

NEWSLETTER

Call of Duty!

Meet our new Assistant River Keeper, Rhodri Evans



We have been very fortunate to secure the services of Rhodri Evans as Assistant River Keeper, following the promotion of Chris Dore to Head Keeper. A former Lance Corporal in the Household Cavalry Regiment, Rod has served with the Royal Military Police in Northern Ireland and Iraq as well as in HM the Queen's personal mounted bodyguard during State ceremonial occasions.

Rod is a passionate fly fisher and horseman and received the Provost Marshall's Commendation for outstanding services to the Royal Military Police.

Poachers may wish to reconsider the location of their criminal thieving activities next season!

New Guard Installed

I am delighted that Chris Dore has agreed to become our new Head Keeper following the departure of Steve Moores. Chris has proved himself to be a diligent, popular and hard working river keeper and I am sure that he will be well supported by our new Assistant River Keeper, Rod Evans.

They tell me that they are both determined to make a concerted effort to reduce the incidence of poaching following the pasting we had last season. In future, we will be following a zero tolerance policy, involving prosecution wherever possible.

Finally, I must thank our Erstwhile Head Keeper, David Percival, for stepping in to support Chris over the last few months.

*Dr John H F Smith
President.*

THE SEASON IN RETROSPECT

Following months of snow, rain and below average temperatures it was not surprising that the early part of the season was somewhat trying. High flows gave the ranunculus a good start however, and early fly hatches were good to excellent, partly due to the indifferent weather suiting their lifestyle.

Not surprisingly, the Mayfly were slow to put in an appearance and it was well into the first week of June before they got going. Large hatches were infrequent and the whole affair somewhat spread out and not really

over until the end of June, the upper beats once again having had the best of it.

Once summer proper arrived, the Blue Winged Olives did not disappoint and some very good late evening spinner falls were enjoyed, followed by outstanding caddis activity.

Many members had the experience of connecting with some seriously big fish this season, particularly on Beat 6, which has been very pleasing and augurs well for the future.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee has met on several occasions over the summer. Members will be aware that Steve Moores has left our employ and we wish Steve well in his new career as a Fisheries Consultant.

The position of Head Keeper was offered to Chris Dore, who was pleased to accept. We have subsequently appointed Rhodri Evans as Assistant River Keeper and Jon Whittle remains as River Watcher.

Don Stazicker has continued to liaise with the Environment Agency following the pollution incident last February. It appears that they will not now be taking legal action against the farmer and unbelievably it seems he may actually be eligible for a grant to rebuild the slurry tank.

There was nothing to report on the proposal to close off Magpie Sough, nor on the proposed hydro scheme at Cressbrook Mill. The EA has assured Don that they will advise us should there be any developments with either.

The EA and Severn Trent have intimated that they will be holding an Open Day at Buxton Sewage Works, following the pollution incidents in 2012. Members will be informed once a date has been agreed.

Poaching incidents had increased dramatically during the summer, mostly at Millers Dale. It was agreed that next year we will devote significant time to the prevention of poaching and

adopt a policy of prosecution rather than the on the spot fines we have levied in the past.

Stocking levels will remain the same as last year, with fish being put in the more heavily fished pools.

The Riverfly Monitoring work previously carried out by Steve Moores will be continued by Chris. Stuart Crofts has kindly agreed to provide Chris with appropriate training.

Don had been asked by Chris Dore to look into the possibility of obtaining a culling licence for cormorants and sawbills, which are becoming more common on the river during the winter.

Close season work will be concentrated on Beat 1, which has become heavily overgrown. A large Ash tree fell into Twin Pools at the end of the season and, with the help of Chatsworth's tractor driver, it has already been removed.

Membership Secretary Chris Pryor reported that there were 101 people on the waiting list and that three members have already intimated that they will be resigning due to distance or ill health.

The 50th Anniversary was discussed and plans are well in hand. Hassop Hall has reserved all its rooms for us on 4th October 2014. The question of whether or not a member's spouse would be able to attend was considered. The Banqueting Hall holds a maximum of 150, so with 140+ members plus say another 10 official guests, on the face of it we would struggle to

accommodate them. However, it is most unlikely that all members will be able or wish to attend so members will be asked to indicate if they wish to bring their spouse, to be confirmed later once the potential numbers are known.

