seemed that they were all nudging the aerator stone! We slowly added pond water to acclimatise the fish and when we were satisfied they were recovered from their long journey, we carefully released them into Wiston. The water was clear and we waited some time to check with our torch that there were no casualties on the bottom.

For a few years, we obtained our browns from the Houghton Club where Mick Lunn was the head keeper – the third generation Lunn in this role. They produced a substantial number of fish, mainly for stocking their water on the Test, and sold the surplus. Peter and I used to collect the fish using our own trailer and a large galvanised ex water tank. Peter had worked on munitions during WW2 and was virtually stone deaf. So on our trips together, I had to do a lot of shouting; and Peter had the unnerving habit of turning to look at me whenever he spoke and even sometimes when I was talking, often taking his eyes off the road for seconds at a time! On one occasion, we arrived at Houghton only to find that Peter had left the screw stopper for the tank at home. We stood around for a while discussing with a couple of Mick's staff how we could sort the problem. Then Mick turned up, quickly found

an old length of broom handle, cut off about 4 inches and tapered the end with his pocket knife. A couple of bangs with a hammer, and we had a bung firmly fixed into the outlet of our tank!

Another trip to collect fish – this time rainbows – was to Seaford College. Their trout lake is beside the A285 just after the entrance to the college south of Duncton. At the time they had their own stew ponds. Peter and I went to collect the fish and to access the stewponds, we had to drive across the field to the south of the lake. Whilst we were loading the water and fish into the tank, it started to rain and by the time we were ready to go it was tipping down.

We successfully negotiated some of the field back to the road but it became progressively softer and eventually we became well and truly stuck – even with four wheel drive. So we walked back to the stewponds and arranged for the college's Landrover to give us a tow. But it got stuck too! Someone then came up with a brilliant idea. A JCB was driven across the field and parked in front of us, the hydraulic locks were lowered to fix it to the ground, the arm was extended forward and roped to the front of Peter's four wheel drive and the JCB driver then retracted the arm and dragged us forward about a yard. This operation was slowly and laboriously repeated until we reached the gate by the road. We were hugely grateful to the staff at Seaford College and in spite of the considerable delay, the fish were fine.

John Baker

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Thank you, John Baker, for this excellent series.

The final instalment, *Tales from the Trout Section (Part 3)*, will be in next year's *Sussex Piscator*. It features wildlife issues such as mink and cormorants, building the lake at Lower Buddington, and the SPS tenancy at Cheriton Mill.

All such reminiscences are most welcome. If any longstanding members would like to contribute, please do drop me an email:

jonsleeper@btopenworld.com *Jon Stewart*



An Ear to Ear Grin

I have a story to tell, so let me begin
About a boy who grew an ear to ear grin
At five he was taken along to the pond
With the men of the family, now sadly all gone

With a split cane rod and centrepin reel
A homemade float from grandad's creel
"This is it," he thinks, "my floats going in"
And one roach later he had an ear to ear grin

As years go by, he turns in to a man
Yet as soon as he gets a rod in his hand
And forgets about the world, his nagging old dear
That big old grin is quick to appear

Thirty years later and now it's my turn
To pass on the knowledge and set this passion to burn
My boy and me, sat down by the stream
"What will we catch dad, a shark or a bream?"

"Sshhhh" I reply, as I hook on the worm
And think to myself, "Its Mr Chub's turn"
In goes the worm then suddenly "we're in"
I hand him the rod and see that ear to ear grin.

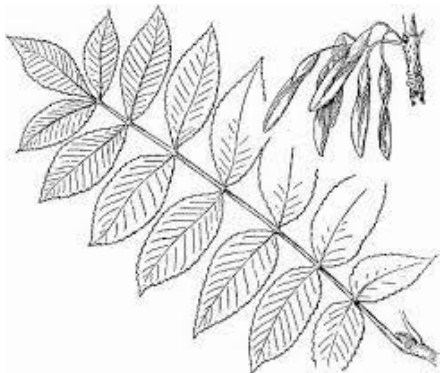
Rob Webber

How ash dieback and a beetle attack may affect the ash trees around SPS waters

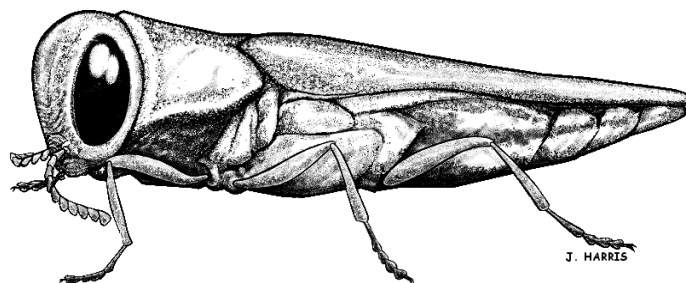
A double whammy of an emerald borer beetle and the fungus causing ash dieback disease could kill millions of ash trees in the UK and Europe, a recent study warned. The loss of the ash, one of the most abundant tree species in the UK, would mean losing even more trees than the 15 million elms killed by Dutch elm disease in the 1970s. Something that permanently reshaped the UK's tree scape. Ash is the most common hedgerow tree, with 60,000 miles of tree lines, and the second most common tree in woodland after the oak. There are many ash trees in towns and cities, and (of course) hundreds around our own waters.



“Between ash dieback and the emerald ash borer, it is likely that almost all ash trees in Europe will be wiped out, just as the elm was largely eliminated by Dutch elm disease,” said Peter Thomas, a tree ecologist at Keele University, UK, whose analysis was published in the *Journal of Ecology* in 2016. “The two together are a double whammy.”



