



## Wild Trout Trust ANNUAL RAFFLE 2011

We have some splendid prizes again this year – **dinner, B&B and fishing at The Peacock, a Sage rod, an Orvis rod, WTT Life Membership and a day's fishing with the WTT Chairman on the rivers Loddon and Lyde.**

Full details are on page 2 and an order form is enclosed – please buy a ticket or two or more... and persuade your friends and colleagues to do likewise.

Tickets cost £1 and the draw will take place in December this year. To purchase tickets, please use the order form or go to the shop on our website, [www.wildtrout.org](http://www.wildtrout.org)

# Wild Trout Trust

## Newsletter Summer 2011

The Wild Trout Trust is dedicated to the conservation of wild trout in Britain and Ireland through protection and restoration of habitat

KRIS KENT REPORTS ON THE

## ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER 2011

The day dawned warm and bright at The Park Hotel in Pandy near Abergavenny. Members arrived early after some long drives to sip coffee and share stories on the broad patio in the warm morning sun.

Proceedings kicked off promptly at 10 AM with a warm welcome from the Trust's Chairman Edward Twiddy. The Director, Shaun Leonard, covered the housekeeping – agenda for the day and the arrangements for the afternoon river walk.

*continued on page 5*



↑ Dr Paul Gaskell and members on the River Walk

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## **AUCTION BREAKS RECORDS – AGAIN !**

In spite of the recession and much to our delight, the auction again broke all previous records, raising a little over £50,000 on eBay (last year's total was £47,000) with a further £7000 raised at the auction event at the Flyfishers' Club. This is a tremendous boost to our funds and our thanks go to the very generous donors and bidders who made it so successful.

The eBay auction bidding was fast and furious in the closing few hours, but many postal bidders won their lots so it is not all down to technology! Having the auction on eBay means that we can reach a wider audience; this year we had winning bidders

from Japan, USA, Switzerland and Norway.

The Flyfishers' Club auction was made all the more enjoyable by the entertaining auctioneering of Neil Freeman, whose professional skills teased those extra few pounds from the audience for our "worthy 4" wild trout"!

The auction epitomises the ethos of the Wild Trout Trust. Lots were donated by a wide range of people who gave what they could and generously shared their love of wild trout with the successful bidders. The money is spent in the same spirit, on a wide range of projects that may not always attract funding in any other way – enabling the WTT to function as an 'advice and help open to all' organisation.

## **“LOST” MEMBERS**

We have lost touch with a few members. Can you help please?

- ⇒ Mr G S Bell – Lower Bockhampton
- ⇒ Mr Michael Albon – Thatcham
- ⇒ Mr M R D Yates – Wallingford
- ⇒ Mr Ian Treaowell – Chichester
- ⇒ Mr J Vater – Oxford
- ⇒ Mr Roger James – Horsham
- ⇒ Mr Stephen Grove – Barcelona
- ⇒ Mr D S W Lee – Sheffield
- ⇒ Mr Mark Hancox – London
- ⇒ Mrs P A Stevens – Bodmin
- ⇒ Mr R J Smith – Camberley
- ⇒ Mr Trevor Fagg – Wickford
- ⇒ Mr Jamie Stewart – Matfen
- ⇒ Dr Robert Ainsworth – Killearn
- ⇒ Mr Kenneth A J Norcross – Warrington
- ⇒ Mr Hugo Swann – London
- ⇒ Mr Paul W Ledger – Petersfield
- ⇒ Mr R Mabon – Cirencester
- ⇒ Mr J Walton – Newcastle upon Tyne
- ⇒ Mr Thomas Goddard – South Africa
- ⇒ Mr Graham Wilkinson – Huddersfield
- ⇒ Mr Alastair Clarke – Tanworth
- ⇒ Mr John Murray – Albury
- ⇒ Ms C Jorgensen – London

## **DETAILS OF THE ANNUAL RAFFLE 2011**

To be drawn at 7pm, Wednesday 7 December at The Thomas Lord, West Meon, Hampshire.