The Illustrated River Map is well in hand and we have been assured by the artist that prints will be ready for the AGM in March.

The Cheedale Parking issue was discussed at length. The subsequent outcome is detailed on page 3.

The Treasurer produced a forecast of Income and Expenditure for 2014. To make a modest surplus the Treasurer proposed that subscriptions should be increased to £930, the Joining Fee to remain the same at £650. There was some uncertainty regarding rent increases - both the Bagshawe and Chatsworth leases are due for review in 2014 and neither party is prepared to enter into discussions at this stage.

Other comparable fisheries in Derbyshire will be charging the following subs for 2014:

Haddon	£895
Chatsworth	£999

TALES FROM THE HUT

The EHK is standing at the bar of the Cock & Pullet, surrounded by a bevy of ladies, all of a twitter.

Years ago, before Litton Mill was sold for redevelopment, the owner kept two rods on the river, so it wasn't unusual to find someone fishing who was unknown to me.

I could see this big Ford Granada parked up with a chap fishing nearby. I didn't recognize him, so I politely enquired if he was a guest of a member or of the Mill owner. Neither, says he, I'm on holiday in the area and I thought I'd do a spot of fishing here. I've got a licence. Could I see it? Thames River Authority. I pointed out to him that as far as I was aware, the Derbyshire Wye didn't flow into the Thames and in any event this was private fishing. He started getting on his high horse, insisting that there were no signs indicating that it was private. I drew his attention to just such a sign, at head height, just across the river from where he'd been fishing.

He now had a slightly hunted look in his eyes, especially when I told him that I was a River Authority Bailiff and started to read him his rights. I explained that I would be seizing his expensive looking split cane rod and Hardy Reel. It was at this point that I noticed a rather formidable woman emerging from the vehicle. Rather sheepishly, he told her he was being prosecuted for poaching and would have to hand over his tackle. "Geoffrey", she said, "you will do no such thing. Get in the car now - we're going!" Now I love it when this happens. I told them if they drove off now I'd have the police on them before they got to Millers Dale. Now see sense, do it my way and then you can go. Things calmed down, particulars were taken, tackle was handed over and off they went.

I now refer to exhibit No. 1, extracted from the Club Archive by our Hon Treasurer, a letter from David LL. R. Davies & Co, Solicitors of Ammanford, Dyfed, claiming that their client had fished not realizing the water was private, there being no signs in the locality and if we could just



see our way to returning the confiscated tackle, they would gladly discharge the reasonable costs of postage etc.

Exhibit No. 2, the response from our then Hon Sec, the irascible Tom Poyser, was short and to the point: "Ref your letter D/MH dated 23 September regarding the poaching offence of the above named (*note the absence of **alleged***). His tackle was not confiscated but seized to be held as evidence. It is up to the magistrates whether or not they order its confiscation. In the event that they do not order its confiscation it will be incumbent on your client to collect his own tackle."

The case went to court, Geoffrey was found guilty, the maximum fine applied and the rod and reel were confiscated. Job done.

PARKING AT BLACKWELL MILL

Towards the end of the season we were informed by the Secretary of the Blackwell Residents Association that they wanted to increase the rent substantially for our two car parking spaces. This followed a similar large increase only a year before. After attempting to negotiate with him, we were informed that the residents had decided not to renew the licence because they all had two cars and needed the spaces for themselves. Reluctantly, we had to accept this. However, on the last day of the season, Chris Pryor, whilst parking his car, was approached by one of the residents and told that we could continue to park there. If he sent a cheque to her for the requisite amount an invoice would be issued and the spaces would continue to be ours. This has now been done and we can only assume that we have been the beneficiaries of some internal politics within the village.



