

# NEWSLETTER

## Toby ate my trout!

*Former keeper's dog in rainbow retrieving revelation!*



Should you find yourself on the river without a landing net, David Percival has found the answer in the form of a canine fish retrieving system called Toby, his Jack Russell.

The terrier's toothy talent was discovered by the President, whose rainbow Toby retrieved from the river before he had time to unshp his net. The fish was

unharmd and went back none the worse for the experience, albeit somewhat confused.

Toby has since further improved his piscatorial skills and will, for a spring roll or a prawn cracker, point out rising fish to members.

The erstwhile Head Keeper is now training Toby to operate the barbeque.

### Welcome to our new members

There are ten new members this year, their patient wait now finally rewarded.

I would like to offer my congratulations to **Richard Cassy, John King, Andrew Middleton, and David Proctor** of Sheffield, **Carl Brumby** of Ellesmere Port, **Peter Lapsley** of London, **Jim Haslegrave** of Melton Mowbray, **Ron Temperton** of Newport, **John Walker** of Rotherham and **Ainslie Kelly** from Baslow, on attaining membership of what is arguably the finest fishing club in the country. I trust that they will have many years to enjoy the free rising trout and grayling of the Derbyshire Wye.

I look forward to meeting them on the riverbank during the forthcoming season.

**-David J Marriott,**  
President C&LFFC

### 2011 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Your membership card will be despatched from our printers in time for the opening of the season on 18th March. If yours should fail to arrive please advise our Membership Secretary, **Chris Pryor**, who can be contacted on 07747 116932. You will be pleased to note that it has been reduced to credit card size to fit in your wallet. It should always be carried whilst fishing and produced on request by the river



keepers or another member. You are also reminded to display your vehicle identification card when on the river, to assist the keepers in their work. Please also ensure that you and your guests are in possession of a valid (i.e. signed) Environment Agency rod licence. EA bailiffs frequently visit our waters, lured by the prospect of a free bacon sandwich and a cup of coffee.

TACKLE REVIEW

"DRY FLY EXPERT" FLOATING FLY LINES



**Top:** a perfect winter rainbow taken on the Dry Fly Expert line above the Bobbin Mill

**Centre:** tea time with Regular Rod in Duck Holds Wood, Had-don Estate



**Right:** the lines

Readers of *Waterlog* magazine will be familiar with the writings of our downstream neighbour, "Regular Rod", a man comfortable with life and certain of opinion. And nothing is more certain than his opinion of the superiority of dark fly lines for river trout fishing. I first came across him in the mid-Seventies when he was already an accomplished all-rounder and a fly fishing disciple of the great John Neville. Those of us who hung on the every word of the late Dick Walker were familiar with his advocacy of black fly lines and many a mill end was ruined by over-enthusiastic dyeing. It was possible to get hold of a mahogany Aircel and I remember fishing with one until it was so cracked that it resembled a string of beads. Let us not dwell on the intervening years of multi coloured fly lines. Suffice to say that RR has now, at great personal outlay, persuaded a British manufacturer to produce a quantity of premium quality lines in a muddy brown, not unlike the aforementioned gem from the Seventies. Called the "Dry Fly Expert", it has an exaggerated forward taper profile, the better to flex the rod during short line work and to "push" the leader forward in a controlled manner.

Having witnessed the scaring effects of light coloured lines on river trout, I can vouch for the effectiveness of the darker line. I took the 4 & 5 weights for a trial by grayling between Christmas and New Year. The lines were supple, even in low temperatures, having very little memory. Being built on a braided core they easily accommodate the needle knot attachment of the sacrificial butt section advocated by RR, although my personal preference is for a furred leader. As he is a split cane devotee, I was concerned that the profile might not suit my armoury

Not cheap at £47 plus postage and packing but the price reflects the quality. Order directly from Regular Rod at [dryflyexpert@o2.co.uk](mailto:dryflyexpert@o2.co.uk) and read more in his blog [www.dryflyexpert.blogspot.com](http://www.dryflyexpert.blogspot.com)

of Sage rods. I need not have worried. The taper was perfect and I was able to place my fly gently and precisely every time. Regrettably the grayling were not cooperating during my brief testing session but I was blessed with a superb Spring spawning rainbow, getting on for 3 lbs. On a black seals fur tungsten bead head jobbie!

DJM

USEFUL LINKS



Ever wondered what that little building is, downstream of the Bobbin Mill Bridge? It houses the river monitoring equipment which automatically sends river level data to the Environment Agency. Our River Conservancy Officer, Don Stazicker, has located the following links to the E A website, which give the river levels at Ashford and Buxton, almost in real time. Put them in your favourites or access them via our website.