- ⇒ **1st Prize** kindly donated by The Peacock at Rowsley & Haddon Fisheries, worth £575. Two Day Tickets on the River Wye plus one night's B&B and dinner for two (double or twin) at The Peacock, Rowsley in high season or four Day Tickets plus one night's B&B and dinner in low season.
- ⇒ **2nd Prize** kindly donated by Sage, worth £549. A Sage TXL-F 7ft 10in, 3-weight, 4-piece fly rod.
- ⇒ **3rd Prize** kindly donated by Orvis, worth £425. An Orvis Superfine Touch 9ft, 4-weight, 4-piece full flex fly rod.
- ⇒ **4th Prize** kindly donated by the Wild Trout Trust, worth £300. Life Membership of the Wild Trout Trust.
- ⇒ **5th Prize** kindly donated by Gresham Angling Society & Edward Twiddy Esq, worth £100. A day with WTT Chairman Edward Twiddy on eight miles of the rivers Loddon and Lyde in north Hampshire. Intimate chalkstream fishing with heavy hatches of fly, strong stocks of wild trout and the chance of a specimen. Date to be agreed in 2012 season (includes mayfly).

## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

In an unashamed desire to acquire a good number of really excellent quality photographs, we plan to run a photographic competition. The winning entrant will have their photograph used as the front cover of *Salmo Trutta* 2012 and be treated to a day of wild trout fishing by one of the staff or executive committee members.

We are always looking for really good quality photographs of wild trout, rivers, lochs and people working in and around the water for a whole range of uses in publications, promotional material and for the website (we hope to launch a new website later this year). We know that many of our members take superb photographs and donating your best images is one way that you can help the WTT, and have the satisfaction of having your photos, credited to you, reach a much wider audience.

To keep it simple, we are imposing very few rules:

- Anyone can enter
- No more than 10 images per entrant
- Photos must be taken in the UK or Ireland
- Photos of fish must be of live fish with no hands or only with very sensitive handling.
- Photos may be of anything you judge to be relevant to the WTT's conservation objectives.
- The photo's must be your own and by entering the competition you allow the WTT to use the image(s) freely.

Send the images as high resolution files on a CD to the WTT office, and write your name and email address on the CD. The closing date is 31 October 2011.

All entries will be made anonymous before judging and judges will be led by Charles-Rangeley Wilson, WTT President and expert photographer (he took the photo for the 2011 *Salmo Trutta* cover).



↑ Photo by Charles-Rangeley Wilson – 2011 *Salmo Trutta* cover



← The WWT conservation gnomes hard at work. Left-to-right – Tim Jacklin, Andy Thomas and Paul Gaskell

## FUTURE FUNDING

It is excellent news that the Environment Agency have agreed to continue for another three years the funding that supports the work of our team of Conservation Officers: Paul Gaskell, Tim Jacklin and Andy Thomas. So, these three wise men can be out there pushing wild trout conservation and getting others involved with that mission right through to 2014.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP – DORSET WILD RIVERS PROJECT

The Wild Trout Trust is a major source of in-depth expert knowledge of trout and trout habitat. By providing this expertise to other groups and individuals we disseminate that knowledge and we can help to get more miles of habitat improved than we could ever achieve solely with our own team of Conservation Officers. Increasingly, we are able to support the completion of habitat-improvement projects through both fishing clubs and other charities such as the Wildlife Trusts and Rivers Trusts.

A recent example of this is our successive partnerships with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and the Dorset Wild Rivers Project. In 2008 we provided a series of Advisory Visits, facilitated with landowners by Sarah Williams of the Dorset Wildlife Trust. She took the reports and turned them into projects. Sarah is now the co-ordinator of the 'Dorset Wild Rivers' project, funded primarily by Wessex Water. We are supporting the project both at a Steering Committee level through Allan Frake and by providing partnership funding to enhance the Dorchester Mill Stream project.

Like many mill streams, the Dorchester Mill Stream has excellent water quality but the habitat is poor; it has a silty, over-wide channel with straight, hard sides and little cover for fish or vegetation to support invertebrates, birds and other wildlife.

The plan of the enhancement scheme is to soften the shape of the stream and provide bankside vegetation on marginal shelves (berms) in the hope that the water voles (present in a nearby ditch) will colonise the millstream. The vegetation also will provide habitat for invertebrates and trap the silt that currently covers the gravels. Flow patterns in the stream will be manipulated to provide better habitat for trout and bullhead. This work is planned for August 2011; it is the culmination of many years of discussion and negotiation with Local Government, community groups and the Environment Agency.

Whilst the primary objective of this project may not be trout, the effect of the planned habitat improvement will be to add more good trout habitat to the elements that constitute a thriving river. By working in partnership, we can add many more pieces to the huge network of rivers in the UK.