PETER LAPSLEY 1943-2013

A TRIBUTE

Just as you're leaving Watford, heading North West to Hunton Bridge, there's a left turn to Cassiobury Park that takes you past a mansion house called The Grange. This was once the home of Fanny & Jonny Craddock, the first TV chefs of any note. Carry on until you get to a bridge over the Grand Union Canal. Cross this. Take a right, and follow the footpath until you get to a lock. A stream runs into the canal on the other side. Cross over the lock and plonk yourself at the end of a small concrete shelf and place your float and maggot just where the stream hits the canal. This is where Peter caught his first roach, at the age of six.

How do I know this? Because ten years later, it's the exact place where I was to catch my first roach too. Under the watchful eye of an old man who fished opposite me, in a black plastic Mac and an all-year-round drip on the end of his nose.

Coincidences continued. Peter and I went to the same prep school. Peter was eight years older than me, so our paths never crossed. Later, I was to discover that we cast our first dry flies on the very same chalk stream, the river Chess. Peter was 12. I was about the same age too. Yes, Peter and I knew each other very well. Long before we got to know each other - really well.

In fact I only got to meet Peter many years later, in the 1970s. He was fishing as a guest on my beat of the Wilderness stretch of the Kennet. In the 1980s Peter disappeared briefly to run his trout fishery at Rockbourne and we lost touch. I visited him there once - and was invited on the last day to 'mop up the stockies'. But Peter and I were destined to meet up again, which we did. Again by coincidence. There he was, standing next to me on the platform at West Kensington tube station. He'd sold Rockbourne and returned to the MOD as Chief

Inspector of Aviation Security after Lockerbie. A job he didn't enjoy. But at last we were neighbours, and continued to be so. We moved around London a bit, but never more than 15 minutes away from one another. This time I decided to never let him out of my sight, no matter how hard he tried to get out of mine.

As a military man, to me he was James Bond. Furiously handsome, upright, well-spoken, immaculately groomed - "well turned out". A real dish of a guy. I have a picture of him standing next to me on a bridge. "Who's that hunk?" girls would say. And they weren't talking about me (or the bridge). Talking about talking - Peter liked nothing better than a good natter. Yes, I can honestly say I gave dear Pierre a damn good listening to. But strangely, he talked little about his years at Sandhurst. Except he was proud to have been their best shot - and captained the rifle shooting team. A dubious credit because when I lent him my airgun a couple of years back to shoot a big fat pigeon that was getting a bit too big for its boots around his bird table, I got it back the next week, unused, the mafia pigeon still there. Peter ... "the compassionate".

He talked even less about his 10 years commissioned service in the King's Own Royal Border Regiment. British Guyana, Aden and the Emirates. Lots of dry sand, but not much dry fly fishing to talk of here. Northern Ireland he only talked about once.

Fishing however, he did talk about. They say you can tell the character of a man by the flies he ties. Peter was no exception. His flies were immaculate. Each material systematically and carefully selected. Each turn of silk cautiously calculated. Watching Peter tie a fly was like watching a nervous man eat a kipper. And, of course he was a wondrous fly fisherman and fly caster. His relaxed style was developed when he owned

Rockbourne, which, quote: "cured me of any wish to catch and kill fish". But Rockbourne included a delightful stretch of chalk stream which allowed Peter to study the trout and their environment at close quarters and in great detail. This led him to become interested in imparting his knowledge and passion to others. To do this properly (Peter liked to do things properly), he passed all the necessary exams to become a nationally qualified game angling instructor. For this reason, perhaps more than any other British writer in recent times, Peter helped beginners and seasoned fanatics understand their sport better.

I'm happy I stayed close to Peter. We fished, lunched, tea & caked together often. We holidayed together. Above all, Peter & I fished his beloved Derbyshire Wye together, where he was at his most happiest. Even though it meant sitting on a bench by Duffer's Pool casting at whatever was nearby. These precious hours together gave me time to do something only a few, the very closest, could monitor. As his good health slipped quietly and painfully away, I wasn't watching a man in retreat. Or a man who displayed the tiniest iota of anger about the blow life had dealt him. This was because Peter was a man fulfilled in so many ways. And here's how I'd sum this up:

At last, in 2012, he was made a Life Member of a club he had dedicated so much of his time to - The Flyfishers Club. In many members' view, long overdue. A hugely supportive and enthusiastic Club and Committee member, he sponsored many new members, including myself. As a highly dedicated and quietly relentless editor of the *Flyfishers Journal*, tirelessly he continued to "up" the standard, despite ill-health, right up to his death.