The arrival of the emerald ash borer, originally from Asia but which has devastated North American ash and is now as close as Sweden, is inevitable: “It is only a matter of time before it spreads across the rest of the Europe – including Britain. Our European ash is very susceptible to the beetle and the beetle is set to become the biggest threat faced by ash in Europe – *potentially far more serious than ash dieback*. It is quite a big beetle, originally from Asia, and can fly a long way. In the past, insect diseases have spread very quickly,” he told the Guardian, and attempts to halt its spread in North America by trying to catch male beetles in traps baited with female pheromones have failed.



Ash dieback was first reported in the UK in 2012 but given the large number of sites it was found at, it must have arrived earlier, Thomas said. It remains unclear how many ash will die, as it can take years for mature trees to succumb. But 95% could be eventually be lost in the worst case scenario, which has played out in Denmark already. “We already have lots that are mortally wounded,” Thomas said.

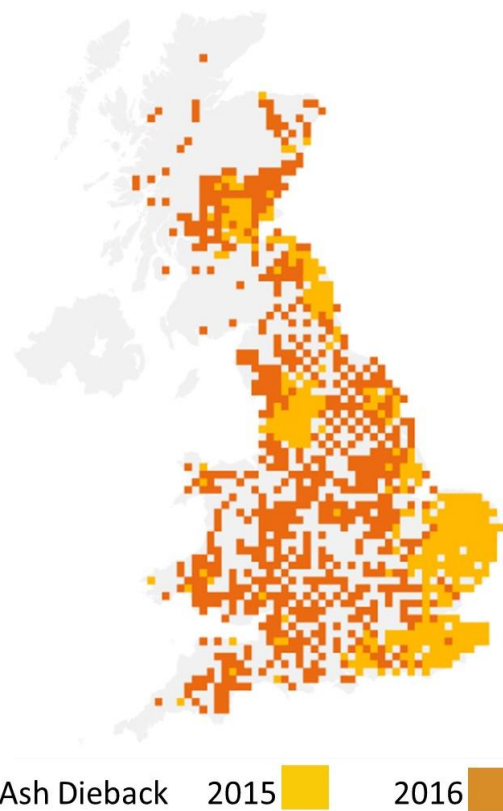
Ash dieback will be virtually impossible to eradicate from the UK as its spores can be blown more than 10 miles in the wind and survive on woodland floors for four or five years. However, ash trees have a very wide genetic diversity and some are resistant to the fungus. Three genetic markers have already been identified and will be used to select trees for future planting efforts. The genes that give the special strains their resistance could also be inserted into trees via genetic engineering. A spokeswoman for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said: “Natural tolerance to the disease exists and the UK is leading the way on work to

identify resistant strains, investing more than £21m in tree health research. Our approach also includes protecting non-infected areas and managing infected trees.”

Defra has identified the emerald ash borer as a “significant threat” and worked with other EU nations to introduce restrictions to protect against its spread. Imports of ash trees have been suspended since ash dieback was first recorded in the UK. “If the ash went, the British countryside would never look the same again,” Thomas said.

Beyond the loss of the trees themselves, the species is associated with over 1,000 species of animals, birds and plants. In particular, over a 100 species of lichens, fungi and insects would decline or become extinct if the ash was gone. While it may well be too late to save most ash trees, more could have been done sooner: “It beggars belief that we had known this disease was coming for decades but we didn’t do anything about it.”

Jon Stewart



Identifying Ash Dieback in the Field

Suspected cases of ash dieback should be reported to: tree_health_england@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



(1) Distinctive diamond-shaped lesion on the smooth bark of a young ash tree



(2) Early signs: discoloured brown twigs and wilting leaves (left, rear)



(3) Late stage dieback: dead leaves and badly discoloured bark. *Note: clumps of dark coloured dried ash keys (seeds) hanging from trees in the autumn are easily mistaken for the disease.*

Text adapted from Damian Carrington's article for *The Guardian* on 23rd March, 2016.
Stills from Forestry Commission's **"How to identify Chalara ash dieback in the field"** (YouTube)

Angling in the 1960s

Some articles in old publications are worthy of re-printing; this issue of our magazine has two, both of them retrieved from Jon Clark's collection by Mike Andrews who recognised the interest to members that each would hold.

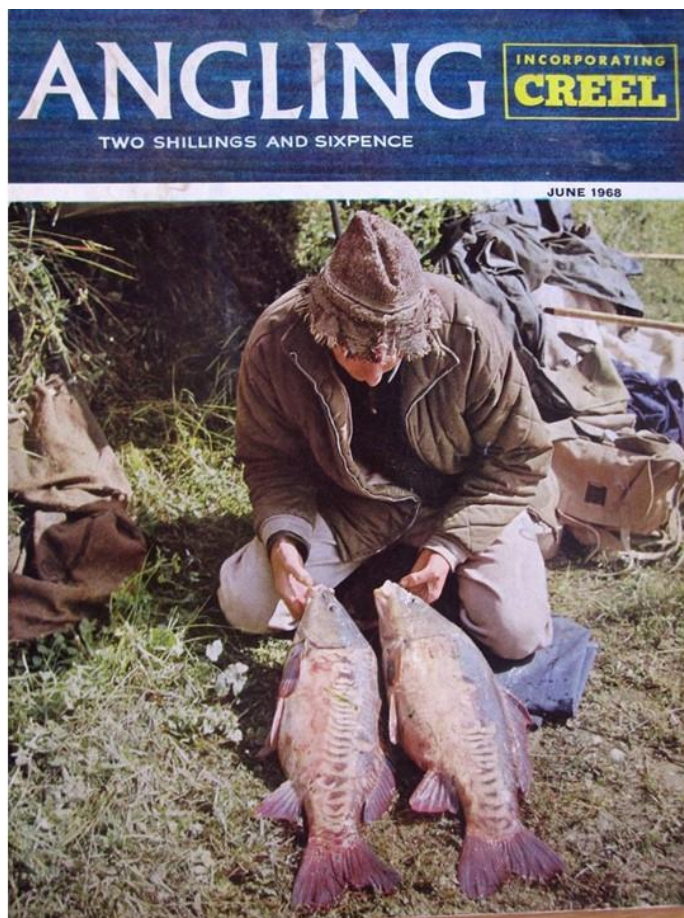
Mike writes: **'Instant Specimens'** will immediately be recognised as an older piece as it says of carp '...fifteen-pounders are common.' Such fish barely warrant comment these days.