## THREE FLY COMPETITION RAISES OVER £1600

Meon Springs Fishery in Hampshire again was the venue for the '3 Fly' competition, run by Neil Mundy, to raise money for the Wild Trout Trust. Twenty anglers gathered on the banks of the lake for a very sociable day catching rainbow trout with one of three designated flies. A scoring system based on fish weight and fly used determined the points – and we know that points mean prizes! WTT members, Meon Springs regulars and members of the John Lewis Partnership Flyfishing Club were amongst the anglers competing to win a Sage Z-Axis rod. The winner was Steve Robinson.

Encouragingly, there was a number of younger participants, including 15 year-old Jake Curry who bagged a creditable points tally to claim a new fly box and flies.

Over £1600 was raised on the day, and the money will go into the Pasco James Fund, established in 2010 following the untimely death of 22 year-old Pasco James. Pasco had a passion for trout and the River Meon. His mother, Harriet Poland, brother Caspian and girlfriend, Holly Barrow, joined anglers and WTT staff for the afternoon, and received an update on the plans to spend some of the fund on a project at Meonstoke. The project is in the early stages, but the proposal is to take a short stretch of wide, shallow channel bounded by concrete banks and transform it into habitat for trout, plants and insects which visitors and villagers alike can enjoy. It is a publicly accessible site within the new South Downs National Park, so we hope it will inspire others to undertake similar projects and will be a fitting memorial to Pasco.

You can find Pasco's tribute page on [www.pascojames.com](http://www.pascojames.com). To make a donation to the fund, please contact the WTT office. Further details on the planned project are available from Denise Ashton.

Huge thanks to Neil Mundy for organizing this day, to the John Lewis Partnership Fishing Club for their support and to Sage for the superb Z-Axis first prize.

If you would like to run a fundraising event based on the '3 Fly' formula, Neil has very kindly written a 'how to' guide which is available on the website or from Denise Ashton.

There is an excellent video by the award winning film maker, High Miles, about the River Allen, on the Dorset Wild Rivers website.  
<http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/dorsetwildrivers.html>

## Annual get-together continued

Shaun went on to review the Trust's work over the last twelve months:

- ⇒ Advisory and Practical Visits have covered the whole of the UK from the Moray Firth in the north to Cornwall in the south, Ireland in the West to Norfolk in the east.
- ⇒ Customers are extremely satisfied with the services provided and the various projects are making great progress.
- ⇒ Trout in the Town continues to go from strength to strength with new chapters starting up, or planning to start up all over the country.
- ⇒ Dr Paul Gaskell has published the Urban Restoration Guide to supplement the existing Wild Trout Trust habitat guides.
- ⇒ The process of updating the existing range of publications continues.
- ⇒ Filming has started on the river restoration video starring Jon Beer.
- ⇒ Mayfly in the Classroom continues to engage schoolchildren in entomology and river habitats.
- ⇒ The Trust has attended and presented at a number of conferences and events influencing

the sustainable-fisheries management agenda.

- ⇒ Tim Jacklin has once again produced an excellent edition of *Salmo Trutta*.
- ⇒ Denise Ashton and Christina Bryant delivered very successful Auctions raising over £57,000.
- ⇒ A series of articles by Dr Paul Gaskell on fisheries management has started in Trout & Salmon.
- ⇒ Progress is being made on updating the existing website and utilising new media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
- ⇒ Funding partners, such as the Environment Agency and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, continue to support the Trust's efforts. The Trust has received several large donations which have allowed the Trust to make investments in a new trailer and two boats for use in practical project work.
- ⇒ Bursaries have been given to many project partners.

### LOOKING FORWARD:

- ⇒ Trout in the Town is intending to establish a footprint in Scotland.

↓ Shaun reviews the Trust's work and points the way forward

Mike Weaver asks a questions ↓



- ⇒ The Trust continues to be supported by the Environment Agency; this funding will allow the Trust to undertake Advisory and Practical Visits, continue the Trout in the Town project and to recruit an additional Conservation Officer.
- ⇒ Partnerships will continue to be a key part of the Trust's approach, working closely with government agencies, clubs, community groups, non-governmental organisations and rivers trusts – to mention just a few.

## FUNDING CHALLENGE WILL CONTINUE.

Shaun invited questions from the floor. Mike Weaver started the debate on the challenge presented by invasive signal crayfish.