The fly-tying classes he so successfully ran for the Flyfishers

..... *continued overleaf*

PETER LAPSLEY

... Club throughout the past two winters gave him great joy and satisfaction. Tying up each stage, of each fly, for each student so they knew exactly what was going on. But his dedication is best demonstrated in the way he used his limited number of guest tickets on the Wye to take his students fishing there. Typical Peter.

He was and is a literary giant. He was the first person Richard Walker asked to take over his angling column in one of the leading fishing magazines of the day.

Dermot Wilson said of him: "Peter has two great gifts which I envy: he never wastes a word and every word is a *mot juste*".

As well as his relentless number of magazine articles - sometimes under the pseudonym 'Grey Duster', he has to my knowledge now written, co-written or edited ten angling books, including the best seller, *Fly Fishing by J R Hartley*. Rare for recent angling writers, most of his books have gone into second editions. His latest, *A Pocket Guide to Matching the Hatch*, he wrote with Cyril Bennett MBE, is a typically uncomplicated, thoroughly useful, brilliantly straightforward book that pulls together all the great works done on the subject in a practical guide no bigger than a fly box.

Once a member of the syndicate, Peter was always a lover of the Abbots Barton water on the Itchen and a supporter and commentator through its more

recent rocky history. But Peter spent some of his happiest days on the pretty little Meon, as a member of the Portsmouth Services Fly Fishing Association. More recently, Peter found the river that was to fulfill all his dreams - the Derbyshire Wye. He became a member of the Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers Club, where he is loved by his fellow members - and by the landlord of the Church Inn at Chelmorton where he liked to stay when in Derbyshire.

He had a 2,200 word monthly column in *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying*, a



magazine he had contributed to for every edition since it was first published in 1990. No other fly fishing writer interviewed so many of the leading fly fishing luminaries and commented so passionately and effectively on the issues of the day. He had plans for another book. This time simplifying "Pond Life".

But finally and most importantly, Peter had, quote - "the love of his life, the fabulous Lizzie. And a brilliant, extraordinarily talented son, Dougie, Clare, a daughter he adored - and four grandchildren.

Yes, Peter would tell you, he was a fulfilled man. He had everything - but his health. But don't listen to me. I want to finish off not with my words but with his. Words I know he wanted to be read. Not just by you and I but by all who have a lot to thank him for and who was, to them, a legend: his audience.

It is the opening paragraph of the very last article he wrote, yet to be published, for FF & FT. It is his 'end of season round up' article that he wrote every year. But you can tell he knew it was more than just a 'year end' piece.

"It's confession time", he writes. "I have not fished once this year and it is possible that I may not be able to do so next year either. The coincidence of an assortment of medical conditions - osteo/porosis, osteo/arthritis, systemic lupus and their various complications - has combined to make me largely house-bound. That is frustrating, but it is not a plea for sympathy. I count myself extremely fortunate to have been able to enjoy almost 60 years of fly fishing and to have been able to hitch onto that great sport three other equally enjoyable pastimes - fly tying, writing and photography. To lose just one of those four, hopefully temporarily, is irritating, but that is all it is."

... I say yes. Irritating. For all of us. To lose such a man and a dear friend.

The foregoing was taken from an tribute given by Neil Patterson at Peter's funeral at Mortlake Cemetry on 19 August 2013.

WHAT I DID ON MY HOLIDAYS

by *Andy Middleton*

As I stood in the drizzle in the first light of day, I rang the door bell. The sign said “A fisherman lives here, with the best catch of his life”. (No argument there Sally!) I was picking up John Smith, followed by David Marriott on the first leg of our journey to Iceland, to fish the Big Laxa for monster trout!

This was to be Cressbrook & Litton’s first official tour, and we were all grateful for the organization provided by Hilary Langan, David Marriott and John Smith. Meetings had been held, flies had been tied, essential kit discussed and bio-security rigorously followed by having everything effectively “sheep dipped” in Virkon. We all met up at Hilary & Steve’s and we were ready to go.