We are reaping the so-called rewards of which we were warned all those years ago – developments in stocking and feeding that were started by the '...trout tycoons of the chalk streams...' (!) To the wels, zander and huge foreign carp mentioned, I would add arctic char, tiger trout, blue trout, golden trout

and so-on. What have we learnt in these fifty years?

It comes from 'Angling' magazine, the issue of January 1966. Fifty years ago: what foresight the writer Brian Bearfield had.

'Carp On The Jigged Moth' is from another 60s issue of 'Angling' and is a captivating piece. It was a very early angling article from a professional photographer and designer of LP album covers, then in his early twenties, who became renowned for his writing in many periodicals and for his books. This article was praised in print by none other than Dick Walker. The outstanding angler of his generation has been very kind and generous in giving us permission to re-print this."



Instant Specimen: When does a well-stocked fishery become an aquarium?

Not so long ago, the game fishes only were considered to be worth preserving. All others were considered and treated little better than vermin. How different it is today. Now, the status-creating barbel and carp, followed closely by chub and pike, take equal place beside trout and salmon.

Anglers too have changed; the modern angler is skillful and well-equipped. Few are content now just to catch three or four hefty fish in a season amongst a host of smaller creatures, yet few have the time or the patience of the solitary specimen hunter who happily spends hours seeking and stalking his big fish.

The modern angler seeks a short cut, a way to avoid the waiting and the patient prowling of the river banks. In short, he seeks instant specimens and often finds them in the growing number of waters that are being artificially stocked with large fish.

But if this system of stocking fishing waters is continued, where will it lead? Already certain waters have become noted for their large carp, chub, pike and so on, and naturally the predominant species is encouraged. From here it is but a short step to specialisation and to the exclusive preservation of that species.

Of course the trout tycoons of the chalk streams have been doing this for years. Where these streams are preserved for trout, the trout are large and plentiful, but the battle to keep competitors away is constant and costly.

Undoubtedly the specialised barbel, chub or pike fishery has definite advantages, but in all controversial things there is always the problem of where to draw the line. In Yorkshire there is a trout fishery that the owner stocks regularly with large fish and then supplements their natural food supply to encourage these fish to grow even larger. Another water, a large pond, was first netted and then filled with fish, most of which were well over a pound. On this water young boys regularly catch roach which hover around the two-pound mark. Then there is a carp lake where again the fish are hand fed and where fifteen pounders are common.

The absence in Hornsea Mere of the quality roach caught in the days of Wilfred Cutting, is

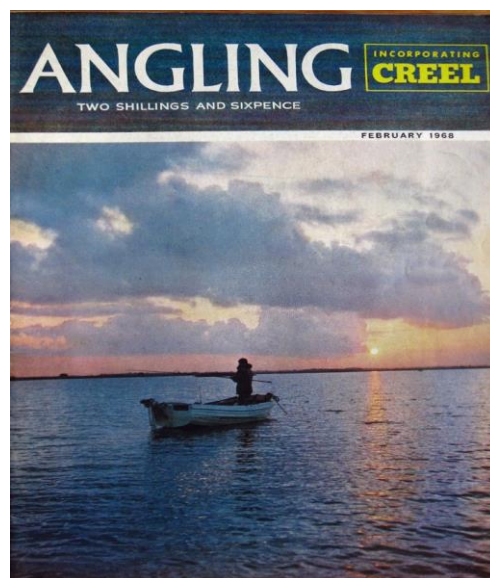
an example of specialised pike preservation. These sacrifices all made to satisfy the craze to catch the greatest and the heaviest, could be just a beginning.

If this cult is continued, the largest will not be large enough and we could see the heavyweight horrors of the continent introduced into a growing number of lakes and rivers. The repulsive wels (the giant catfish of the Danube) and the savage zander or pike-perch could become as common as the carp and the rainbow trout, our other prominent importations.

I admit that preserved, spoon-fed fish still have to be caught, and sometimes can be as shy as wild fish, but to my mind the greatest satisfaction in fishing comes to combining skill and watercraft with our inborn hunting instincts and from seeking out the specimens for ourselves. Large fish in fisheries do not in the long run give better fishing; they give only a greater weight of catches.

Even if so-called natural fisheries, or stretches of water left completely to nature are almost non-existent in this country, our waters as they are, are still better than "angling aquariums" filled to the brim with big fish.

Far better that we concentrate our cash and efforts into improving the productivity of the waters and so create conditions where more fish have a chance to live naturally and grow larger naturally.



Carp on the Jigged Moth

Shortly after I had the idea of transcribing this from the original for re-publication here, "cookie", "damper" and "steve st clair" were coincidentally engaging in a dialogue on the Society's web-forum on this very subject. Their exchanges under the appropriately titled "Fly Fishing For Carp" is worth reading.

I very much enjoyed Peter Wheat's article in the September issue. The bit that really interested me was what he had to say about the American technique of fishing for big carp with fly tackle, for this season I have been putting some serious thought into fly fishing for carp – with some success.

It started one evening in July when I was trying unsuccessfully to catch a big carp on floating crust. I could see the fish swimming around, stopping here and there to push his fat head out of the water, as if he wanted to know what was going on above him. Suddenly a big white moth came spiralling down and landed with a splutter in the lake, only inches from the carp. What happened then was so quick that it took me a little time to realise what was going on. There was a flurry in the water and the moth just disappeared. The carp had grabbed it without hesitation and he swam slowly off leaving me on the bank with my head full of brilliant new ideas.