↓ Ian Johnson – Environment Agency



## GUEST SPEAKERS

### **Ian Johnson (Environment Agency) – EA Fisheries: The Future Landscape**

Ian emphasised the important role of the Environment Agency's (EA) partnership with the Wild Trout Trust in sustainable fisheries management. He went on to explain the role of, and funding for, the Fisheries Team within the EA. The vast majority of the £34m budget goes into fisheries improvement but he also highlighted their influence on the overall £1.27 billion budget.

The Fisheries Team's priority is the delivery of the Water Framework Directive (WFD); in particular dealing with pollution, flow, fish passage and habitat issues. Fish, including brown trout, are at the heart of the WFD. Their statistics show that 58% of water bodies are failing in terms of fish. WFD improvements represent improvements for trout.

The EA intends to work more closely with local communities and other parties, such as the WTT. "We can do more work, better together": the big society in practice. £75k will be going to the Trust alongside £10m being spent on trout habitat improvements.

Questions from the floor covered funding on fish kills; stocking policies in relation to the 58% of failing fisheries; impact of flow levels on trout populations; licence evasion; diffuse pollution; flood plain planning permissions.

### **Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith (Wye & Usk Foundation) – Thinking Outside The Beat, a whole catchment approach to wild trout management**

Stephen started with an overview of the Wye & Usk Foundation, its past and the current catchment-wide approach. Particular focus was given to the removal of impediments to salmon and trout migration; the eradication of invasive plant species; gravel and water abstraction.

Stephen encouraged the Trust to take a whole catchment approach.



↑ Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith – Wye & Usk Foundation

### **Dylan Roberts (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) – Trout Stocking Research**

After coffee Dylan presented the background and the key findings of the GWCT's research on trout stocking. Stocking is a reality for many fisheries, creating viable stocks to meet fishing demand. Stocking is of concern in terms of its effect on native wild trout but there has been little research undertaken in the UK to understand this effect. What is the impact of stocking?

A 2003/2004 study of diploid stocking at low medium and high levels on lowland and upland river systems, showed that there was no impact on wild brown trout density, growth rates or displacement.

A further 2004/2007 study, part funded by the EA, the Test & Itchen Association and the Wild Trout Trust, again on lowland and upland river systems looked at both diploid and triploid stocking. Again there was no discernable impact on wild brown trout density, condition, growth rates and displacement. Another part of this study looked at diet and found no major differences in diet or issues in terms of competition for food. Tagging of stocked and wild brown trout found that during spawning triploids did not interfere with wild brown trout spawning and that they overwinter better than diploids. In terms of fishing performance the study found no significant differences in fishing quality although this requires further validation.

Stocking as fry has many benefits over mature stocking – lower cost, easier set-up and more natural fish behaviour. But at which stage in terms of lifecycle and timing should fry be stocked? A study on southern rivers found that native fry in incubator boxes performed best and that fed-fry did better than swim-up fry. However general retention rates were very low, less than 0.5%, and therefore is ineffective way to stock. Lots of questions are still unanswered and further research is required.

Good habitat and water quality remain key to good trout populations.

Questions from the floor covered the use of rainbows as an alternative to diploid/triploid brown trout stocking; is stocking really needed at all; the role of predation in retention; smolt predation by

↓ Dylan Roberts – Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust



triploids; the ban on diploid stocking in 2015; densities and retention; stocking impact on genetic diversity.

### **Simon Evans (Wye & Usk Foundation) – 0+ Trout: The Canaries of the River**

Simon gave an impassioned insight into the EU Life+ Funder Project on the River Irfon, one of the best parts of the Wye & Usk catchment. Baseline electro fishing found that trout fry prosper in the smaller channels and tributaries. There are major hindrances to fish utilising these spawning channels and fry surviving, in particular impediments to migration, gravel impaction/silting and acidification.

Soil loss on farmland, creating siltation in water bodies, is increasing significantly and it is not sustainable. It also brings in pesticides and other toxins. Reducing farm pollution is a major challenge on the Wye & Usk catchment. Whilst guidelines have been published compliance and enforcement will be key. This requires the EA and Defra to enforce the guidelines and will require assistance from the third sector. Good practice works and it is possible to address this issue.

Questions from the floor covered farming practice; EA regulation; impact of climate change; biomass contribution to diffuse pollution; who can provide assistance where there is no river trust or similar organisation in place.