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/120755.aspx?stationId=2110](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/120755.aspx?stationId=2110)

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/120755.aspx?stationId=2162](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/120755.aspx?stationId=2162)

SYNAGAPETUS DUBITANS - A FIRST RECORD IN THE UK

by *Stuart Crofts*

The finding of this caddis was a total surprise, not at all planned and just plain lucky! It started as just another day as a fly-fishing guide last September when I met my clients in the lovely market town of Masham. We were to be fishing the river Ure in Wensleydale. Whilst guiding I always carry a small net in my pocket to catch caddis flies as part of my research into these fascinating insects. During the afternoon I was walking past a tiny spring fed stream and I ran my net through the plants alongside, just to see what might be there. Two caddis flies were caught, one of which I recognized immediately as *Crunoecia irrorata*, a common species in small streams. The other I assumed to be another common caddis, *Agapetus fuscipes*, which abound on your stretch of the Derbyshire Wye. However, I've learned never to take things for granted, so I popped them into a collecting tube for proper investigation at home.

As I looked at the latter down the microscope I started shaking as it dawned on me that I was looking at something I had never seen before. After some research I realised that it could be *Synagapetus dubitans*, the male of the species, never before recorded in the UK although found on the Continent. It was always going to be challenged as a freak, perhaps blown in from Europe, but a few weeks later I found another, a female, in the company of Dr Ian Wallace (the UK National Caddis Recorder). It was within a few feet of where the first capture was made. This was great confirmation and now the hunt is on for the larvae which are very similar to other

related species. Unfortunately we have no UK identification keys for larvae or adult and I had to work to European keys to establish its identity.

I am now looking at similar sites in the area to see



if more colonies exist. I sincerely hope so as the stream where they were found is only 30 yards long and so very susceptible to disturbance and pollution. They have probably been there, undiscovered, for thousands of years and it would be a tragedy to lose them now. The area is quite unique, with tufa depositing springs, probably emanating from an ancient deep marine shell bed layer below a predominantly sandstone geology. The water is cold and rich in calcite and I have since discovered that they are found in similar habitat in Europe. As with all caddis species there is very little information about them so my own research will, of course, continue.



The autumn grayling fishing started well. Members of the Grayling Society, who fished as our guests in November following their annual symposium, enjoyed

excellent sport. It became altogether more challenging after the weather turned cold at the end of November but even slight improvements in the temperature

encouraged rising fish in the middle of the day. As the days start to lengthen we can look forward to some Spring Olive and early stonefly hatches, encouraging the grayling to look up.

RIVERCRAFT, FLYFISHING AND ENTOMOLOGY WORKSHOPS



Following the continued popularity of these events, **Steve Moores** will be hosting two more workshops in 2011. He will be ably assisted by **Stuart Crofts**, former England International and entomologist, **Steve Yeomans**, Orvis endorsed guide and instructor, **Cath Johnson**, respected Bat Ecologist and our own **Don Stazicker**, international fly fishing guide and acclaimed film maker. The **Rivercraft Day** will take place on 7th May and a **Bats & Bugs Evening** on 25th June. The cost is £75 per event including lunch/barbeque (but not drinks or gratuities). More details from Steve on 01298 871676.

CAN YOU HELP?



The members of Flyfishers' Lodge, which meets at Ashbourne in Derbyshire, have for the last few years hosted a flyfishing day for disabled and disadvantaged youngsters. This event takes place each May at the Yeaveley trout fishery just outside the town.

The children really enjoy the day, as do their parents and carers. Breakfast and lunch is provided and the local fire crew bring along their fire engine for the children to explore. Presentations are made at the end of the day and each child takes home a certificate and a prize.



*Above: Catching the smile at Yeaveley*

Of course, all this takes money so the members have hit upon a novel way of financing the day. They have scoured their attics and garages for any old bits of fishing tackle that they no longer need and then have them auctioned on Ebay. So far in this way they have raised over £4,000.

**Can you help by donating any of your own surplus tackle to this worthy cause?**

If you can, please contact John Smith on 07787 515142, or alternatively leave your unwanted tackle with the keepers, who will pass it on. It will be gratefully received.

**Rebecca Wylie**, the daughter of a neighbour (and river-watcher) at Litton Mill, is about to embark upon an expedition to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. As our Hon Sec can vouch, this is no stroll in the park and requires great stamina and strength of will. She is undertaking this climb for the benefit of the charity Childreach International and is seeking sponsors. If you are able to support her then please donate via her website <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Becca-is-climbing-4-kids>.

BANK IMPROVEMENTS BETWEEN THE WATERWHEEL & FREDDIE'S WEIR

Timber stacked as a wildlife refuge

Path cleared on true right bank



Access to right bank via the shallows above the metal bridge

Large woody debris acting as an instream flow deflector and fry sanctuary

**The keepers have been opening up the true right bank below Litton Mill during the close season. (See page 6)**

GOOD WISHES TO SHIRTS



Our former Hon Sec, John Shirtcliffe, has just had a hip retrofitted but tells us that he hopes to be running around in time for the new season.

We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him in familiar pose, glass in hand, on Opening Day.



AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!  
STAY AT HOME AND FISH  
IN DERBYSHIRE!

*by Peter Hayes*

Flies and rivers are funny things. We can get to know our rivers, but it's hard to get to know our fly. They almost never do what they're supposed to do. Once in a while, we get it right, and then we have the great pleasure of saying "you just had to be there". Hatch disappointment is common but the "purple patches" that do occur, seem to happen much more frequently on some rivers and much less frequently on others.