I packed up immediately; it had taken four hours of hard fishing not to take that fish on crust and yet it had taken only four seconds for that carp to take a moth. But next time it took a moth, I hoped, it would be an artificial with my hook in it!

When I got home I immediately began the manufacture of one of the largest artificial flies ever tied. Two stiff white feathers were cut from a shuttlecock and tied to a number 2 Goldstrike hook. When the body had been added and the wings separated it looked even more like a moth than the one which had landed in the lake. I felt sure of at least some success.

By next evening I was back at the lake with my nine foot fly rod, a leader ending with a six pound point and my "bat-sized" moth. However, there was a big drawback I had

overlooked – it would have been all right to use such tackle in an open, weed-free water, but here, with the nearest snag only twenty feet away, it was going to be futile trying to stop a big carp with just a medium-action fly rod. I was just asking for trouble, as you will see!

I got into a good casting position and began to extend line out towards a weedbed. I'm pretty useless at casting, even with a small fly, but the sheer size of the moth I was using made it even more difficult. I managed it in the end and the moth landed with a plop only inches from the desired spot. After a slow retrieve across the surface I jigged it back and cast it out again.



After only ten minutes, while the moth was being jigged back along the surface there was a quick and sudden swirl, the line shot tight and I was into a fish. It all happened so fast and the fish had hooked itself.

As soon as I felt it, I knew it was not "my" fish, but even though it was only small it put up a terrific fight on the fly rod. The carp, a four pound wildie, leapt twice and anybody watching would have been excused for thinking that I was fishing for trout. That carp gave me far more pleasure, though, than any trout I have ever caught. I proved to me that carp could be caught on dry fly tackle and I wasted no time in moving to another pitch and banging that big moth out again.

The sun set over the trees and it began to get dark, but for over an hour the only movement to break the calm surface of the lake was my moth, as again and again, I cast it out with a plop that sent ripples spreading over the quiet water. But if the carp were not rising to my artificial, they were not rising for crust either. I

had scattered a liberal helping into a nearby weedbed but all evening the only thing to take a crust was a very tiny, but very ambitious baby moorhen. Just before dark I moved back into my original pitch and a big ripple not ten feet from the bank, indicated that my carp was at home. It was a long time in coming, but when it did come, the take was a classic.

I was in the middle of a long retrieve when I heard a big rippling sound out where my moth was. I waited but nothing happened, so I began to jig it, making it skip for a couple of feet along the surface. There was a big swirl and the rod was nearly grabbed from my hands. Again, I hardly needed to strike.

At first the carp just plunged round in circles and I thought he was going to come in easily. I felt a bit sorry for him; the poor fish couldn't even trust a moth any more. But I should have been feeling sorry for myself! As soon as the big carp got over his initial shock, he turned and ran like hell! Right then I knew just how helpless I was. My medium action fly rod might just have been a blade of grass. I was only playing the fish with the last three feet of the rod, the rest of it was parallel to the water! The carp had everything its own way. I was just the casual observer waiting for the inevitable to happen. The fish took all my fly line out, went through two weed beds and under a sunken branch. The leader broke and the rod whipped back, flicking the line up in the air so that it landed round my neck and shoulders. I must have looked a sorry sight and I felt even worse. It was great to hook that big carp – a fish of around fifteen pounds – first time by a new method, but it was terrible to lose it. I lost my big moth too!

After that first attempt, I realised just how foolish it was to use my fly rod so I experimented with various other heavier action fly rods and eventually came round to trying my floppy old Mk. IV Avon. I had always thought that it might make a good fly rod with that smooth, beautifully fluid action. To my delight it was perfect. It could cast a big fly with ease and I could get a lot more distance out of it than I could with my other rod. Even though it was a bit hard on the wrist muscles this did not matter – here was a rod that was pliant enough to cast a fly and with enough strength to play a

carp out of a snaggy swim. I had plenty of confidence in its carping abilities having taken a great many big fish on it, including a twenty pounder.

As soon as a new collection of big white moths was tied, I went back to the carp lake feeling more than confident with my new carp tackle. But the weather had turned against me and the temperature of the water took a plunge for the worse. Even though I could now cast, with comparative safety, over weedbeds and into snaggy areas, I failed to raise a single fish. Disappointed, I had to revert to more standard methods and I managed to hook a baby common of three pounds. It took honey paste but I would have been much more satisfied had it taken one of my big moths.



A pair of Mark IV Avon rods

Since then, and all through the summer, I have tried at various times to catch carp on my "Mk. IV Moth Tackle" and so far, I have been quite successful. Common carp, mirrors and wildies have all fallen to the attraction of that big white moth jigged so alluringly over their heads. Although these fish have only been up to eight pounds, I am confident that it is only a matter of time before I get a real big one on dry fly. I did manage to get one of these heavies, but like that other one, I lost it! It might be interesting to relate what happened, though.

I had been working on this estimated ten-pounder for over an hour and he was just beginning to build up his confidence when a much bigger fish cruised up to the moth, stopped and looked at it for a long time. I jigged it across the surface and he followed it, like a pike after a plug, until I stopped jigging; then he came up underneath it, opened a cavernous

mouth and lazily sucked the big moth down. But he just hung there in the water. I could see the moth held between his lips and I knew it would be hopeless to strike. For one heart-stopping moment, that carp and I waited, watching each other. In the end I gave in and struck, just for the hell of it! To my amazement, I hit it!



The fish took off like a torpedo, making a big arrow in the water and heading straight for the nearest lilies. Swinging the rod over, I piled on side strain to try to turn it. It slowed down, came up to the top and went down again. But my line did not follow it! The hookhold gave and the moth came out of the water like a rocket-assisted mayfly! Losing that fish was even worse than losing the other big one. I had some friends watching and I was trying to impress them and prove to them that carp could be caught on a dry fly. At least they had seen one hooked, even if it was only lightly!