↓ Simon Evans – Wye and Usk Foundation



### **Rob Denny (Monnow Rivers Association) – Going Native: An MRA Project to Control Invasive Non-native Species**

Going Native is a catchment-wide project to rid the Monnow system of invasive non-native species (INNS) including Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed, Mink and Signal Crayfish. Going Native is

Annual get-together

a partnership project working with the EA and the Wild Trout Trust. It also works to promote native species such as Water Voles, *Ranunculus* and White Claw Crayfish.

A major challenge has been Himalayan Balsam with over 60km of riverbank infested. Several methods of control have been trialled with spraying combined with hand-pulling being the most successful. The project's goal is eradication within 3 years.

RIVER WALK

After lunch minibuses whisked attendees off to the River Monnow at Alltyrynys. Tim, Andy and Paul provided an insight into the use of large woody debris to create features within the river, improve trout habitat, and reduce rates of bank erosion. The Monnow Rivers Association has undertaken considerable habitat improvement on this stretch of the Monnow.



↑ River Monnow at Alltyrynys

→ Dr Paul Gaskell demonstrates practical river work



↑ River walk on the Monnow



→ Enjoying lunch



## DINNER

The day ended with a dinner back at The Park Hotel. After a wonderful meal, a few drinks and many interesting conversations Gwilym Hughes entertained the assembled audience with tales of fishing, a few hilarious jokes and an interesting mime. Gwilym also read from his new book *The Angle of The Cast*.

Rob Denny stepped up to the plate and hosted an impromptu auction. Copies of Gwilym's book and rods and fishing donated by the audience helped to raise much needed funds for the Trust.



← Rob Denny acts as auctioneer

↓ Gwilym Hughes reads from his book



## SUNDAY FISHING

Sunday morning saw 30 or so members gather in the car park at The Park Hotel. The Monnow Rivers Association had arranged fishing on local beats and it's members took WTT members in hand guiding them for the day. Conditions were difficult with bright sun and low river levels but reports suggest that fish were caught with Andy Thomas hooking a lovely 2lb fish.

## TROUT STOCKING

A springtime meeting in London between WTT, the Angling Trust, the Salmon & Trout Association and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust agreed to support the precautionary principle behind the Environment Agency's National Trout & Grayling Fisheries Strategy. Fundamental to this principle is that stocking of fertile (diploid) farmed brown trout poses a real risk to wild trout stocks through interbreeding – this is what a huge number of scientific studies tell us. It is such good news that the major fishery and conservation Non-Governmental Organisations have united on this really important issue. However, the group also recognises that more research is needed and we have asked regulatory authorities to apply the same rigour across all their spheres of influence, for example in relation to hydropower and abstraction.

## NEW CONSERVATION OFFICER FOR WTT

In an exciting collaboration with the Eden Rivers Trust, WTT will be taking on a new Conservation Officer to join the team, funded by the Environment Agency. The post will have a dual role, pursuing WTT interests across the North of England and implementing the River Eden River Restoration Strategy, a catchment-wide river enhancement initiative, the first of its kind in the country. The WTT and ERT websites will carry more detail on our new appointment.



## Conservation update from the South and West

ANDY THOMAS

The last six months has seen a bit of a shift from the usual demand for Advisory Visits (AVs) to more requests for written up Project Proposals (PPs). These project opportunities often fall out of a previous AV but in the last six months I have drawn up 8 PPs ranging from plans to restore a small spawning tributary on the Wey North, through to providing 'trout friendly' solutions to excessive bank erosion problems. I have also had the honour of walking in the footsteps of the legendary Frank Sawyer with Martin Browne, the current keeper of

production of a Western Rother Tributaries Project which has attracted positive interest and financial support from the EA. Currently the Rother is one of those rivers that falls outside of a Rivers Trust umbrella but hopefully not for long. An inaugural meeting of the proposed Rother & Arun Rivers Trust (RAAT) is due to take place in June and it is hoped that a core group can be formed to take on the responsibility for looking after these very interesting and unusual rivers. WTT is closely involved and we will be working with them to help take the tributaries project forward.

Advisory Visits have again introduced me to some absolute gems from the Little Avon in Gloucestershire to the Devils Brook (Piddle tributary) in Dorset. Classic chalk stream carriers like the Segar Stream on the Itchen through to wild and unmanaged little trout streams like Combe Water, a little tributary of the Exe. All different, all with their fair share of issues and problems but all with lots of potential for improvement.

Providing support to Rivers Trusts, fishing clubs and land-owners can take various forms.