Our first flight took us from Heathrow to Keflavik, where we had a little time between flights. Being weary and hungry travellers we headed for the Food Hall where a selection of peculiarly Icelandic fare was on offer. I was moved to try Cod Chips, a typically Icelandic snack, substituting fish skin for potato. Rapidly realizing my error of judgement I attempted to offload the problem by generously offering them to my travelling companions..... FAIL! The smell was truly appalling! Our second flight took us across glacier fields to the northern town of Akureyri, where we were met by a coach driver who was to take us on the final leg of our journey to Hof, the upper lodge at Myvatn on the Big Laxa. I was able to impress our driver with my choice of fishy snack, as he clearly thought Cod Chips to be the ambrosia of the gods!

The accommodation proved basic, but it was clean and warm. We each had our own room but with shared washing facilities. There was a large communal dining room, a pleasant lounge and an excellent drying room. The food was excellent and there was plenty of it.

We were all itching to get fishing and it was our intention that we should fish until 2200 each night; we would be well into the gloaming at this time but the skies never got truly dark at this time of year.

We were to fish in pairs, with a guide, and I was partnered with Ian Ellis. We set off with high expectations for the river. Unsurprisingly, it turned out to be a bit trickier than I’d hoped, posing a somewhat different challenge to fishing around the ranunculus in Miller’s Dale. The wading was mostly straight forward, provided areas of strong current were avoided. The

river bed is mostly black lava sand, although in some areas there were rocky pockets and sometimes flat lava beds. Casting was usually easy enough (no trees in Iceland!) and long casts were only occasionally necessary.



As in every river, the thing to avoid is drag and thus a short upstream cast proved to be the most effective method.

My partner cottoned on to these requirements far quicker than I, which showed in our relative catches. Nevertheless, a steep learning curve is no bad thing. We returned happy to the lodge for our late dinner, a few glasses of wine, a debrief - and a wee dram!

As usual, I had tied too many flies, mainly of the wrong size and colour. The guide looked askance at my selection of black klinks and heather flies, then suggested I use one of his creations. The Mattress Fly is a piece of black foam with one red hackle tied round the middle - honestly ... that’s it! If he was in a particularly frivolous mood he might add a bit of red sponge, but not too much. Whilst we had all brought a few streamers (just in case) I think most of us intended to fish dry flies when we could and now I was equipped with a heavily ginked Mattress I proceeded to find out how many other ways there were of getting it wrong.

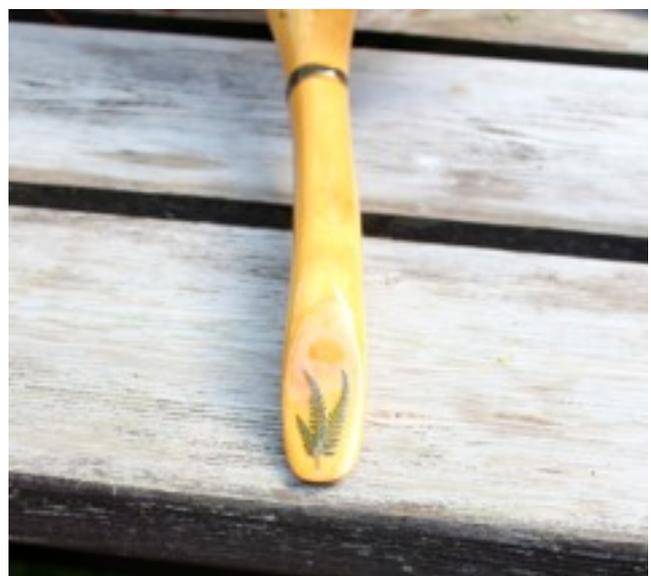
Firstly, a 9 foot leader is not enough. A leader half as long again made a dramatic difference. It must be something to do with *DRAG* (thanks again David & Ian). Second, expensive fluorocarbon was a complete waste of money. Our guide Asgeir said “Fine for chalk stream, but no good here.” Larger diameter monofilament has a much greater wear resistance around rocky outcrops of lava and fortunately the fish are not leader shy. Next time it will be 8 lb Maxima for me!