What is so attractive about this type of fishing is that it seems to work well on days when floating crust is poked about and not eaten and when a big moth dropped close to a cruising fish sometimes produces an almost immediate take. I am not saying that it will ever be as deadly as floating crust but it seems that the carp do not regard the moth with as much suspicion, and this is where the method scores.

I am sure that there must be other carp fishers around who are also trying this technique, but the fact remains that it is very little used. However, if a run of very big carp are taken on fly tackle, many more anglers will accept it as a new carp fishing technique and perhaps try it out for themselves. But then the carp will get wise to it as well.

I feel I should say that I have only found success with it where I could spot and stalk a carp. You can't just flick out a moth and wait for a carp to swim along and take it. The artificial has to work in a life-like manner. Just the same as surface plugging for pike, really, except that you have to be far more subtle about it.

After reading Peter Wheat's article I am going to try nymph fishing in the deeper water where I would not usually be able to raise a fish. This method might prove successful with the bigger carp.

Naturally, I have already had complaints about using fly tactics for carp. I can't think why. Somebody said I couldn't use an artificial bait until October and somebody else said it was against the law! More probably it was just that they wanted to complain simply because I was catching a few fish by a new method while they, using the more standard carp technique, had caught nothing!

I expect that reference to success with carp on a Mk. IV Avon will have told you that the writer of this article was Mr. Yates himself, who has kindly given his permission to reproduce it here in The Sussex Piscator.

It was first published in "Angling" magazine in the issue of December 1969.

Mike Andrews



A Duncton Mill Char

I caught this lovely char at Duncton Mill on a very hot steamy day. It took four hours stalking out of a nice shoal of about eight fish.

I had to try everything in the fly box straight past their noses. One finally took it off here's ear off the bottom of the lake.

What a lovely spot and top fishing! *Alastair Milne*



A new member takes a punt at Possie

I drove straight past the entrance, of course. I mean, why would you turn into the rear drive of somebody's stately home? I then missed the left turn off to the car parking place. I'm a bit vague about how I eventually found it; it took a little while, involved a multipoint turn on a dirt track and the removal bits of rhododendron bush from under my rear suspension.



Laden with gear, I'm deep into the woods, having rejected the right turn down to where I now know the lake is. As a last resort, I apply brain and walk downhill. Walking through acres of amazing bluebells and chartreuse-coloured, newly leaved beech trees, I arrive at a rather lovely wooden bridge with a fabulous view across a picture-perfect lake. There's nobody else here, the sun is dappled through the trees, there's a slight ripple on the water and a trout rising off to the right next to the island. Maybe it'll be worth all the bother...

I decide to walk around the lake and size it up. There's a chimney stack without a house attached; it'll be nice when it's finished. Half way round I spot the jetty with the punts on the other side of the lake and realise that I've walked the wrong way round the lake. Well no surprises there, given experience so far today. Reaching the dam wall there's a notice about not walking across it because of recent seeding. So I get lost in the woods again and wonder if I'll ever get a fly into this jinxed water.

Finally arriving at the jetty, I see the path I should have used going straight up to the car

park and sit on the bench to admire my navigational incompetence whilst tackling up. Raring to go, I walk over to the box that I figure holds the oars and with a sinking heart I see the padlock. I don't have the code, it's in my documents back in the car. But wait! I can get it from the SPS joining email on my phone. But of course there's no signal down here – of course there isn't, why make it easy? I was on my way back to the car before remembering that the code is the association's founding date and that there's some sort of anniversary of it. 50, 75, 100? 125? 150? Was it this year, last year, next year? You can imagine.

Feeling smug having guessed the code at only the 6th attempt I'm in the punt with the oars and I remember that the last time I was in a rowing boat was 40 years ago with an ice cream and a girl. I don't know whether you've ever tried it, but it's incredibly difficult rowing a boat with the rowlocks behind you. I can confirm that it is just about possible but difficult, inelegant and very inefficient – surely I was better at this with a girl on-board or she wouldn't have married me? I rearrange myself and blunder my way into the middle somehow.

This boat has two huge iron weights tied to ropes that I recognize as balancing weights in Victorian sash windows. On a roll now I figure that they're anchors, so I bung one over the side and immediately get a rope burn attempting to stop it hurtling to the bottom and burying itself three feet into the mud like a broken Polaris. I won't do that again. (I did.)

By now I'm almost too frazzled to fish so I have a coffee and take in the situation. There doesn't seem to be any fish at the surface now – no surprise given my clowning around with weights, oars and rowlocks. That anchor went pretty deep so I tie on a weighted black buzzer on the point and a lighter one six feet further up and settle down finally to fishing. This, at least, I can do with a measure of confidence.

The rest of the day is a kind of bliss, I catch fish steadily; they're all in great condition including a very large brown that came to the first fly I ever tied onto my line many years ago - and also the first fly I ever tied - a black and peacock spider fished just sub-surface in the



Beautiful Possingworth Lake, viewed from the bridge

shallows. At one point the sun was bright and the water a flat calm so I stopped to have lunch. Afterwards I lay down in bottom of the boat and dozed for half an hour feeling like 'no-good boyo' in Under Milk Wood. I wondered what I'd done to deserve this kind of life.

Eventually I reached my limit and made to go home, enjoying for the first time the joys of maneuvering the punt back into its position at the jetty - does anybody do this prettily? The day ended in farce just as it had begun when it came to locking the boat back up - I'd lost the lock. Couldn't find it anywhere - not in the boat, my pockets and bags or, even in the water around the jetty. Gone. That night I wrote an apologetic email to Terry Scragg's offering to pay for a new lock. I received a very understanding reply saying that the water keeper would go down with another lock in the morning.