The AV, PP and Practical Visit (PV) approach are well trodden paths to trout heaven, but increasingly we are looking at how we can up our game and get our messages out about improving trout habitat. Work has started on producing an instructional DVD which we hope will be an entertaining practical guide to trout habitat management. I'm sure Shaun will be informing you all on progress but I spent a long day filming with Jon Beer, who is helping us to get our messages across in a professional manner. It certainly was an education for me; eight hours of filming for about eight minutes worth of useable footage but great fun all the same!

Another approach is the interactive workshop. A few months ago we teamed up with the Test & Itchen Association to help them run a 'River Management' workshop aimed at providing owners and keepers with an opportunity to debate how these two famous chalk streams could and should be



↑ The fruits of a PP. Ten tonnes of newly installed gravel providing a new spawning habitat on the River Len in Kent (November 2010)

the Services Fly Fishing Club. Frank was obviously very keen on the idea of boosting wild stocks in the main Hampshire Avon through the creation and development of small nursery carriers, and Martin is very keen to follow on the tradition. Hopefully the Project Proposal we have drawn up will turn into real improvements for Avon wild trout very soon.

Work to raise awareness of South Coast sea trout will begin with the official launch of the South Coast Sea Trout Action Plan in late June. In the meantime plans to improve habitat for sea trout are gathering momentum and two new easements are to be built this summer in the Adur Catchment. John Whiting is 'Mr Adu' and is the local Ouse Adur Rivers Trust (OART) man and a passionate advocate for Sussex Adur sea trout and a WTT member to boot. We will be working closely with OART to help them deliver their programme of river improvements.

Another exciting development has been the

managed. Tom Davis, the T&I Executive Director, is keen on persuading his members to look for opportunities to improve trout habitat, in the knowledge that a more sensitively-managed system will help to boost wild trout numbers, which currently only tend to thrive where there is good habitat to support them (no surprises there). Nobody was trying to suggest that these rivers will be 'wild' trout fisheries from top to bottom but there does seem to be an appetite for change so that both of these iconic rivers can support thriving wild trout stocks.

In the last six months the emphasis of my work has changed from simply advice and some project work with fishing clubs, to much more project work with a wider range of partners and communicating the habitat message to a broader audience. There is little time to dwell on successes as there is always so much to do. However, I believe we are making great steps forward and maintaining our reputation as an organisation focused on delivering real improvements for wild trout. It's great to be part of the WTT.

## Trout in the Town

PAUL GASKELL



↑ Trout in the Town practical work – carrying out habitat improvement on the River Wandle

'Trout in the Town' has struck a chord with anglers and community groups all over the UK. In February, a group of Trout in the Town project leaders gathered in London for the weekend to share their knowledge and experience, and also to get down to some practical work carrying out habitat improvement on the River Wandle.

The Wild Trout Trust's Trout in the Town programme was inspired by the Wandle Trust's work to return this London chalkstream from a rubbish dump to a fishable river. So it was fitting that this second 'Urban Conclave' of Trout in the Town chapters should take place here. The Conclave was attended by members of Trout in the Town projects in Huddersfield, Sheffield, Nottinghamshire, Wigan, Birmingham, Manchester, Derbyshire and London (with apologies from

Lancashire Colne, Glazert near Glasgow and London's River Cray).

Following a rousing introduction by Wild Trout Trust director Shaun Leonard, the Saturday programme was kicked off by an inspirational and personal perspective from Wild Trout Trust President, author, photographer, film-maker and (accidental) angler Charles Rangeley Wilson – who, by greatly auspicious coincidence, had caught his first (and to date only) Wandle trout not 50 yards from the conference venue after many years of trying. So began a day of accounts from representatives of each local branch – both giving background to their own aspirations as well as sharing les-

sons learned the hard way.

A great many discussions and friendships were forged across all groups throughout the day. These discussions and cross-group problem solving activities continued well into the night over dinner and drinks (even finding time to take in the Rugby game at 5pm). A great day.

Sunday saw the whole thing stepped up a notch with the combining of local volunteers with conference delegates to make a workforce group 49-strong to be trained by Andy Thomas and myself with Bella Davies and Theo Pike (Wandle Trust) and WTT Director Shaun Leonard marshalling the volunteers. Amongst the people getting their hands and waders dirty was local MP Tom Brake who turned out to be remarkably handy with a bow saw.

## Trout in the Town continued

Particularly gratifying for me was the sight of volunteers (who half an hour prior to our guided river walk and training talk knew nothing of trout habitat requirements and only a little about stream ecology) expertly and correctly fielding questions from passing dog walkers and local residents. At least half of the true value of a Wild Trout Trust Practical Visit is its educational value – not just the physical habitat restoration itself.