Earlier in the season, Oliver Edwards had told us that the fishing on the Big Laxa was unparalleled in his experience, anywhere else in the world. “When you hook a big one, and you will, you’ve just got to hang on just got to hang on!” I was hoping for more practical advice than this, because when I finally did hook a big one on the second day, it just went off like a train. It took 30 metres of line in a few seconds - Oliver was absolutely right!

I have been lucky enough to catch lots of big salmon over the years in the UK and abroad, but pound for pound for a salmonid, I don’t think these fish have an equal.

This was a memorable trip, with many personal records broken. Thanks to everyone for making it such a success and I hope to fish with you all again.

OUR THIRD ANNUAL TENKARA DAY



LAST CAST



Autumn Dun *Ecdyonurus dispar*

SEASON RESULTS

Catch returns up to the end of the trout season show that we have enjoyed another excellent year - over 15,000 fish caught with an average of 8 fish per rod day. Once again, the number of fish killed was less than 1% of the total, showing that overwhelmingly members are practicing catch and release. It is entirely possible that this is one of the reasons for the gratifying number of larger fish showing up each year.

Once again, Beats 7 & 8 were the most popular but increasingly, Beats 1 & 2 are winning over many who have previously ignored these spectacular pools.

POACHING

Regrettably, the fine summer brought out the fair weather poachers and the Millers Dale beats suffered at the hands of these despicable people, particularly during the weeks when the fairs visited Tideswell and Litton. We received a letter from Staffordshire Magistrates Court intimating that they were minded to write off a balance of £60 compensation owing to us by one of the "Price" family, following a successful prosecution 4 years ago. This person had just been released from prison and would we be prepared to agree to this? We wrote back pointing out that the latest poaching incidents were probably due to this chap being released and if we agreed to this it would be sending out the signal that we did not take poaching seriously. We also took the opportunity to explain to the magistrates that the

trout was an iconic species and that the Wye is unique in breeding wild rainbows. Wild fish taken by poachers cannot be replaced and the whole ecosystem is depleted as a result of their criminal activities.

WEBSITE

We hope by now that most members have taken the time to have a look at our revamped website. The main reason for the change was to accommodate online booking for the Day Ticket water and for this we must thank John Pitt and his son Dave at Fish Junkies for putting in hours of effort to produce an excellent result. We have already had over 6500 visitors and bookings for next season are already coming in with pleasing regularity. It is our intention in future to upload the Fishing Reports and Newsletters to the website and we will email you when they are ready to view. We would be delighted to hear from you about any noteworthy catches and we are always pleased to have any photos you might like to share with us.

EVENTS

With the continuing success of our Fly Tying, Rivercraft & Tenkara Days, we are pleased to confirm that these will be repeated next year. The dates are shown in the panel above, and the Hon Sec will be writing to you with the application forms in the New Year.

ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Our President invites you to join him for dinner at the Flyfishers Club in London on Tuesday 25th February 2014, when he will be presenting an updated version of his entertaining talk - "The Medical Hazards of Fly Fishing". There will also be the opportunity to have a look round the Club and see some of the rare and unique fly fishing memorabilia housed there.

In the New Year we will be taking delivery of our illustrated river map and we hope to let you have your copy before the start of the season. We have seen the rough draft and it looks superb!

Calendar

February 1st 2014

Stuart Crofts - Fly tying day

February 25th 2014

Fly Fishers Club dinner and talk "The Medical Hazards of Fly Fishing"

March 4th 2014

Annual Meeting and Dinner

March 9th 2014 (to be confirmed)

Paul Procter - Fly tying day

March 14th 2014

Grayling season ends

March 18th 2014

Trout season begins

April 5th 2014

Stuart Crofts - Essential Entomology for Anglers

May 3rd 2014

Rivercraft Day

June 16th 2014

Grayling season begins

July 1st 2014

Mid Season Dinner

September 6th 2014

Fourth Annual Tenkara day

October 4th 2014

50th Anniversary Dinner

October 7th 2014

Trout season ends



Cinnamon Sedge

Potamophylax latipennis