The next day I received a copy of an email which I don't think I was meant to see:

"Nic popped down to Possingworth this morning to arrange for a new lock on punt 1. He found the punt had been moored up the wrong way round so the lock was on the other end! Probably best not to embarrass Colin."

Oh, well, I had had a great day. And what a joy it is to return fish instead of having to perform acts of mass butchery that's the norm elsewhere.

I've fished 'Possie' half a dozen times since that first day and managed not to disgrace myself in quite the same way – I'm even pretty competent with a pair of oars now. I suspect I'll be going back there regularly for as long as it's part of the association, which, with a bit of luck will be a long time.

Colin Duffy

SPS Autumn Social Meeting, Weds 16th November 2016

The chairman, Nic Stenhouse gave a brief opening address. He offered a warm welcome to the 60 or so members and guests attending the evening in this, the 125th year of the Society's existence. This is an occasion where members can meet those who serve on the committees, eat, drink and share views with fellow members and celebrate the successes as well as hearing about some of the challenges.



This year there was also the opportunity to learn more about fly dressing from Phillip Ellis who set up a stall for the evening. There was no guest speaker this year but members were entertained by a session from John Parsons the SPS Treasurer.

Nic thanked the members of the three committees for another year of hard work. The year saw a successful Juniors Day/ Summer BBQ at Plashett Lakes. Also the acquisition of Pond Lye, the historic venue fished by the SPS since 1891. Finally he encouraged all members to sign up for the web site which is now the only way of making guest bookings.

Coarse Section update and Q&A.

Keith Russell, Mike Andrews and Paul Spiers.

The committee advised members that the punts at Burton Mill Pond, out of action for some weeks due to work on the landing stage, should be available soon. All members are encouraged to give this venue a try, the fishing can be superb.

Wellingham Pond, the Society's first owned venue is looking in great shape having benefited from new estate fencing and car park. The water is fishing well.

Plashett's Lake is experiencing problems with geese, whose droppings are infecting fish with an eye condition called red eye. The committee reminded members that if they lose tackle on the island, they should contact the officers named in the booking station.

As everyone knows we finally purchased Pond Lye in October and work on planning the changes to comply with the Reservoirs Act can now begin (more on this below).

Q. Are the committee looking for more feedback on fishing the Kennet?

A. Yes. There are not enough members fishing the river, which offers a rare chance to catch barbel. The same few anglers book the river. The Kennet and the Avon offer different opportunities and while challenging are both well worth a fish.

Q. Can dual members fish with fly on Coarse waters?

A. Yes (provided it is safe to do so) The committee particularly recommend fly fishing for carp on Plashett's middle lake and there are suitable stretches for fly fishing on the Ouse and Cuckmere. In addition Trout Section and dual members can fish the Avon from early April until 15 June. Members were reminded that if fishing for salmon or sea trout they must have a Migratory fish licence from the EA.

Trout Section update and Q&A session.

Tony Camilleri, Tony Fox and Dave Hole.

The committee referred to a challenging year. Generally the fish caught have been of excellent quality and this is thought to be at least partly due to feeding over the Winter. There have been problems though.

There was sadly an extensive fish kill at Lower Buddington in May, the reasons for which are still not clear. We lost many large trout as well as eels and even sticklebacks.

As everyone knows there is a severe weed problem at Wiston and Lower Buddington, which is being addressed by engaging contractors. These are specialists who have been fully booked, which is why the work will not be undertaken until the end of this month (more on this below). There are some excellent fish waiting to be stocked so the fishing this Winter and next Spring should be fine.

The committee decided to increase the number of Trout Section members this year from 155 to 175, to provide more income and also to reflect the additional fishing venues now available. Hopefully this has not resulted in the lakes feeling more crowded.

The committee plan to introduce payment of subscriptions, guest booking etc by Paypal.

SPS now offers a wide range of fishing opportunities. There is conventional lake fishing, wild trout at Cheriton, grayling, sea trout and salmon on the Itchen and Test. There is also the river Teise which is well worth a try. At the same time, the Society is raising its profile as a conservationist through the work we are doing on the Itchen in alliance with the Wild Trout Trust.

The committee confirmed they intend to retain the fishing arrangement at Duncton Mill.

Q. Was the October catch return showing 30 fish caught at Colin Godmans right? Didn't the season end on 30 September?

A. The season ended on 31 October. (formerly 30 September). This is the only water where we have a Winter close season, because the owners actually live on site.

Q. Any developments at Possingworth Park?

A. We understand that the property is under offer. If it is sold we must hope that our good record as tenants there over 80 years will stand us in good stead with the new owner. In any

case we have managed to secure a two year protected lease.

John Parsons – Treasurer

John gave an entertaining talk on the perceptions of the Treasurer on some current issues.

1). Salmon fishing is subsidised by “ordinary” members: He explained that the cost of the salmon fishing beat on the river Test this year, which entitles 2 members to fish per fortnight, is £900. A total of 15 members have fished this year, paying £60 each i.e £900 in total. So the net cost to the SPS is Nil.

Against this, the cost of maintaining our fishing at Possingworth amounts to some £10k a year, taking account of the annual rent, maintenance and cost of stocking fish. A total of 332 days fishing by members and guests to date this year, works out at £30.55 per day.

The committee constantly review the respective real costs of fishing the Society's waters and make a judgement on whether to keep them or not. And use the same criteria in assessing new waters. The aim is always to continue to provide a full range of fishing opportunities.

2). SPS has for some years grown some of our own fish stocks in stock ponds at Possingworth, trickle stocking various waters with the partly grown fish. There is a lot of work in this for a few committee members and volunteers. Up to now the committee has been satisfied that the effort is worth it economically, but latterly it has proved as cheap to buy in fish stock from professional stockists. So we are to dispense with the stock ponds.