The habitat works that we completed used a combination of logs, brash and metal pins to produce scoured spawning gravels, holding lies for adult trout and cover suitable for juvenile life stages of trout. Doing the work in the river is the tip of an iceberg, as making any changes in an urban river needs careful thought and consultation with all interested parties. This work was the culmination of months of consultation, planning and gaining permission as well as funding, so it was really exciting to see it all finally coming to fruition.

A hugely important aspect of these works is also the simple monitoring techniques used to track the physical effect of each structure. The Monday following the practical works saw formal surveying and measurements carried out to complement those undertaken during the works and was followed up by an assessment and discussion with regional EA representatives of Flood Risk Management, Development Control and Fisheries who approved the works (there was still a chance that we would have to remove any structures that caused undue concern in this heavily urbanised environment).



↑ Trout in the Town practical work – carrying out habitat improvement on the River Wandle

When combined with the removal of five key barriers (three already tackled, a fish pass imminent on a fourth and a project this year to tackle the fifth) these works pave the way for the seeding of the river with wild trout parr from a suitable donor river. This will tie in with the shift from using fertile hatchery fish in the ‘Trout in the Classroom’ projects to sterile fish in the near future – a move that will ensure the greatest possible genetic diversity (and hence adaptability) of the self-sustaining trout within the Wandle.

One word was used repeatedly (and without prompts from me!) over the course of the Conclave and the Practical Visit: ‘inspirational’ – and I would like to add my own use of that word when applied to all Conclave participants and volunteers from each and every Trout in the Town project. I am in awe of all your undertakings and it is a privilege for me to work on your behalf.

## Conservation update from the North and East

TIM JACKLIN

### ETWALL BROOK PROJECT

The Etwall Brook is a small tributary in the middle reaches of the River Trent in South Derbyshire. About 18 months ago pollution resulting from an accident at a Severn Trent Water sewage treatment plant killed numerous fish in the brook, including a number of wild brown trout. Following the incident, the local Environment Agency (EA) fisheries officer, Alex Lumsdon, contacted the Wild Trout Trust for advice on how habitat within the brook might be improved to

speed the recovery of the fish stocks and to provide a lasting improvement. The brook is not fished and this approach was an alternative to stocking the brook with hatchery fish, which have much poorer prospects for re-colonising a water than wild fish.

Tim Jacklin carried out an Advisory Visit and prepared a project proposal for works on the brook to improve a section where the channel had been straightened twenty years previously. In conjunction with the EA, the plans were discussed

with the landowner who agreed to the works and with Severn Trent Water (who agreed to fund the works) as mitigation for the pollution. The relevant consent applications were prepared and submitted to the EA and soon everything was in place for the habitat improvements to go ahead.

The work took place in early March and involved creating pool habitat, introducing spawning gravels, placing large woody debris (root wads) in the channel, re-profiling the banks of the brook, planting trees and fencing the brook from livestock. It was a real team effort with WTT supervising the earthwork contractors, EA staff helping with the pool habitat creation and tree planting and the landowner providing assistance with his farm machinery. On subsequent visits to the site it has been gratifying to see some trout have taken up residence on the improved section and shoals of minnows and the odd chub have also been seen; these should form the basis of a speedy recovery for the fish stocks.

#### ADVISORY VISITS AND PROJECT WORK

The Advisory Visit programme has been progressing apace this year with visits to the Afon Cain (Powys), Gwash (Rutland), Churnet and Blithe (Staffordshire), Worfe (Shropshire) and Leven (North Yorkshire). Project proposals have been prepared for the Afon Ceiriog (north Wales), Dove (Derbyshire) and Peffrey (Ross and Cromarty).

One problem that has cropped up regularly on these visits is that of excessive fine sediment (silt and sand) entering the river from soil erosion. This has been apparent in rivers as widely spaced as Shropshire, Yorkshire and NE Scotland and was also very apparent on the River Monnow during the Wild Trout Trust's Annual Meeting (reported elsewhere). Simon Evans of the Wye & Usk Foundation gave an excellent presentation at this meeting on the subject of sediment pollution. This is a major problem facing our rivers and one that needs to be addressed before we will see improvements in fish stocks.