My own fishing has dominantly been on the Wiltshire Wylde, which is a proper chalk stream with all the trimmings - except that it is very hard to see fish in if they are not rising. This of course makes it all the more important that fly should hatch. Then about seven years ago I started fishing on the upper Itchen, which is also a proper chalk stream, except that it is so clear and the gravel so golden and clean, that you can see any and every fish that has come out of the weeds to feed (and their disdain for your imitation). On the Itchen I found that on most days nymphs were active enough to bring the trout out to feed without your seeing any hatch.

I had been making occasional forays to the Derbyshire limestone rivers for thirty years and eventually my name came up two years ago for our wonderful Cressbrook & Litton club. When I started seriously fishing the upper Itchen and the Derbyshire Wye, I became very



disappointed in the small - fly hatches on the Wylde and Hampshire Avon. The National Fly Abundance Survey I run based on angler observations, showed that small upwing hatches had drastically declined and remained low on many of the southern chalk streams, though with exceptions such as the upper Itchen.

In the Riverfly Partnership we got the Angler Monitoring Initiative started with its regular kick sweep sampling across many rivers. What it shows is whacking great differences between rivers which demand (but are not getting) explanation. You'll be delighted to know that the Derbyshire Wye is right at the top of the class, with olive nymphs in peak season featuring at 1,500 in a sample and BWO anywhere from 500 to 1,000. But our poor old river Wylde struggles to get 200 olives at most sampling sites, and seldom produces 100 BWO.

There are many other fly-depleted sites on our reputedly iconic southern chalk streams.

And yet high figures like those of the Wye are coming from rivers like the Kentish Stour, the little Tillingbourne in Surrey, the Driffeld Beck and indeed the upper Itchen, while almost-fabulous figures for olives and for BWO come from the little river Ebbel, which is another Avon tributary only a short crow's flight from the Wylde.

What's up? We don't know, but although many factors of the "chalk stream malaise" are present, the biggest finger is pointing at climactic low flows exacerbated by abstraction.

*Above: Grayling in full view on the upper Itchen.*

Don't forget that the Orvis Retail Store in Bakewell continues to offer 10% discount to all members of C&LFFC on presentation of their membership card.



HEAD KEEPER'S REPORT

Chris and I have been hard at work during the winter, removing diseased alders and coppicing younger trees to promote more vigorous growth. This makes for improved disease resistance in the future. We have continued to open up more of the true right bank between Freddie's Weir and the Water Wheel. Sycamores and Willows have been removed to make a pathway and let in more light. Several trunks have been used to repair eroding banks and



others have been felled into the river to create current deflectors, narrowing the stream and speeding up the flow. We have also introduced willow branches and brash to create trout fry "sanctuaries". More casting room has been created at Keepers and on the Point at Water cum Jolly Dale by pollarding back a number of Willows and new steps have been put in at Upperdale.

We have been preparing the ground for the removal and replacement of the Lock Bridge. This project has been hampered by the absence, through injury, of our chosen contractor, not to mention the adverse weather conditions. It is still my hope that the work will be completed before the start of the Season.

The livestock in the meadows adjacent to the Bobbin Mill continue to wreak havoc with the fencing. This is

becoming an increasing problem and we are trying to persuade the farmer to take responsibility for the damage. We are also looking into re-siting one of the cow drinks which was never installed properly in the first place.

Cormorant predation has been a nuisance during the winter, the birds having been driven to us due to frozen lakes and "disruption" by other Estates in the area. It must be said that most damage is being done on the stock ponds rather than on the river but several birds have been witnessed at work on Twin Pools. There has been very little mink activity this year and the trout appear to have enjoyed a successful spawning following the scouring of the gravels in the autumn floods.

Members who would like to help with the pre season litter picking sessions should contact me on 01298 871 676. The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust will be organizing a day in Chee Dale in early March and the residents of Millers' Dale will be out in force later in the month, although no dates have been set as yet.

Finally, don't forget that the grayling season continues until 15th March. Given the right weather conditions you can expect some prolific hatches of Large Dark Olives, Stoneflies and Midges.

*Tight lines, Steve*



Calendar

- March 8th 2011**  
Annual General Meeting
- March 14th 2011**  
Grayling Season Ends
- March 18th 2011**  
Trout Season begins
- May 7th 2011**  
Rivercraft Day
- June 16th 2011**  
Grayling Season begins
- June 25th 2011**  
Bats & Bugs Evening
- July 5th 2011**  
Mid Season Meeting
- October 7th**  
Trout season ends
- November 1st 2011**  
End of Season Meeting

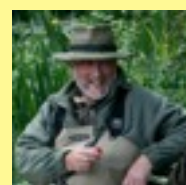
Contributors

STUART CROFTS



Stuart is a highly respected fly fishing guide, entomologist, environmental campaigner & writer.

PETER HAYES



Peter is President of The Wilton Fly Fishing Club, Vice Chairman of the Wessex Chalkstreams & Rivers Trust and joint author of the S&TA's Riverfly Survey.