3). The weed problem. John has been an SPS member for over 30 years and this is the worst year he can remember for weed growth on the trout lakes, particularly Wiston and Lower Buddington. The fact that the lakes have been unfishable for weeks past has presented the committee with a dilemma. Either do nothing and hope the problem resolves itself (and risk disgruntled members resigning) or bite the bullet and spend money trying to resolve the problem. Given that Wiston and Lower Buddington are the key trout waters for West Sussex members the decision was taken to spend up to £9000 on specialist contractors to cut and remove the weed with amphibious

machines (there is too much weed to make any impact by conventional means). In addition more funds will be committed on a follow up clearance next Spring to ensure the fishing next Spring and Summer. The SPS general fund will cover this expenditure.

4). The purchase of Pond Lye: Acquiring Pond Lye, fished by the SPS since 1891, has cost so far around £50,000 including the purchase price, reports, surveys and fees. Having bought it we need to commit substantially more funds to bring the water up to standard to comply with the Reservoirs Act. This will mean work on the spillway and dam. Again this was a difficult decision for the committee and caused much soul searching in the process, given that we were committing such large amounts of members' funds. The committee hopes to keep future expenditure to a manageable sum each year using volunteers to get as much of the work done as possible.

But the reward at the end will be a very valuable, permanent asset for the Society.

Presentation of trophies: President Charles Gallanaugh presented the following trophies:

SPS Challenge Shield to Keith Russell for a 2lb 6oz Roach from Pond Lye.

Hasted Salver to Russ Evans for a 23lb pike from the River Ouse (trophy collected by Paul Spiers on Russ' behalf).

Junior Challenge Shield to Cameron Luxford for all round enthusiasm and effort (trophy collected by Mike Andrews on Cameron's behalf)

Robin Dainty Tench Shield no nominations this year so the trophy was not presented

Malcolm Rippin Memorial Trophy to Keith Russell for excellent and untiring service as Coarse section Membership Secretary and in particular this year, for his efforts on the acquisition of Pond Lye.

The 125th Annual General Meeting of the Sussex Piscatorial Society

Wednesday 18th May 2016, Steyning Centre
Approximately 50 Members attended.
Minutes taken by Derek Easey (Hon Sec).

1. **Welcome** by the Chairman (Nic Stenhouse)
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of the 124th AGM

4. **Chairman's Report**

Members had been sent a copy of the Chairman's written report for 2016 as part of the AGM meeting pack. Nic paid tribute to all those people who make the Society work; the members of the committees, the water keepers, volunteers at work parties and the members of the main committee. He also thanked Bob Burbidge for his tireless work as our web master and Jon Stewart for producing the society magazine.

5. **Treasurer's Report** (including presentation of Annual Accounts)

Treasurer John Parsons could not attend the AGM so Nic presented the Society Accounts, an audited summary of which had been included in the AGM pack. There were no questions from the floor but two questions had been submitted before the meeting:

Q. "With regard to the Accounts, I note that there is no entry for dual membership and wondered why that was".

A. "We don't show a separate item in the Accounts for dual membership because we do not collect the information. We have figures for membership income from the Coarse Section and from the Trout Section but we don't identify separately income from dual members. This would be extra work for the two Membership Secretaries for no useful purpose".

Q. "With regard to working parties, does the society insurance cover such activity and if not, may I suggest that the society rules include a disclaimer in case of injury occurring at such an event".

A. "Yes they are covered, either by the Public Indemnity or the Employer's components of the insurance. But we would expect members who operate power tools such as chain saws to carry their own insurance and be qualified to use the tools safely. And we would expect all members to take proper care when working on the Society's behalf."

The Accounts were unanimously approved.

6. Coarse Section Q&A

(Mike Andrews, Keith Russell, Paul Spiers)

Q: Is it necessary to maintain two gates to get into the lake at Firle. The inner gate seems superfluous?

A: The gates at Firle are the Estate's responsibility. We will ask the Managing Agent if the inner gate can be removed or left unlocked.

Q: Any plans to enlarge Wellingham Pond?

A: No plans to enlarge the water. Maintenance is required to cure a leak in the dam. We also plan to do some excavating, clearing trees and reeds. The Society is generally quite restricted as to what we can do at Wellingham.

Q: Are there, as it appears, fewer herons this year at Firle? If so do we know why?

A: Yes. RSPB advise that this is normal as birds come and go, year to year.

Q: Is it still the practice to move carp from the middle lake at Plashett Lakes to the top lake?

A: This exercise has finished for the time being.

Q: Is SPS in danger of losing any waters or has any prospect of acquiring new ones?

A: Apart from Primrose Pond and the stretch of the Cuckmere that went with it, we have not lost any waters. Primrose's owner simply wouldn't negotiate about issues affecting the water. We are always looking out for additional waters but there is nothing in view at present.

Q: Where are all the barbel in the Kennet! I've fished there four times and not seen one!

A: It's a mark of the Society's progress and ambition that we can discuss fishing on waters such as the Kennet, the Avon, Itchen and Test!

7. Trout Section Q&A

(Tony Camilleri, Tony Fox, Terry Scragg)

Q: When would it be possible for CS member to fish the river Teise (out of the trout season)?

A: We are trying to come to an arrangement with the Teise syndicate. Their season runs from April to October and they have no agreement with the land owner for Winter.

Q: Could we have an update on Possingworth?

A: [As at the time of the 2016 AGM] We have been advised by Jonathon Pearce the owner of the Possingworth estate that the property is being put back on the market shortly. The asking price last year precluded any possibility

of SPS making a bid. We have recently signed a new licence which should give us security of tenure for a while. Members will be kept informed of developments.

Q: A recent small increase in subscriptions was accompanied by an increase in membership limit from 155 to 175. Is this trend likely to continue?

A: Probably. The subscription increase met our rising costs, particularly maintenance and stocking fish. However the rise in membership has been balanced by the acquisition of additional trout waters, Duncton Mill and the rivers Itchen and Teise.