The Water Framework Directive is a major piece of legislation that provides an impetus to tackle such problems where watercourses are designated as having less than 'good ecological status'. Recently, ten catchments were named as being pilots for implementing the measures necessary to achieve good status; included in these is the Welland which is one of the rivers covered by the WTT's Anglian Sea Trout Project. This is good news as it provides an opportunity to fund and carry out some of the projects that have been identified during a recent walkover survey of the catchment. Work also

continues on other rivers under the Anglian Sea Trout Project including the Nar, Glaven and Stiffkey in Norfolk where improvements to fish passage and habitat are in the pipeline.



↑ Before – a straightened, open section of the Etwall Brook



↑ Placing root wads in the channel and re-profiling the banks



↑ The River Worfe, Shropshire. Fine sediment in rivers is a major problem affecting watercourses across the British Isles

## Mayfly in the Classroom update

PAUL GASKELL

An important part of my role as programme manager for Trout in the Town is to help develop a sense of custodianship within local communities for their urban river corridors, 'Mayfly in the Classroom' is an important way of doing just that. The idea was clearly inspired by 'Trout in the Classroom' but I was really looking for something cheaper and simpler that did not require expert support or specialist equipment. Something that teachers, mums and dads, and fishing club volunteers could set up and run easily, and that needed physical visits to a local river – first of all to collect the mayfly larvae; and then subsequently to carefully release the emergent adult flies back to their natal home.

The idea has been thoroughly tested in schools up and down the country and has developed a momentum of its own in urban and rural areas alike, having been picked up by other organisations from the Eden Rivers Trust in the north to the Meon Valley Partnership on the South Coast.

There is now a dedicated website [www.mayflyintheclassroom.org](http://www.mayflyintheclassroom.org) which gives very clear and simple 'how to do it' instructions and downloadable resources for teachers, including ideas for lesson content and linked themes such as water quality/quantity and the interlinked nature of riparian and aquatic foodwebs. The cost of equipment is less than £20: a very small investment to reveal the wonders of river to a new generation.

Becky Helm, Education Officer with the Eden Rivers Trust, tells the following story from one her Mayfly in the Classroom schools:

*"One brilliant example of a lesson learned was standing on the bank of a river with the children and parents from the Home Education Group. On releasing an adult mayfly (a Large Brook Dun to be precise) the adult fly decided to fly skywards instead of crawling onto the underside of the leaf it had been offered. All eyes were gazing in wonder at the mayfly as it was promptly snapped up by an eagle-eyed swallow. As we all looked on in horror as the life of this carefully nurtured mayfly slipped away, one little boy in the group piped up 'oh well, it's nature after all' – fantastic!"*



↑ Mayfly in the Classroom projects with the Monnow Rivers Association and local schools

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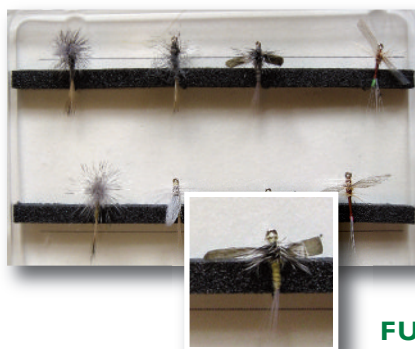


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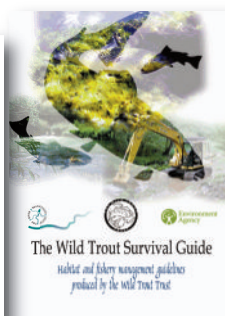
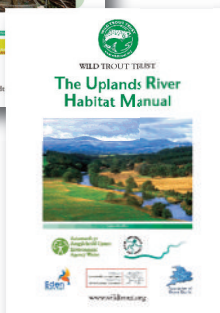
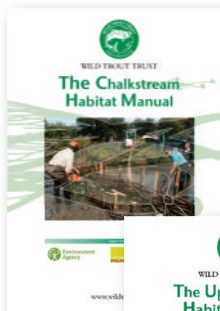
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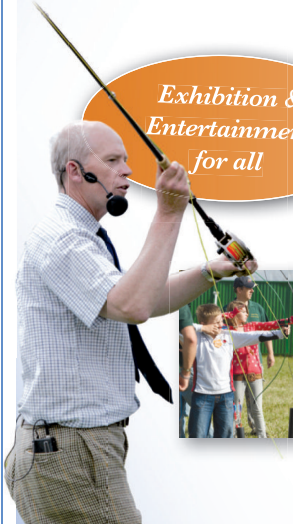
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