8. Honorary Membership

Honorary Membership is granted for a period of one year by the SPS Committee. Members were informed that the Committee had reviewed and updated the list of Honorary Members who are as follows: Chris Hodder, David Douglas, Steve Crouch, Jim Smith, Robin Howard, Robert Squires, Kelvin Foord, David Hall, John Goddard.

9. Election of Officers

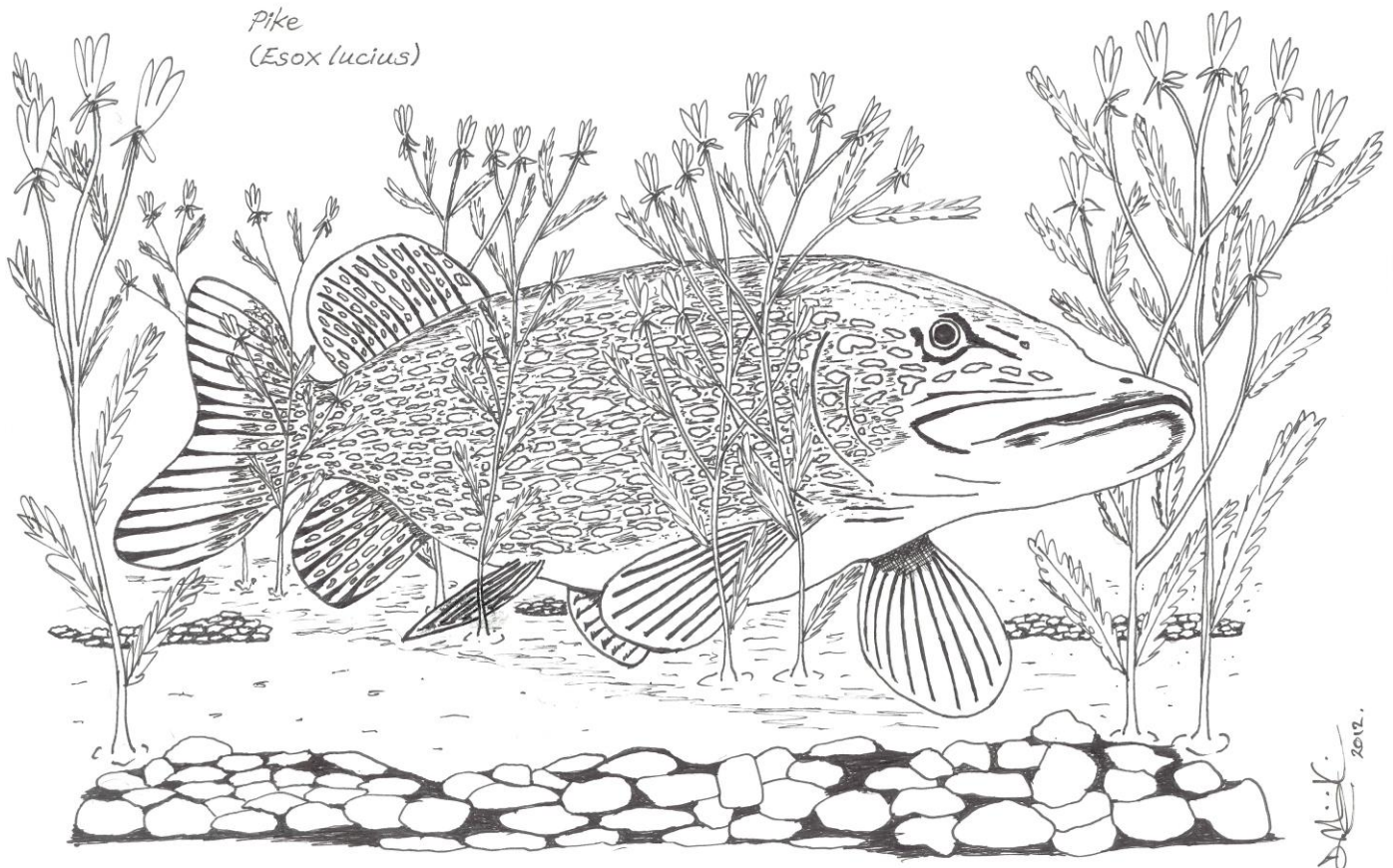
In accordance with Rule 5, the Officers of the Society retired. All stood for re-election apart from Terry Scragg. Dave Hole was nominated as the new Trout Membership Secretary. The following officers were (re)elected.

Chairman, Nic Stenhouse; **Hon Sec**, Derek Easey; **Treasurer**, John Parsons; **TS Co-ordinator**, Tony Camilleri; **TS Curator**, Tony Fox; **TS Membership**, Dave Hole; **CS Co-ordinator**, Paul Spiers; **CS Curator**, Mike Andrews; **CS Membership**, Keith Russell

Nic Stenhouse paid tribute to Terry Scragg who has worked unceasingly for the last eight years as TS Membership Secretary, during which time the role has grown increasingly demanding with the rise in membership with all the additional interviews and the increased use of the booking system.

In addition Terry has introduced the highly valued monthly water reports. He has conducted all these activities with great charm and good humour. Charles Gallanaugh added his thanks to Terry and informed the meeting that the committee had decided to award him Life Membership.

The meeting approved the award unanimously.



Mr Pike

*To fish is such a joyful thing,
And so much pleasure it does bring.
To make me want to stand and sing,
Come kindly fellow and with you bring.*

*Your rod and reel, hooks and float,
And drift with me upon my boat.
For when we've caught fish from this moat,
Great tales we'll tell, and how we'll gloat.*

*Of pike the size of submarines,
Caught on smelt and tinned sardines.
Oh how they fought and how we beamed,
While catching fish beyond our dreams.*

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