



WILD TROUT TRUST
SUMMER 2015

News

ANNUAL DRAW 2015

To be drawn at 7pm, Tuesday 8 December 2015 at The Thomas Lord, West Meon, Hants. Tickets are available via the enclosed order form or by visiting www.wildtrout.org.

FIRST PRIZE

Kindly donated by Sage, worth £669. A Sage One 9ft 6in, 4-piece, 4-weight Fly Rod.

SECOND PRIZE

Kindly donated by The Peacock at Rowsley & Haddon Fisheries, worth £400. One night's accommodation in a large double/twin room for 2 with 3-course dinner and buffet breakfast, plus two low-season tickets to fish the Derbyshire Wye.

THIRD PRIZE

Kindly donated by Orvis, worth £310. A day's trout fishing on Orvis's Itchen beat at Abbots Worthy for 2 rods in August or September 2016.

FOURTH PRIZE

Kindly donated by Snowbee, worth £174. Snowbee Spectre 3-4 weight Fly Reel and an XS-Plus Spectre 4-weight fly line.

FIFTH PRIZE

Kindly donated by Phoenix Lines, worth £80. 2 Phoenix Tenkara Lines, 2 Phoenix Braided Leaders and 4 Phoenix Furled Leaders.

SPLENDID GATHERING ON THE RIBBLE...

The Friday evening of our annual gatherings usually sees a few early arrivers share supper, a few drinks and catch-up on the past year

and early new-season victories. 2015 was no different, save for those whose time was spent enjoying the queues on the M40 and M6...



IN THIS ISSUE

News and Notices
Annual Gathering
Other News

pages 2–3
front, pages 4–5
pages 6–7

Conservation News
Merchandise

pages 8–23
page 24

WTT GOES LIMITED

From this summer, WTT will incorporate to become a charitable company limited by guarantee, bringing us into line with the vast majority of other charities.

We believe that this move might bring us opportunities to pursue work which we currently cannot do and that there may be other operational advantages. This move will not change what we do and how we do it: we will still work feverishly to make life better for wild trout and the places they live. For existing WTT members, there will be a need to update any direct debit and Gift Aid arrangements you have with us and Christina will be in touch during the summer with details, if applicable. Please do not hesitate to contact me, Shaun Leonard, Director, WTT (director@wildtrout.org; 07974 861908).

DENNIS MOSS STILL GOING STRONG!

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that Dennis Moss was missed off the team sheet of venerable Vice-Presidents of WTT in our 2015 *Salmo trutta* journal.

We would like to point out that Dennis is still very much one of our most esteemed V-Ps and his omission was an editorial error, for which the Director takes absolute responsibility. Sorry, Dennis and thank you for your excellent and ongoing support of WTT, especially in Ireland.

NO GAME FAIR 2015 FOR WTT

After much deliberation, WTT decided not to attend the CLA Game Fair at Harewood in 2015.

This was not an easy decision since we've been a regular feature in Fisherman's Village for many years and the Fair has been a great place to meet existing and new members, but we feel that, based on the experience of recent years, we could not justify the cost of attendance. A stand for WTT costs several thousand pounds – money that we can put to better use for trout in our rivers and lakes. We'll be sure to keep an eye on the future of the fishing area in the Game Fair and hope to return at some future point. We'd be delighted to see members at our annual gathering, an event that travels around the country, or the other shows that we'll continue to attend, such as the British Fly Fair International and Sportfish Show.

PETER LAPSLEY'S FLY TYING KIT

WTTC members will remember with fondness and great respect, Peter Lapsley, who died last year.

Peter bequeathed his fly tying kit to WTT which, through a blind auction drawn at the British Fly Fair in October, raised £680. The kit has gone to a loving home near Blackpool and WTT has teamed up with the River Chess Association to donate the proceeds to the purchase of tackle for the start-up of a fishing 'school' based at Latimer Park on the Chess. Peter much loved Latimer Park and here taught kids to trout fish; a fitting and happy end to a sad story. Many thanks to Peter's widow, Liza and to his great friend Neil Patterson for all his help, and to Snowbee for so kindly supporting us to provide 14 fly fishing kits to the River Chess Association. More on this at www.wildtrout.org.

AUCTION

The auction held in March was very successful and provided some much needed funds for the WTT. The final total crept up following the auction close, finally coming to rest at over £70,000, a big increase on 2014 (£58,000) and another record!

Thank you to all the very generous donors and bidders for making it such a success. The generosity of our supporters is truly astonishing – people giving up their time, fishing and money to help us improve habitat for wild trout. We promise to use the money wisely and continue to focus our work on practical advice and delivering projects.

We had over 40 new lots in the auction this year, along with many regular lots, and a very wide range of prices from £20 to over £5,000. The aim is to

appeal to a broad range of pockets and tastes, so that as many people as possible can participate in what is increasingly quite an event at the start of the season. Although the final total was a new record, there are still many lots that sell at or below the guide price so please don't be put off from bidding!

We will continue to use eBay Charity Pages to run the auction as eBay refund all their usual charges and it gives us very secure access to a large global audience. Postal bidders win lots every year as we bid on their behalf, so do bid by post if that's easier.

The process of gathering lots for the 2016 auction will start in October, so please get in touch if you would like to donate a fishing day, a book, art, tackle or flies.

Contact dashton@wildtrout.org or call 07802 454157.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 6 October 2015

WTT Conservation Awards
London.

Saturday 24 & 25 October 2015

Grayling Weekend

The Haddon Estate, Derbyshire
The Haddon Estate has kindly offered us grayling fishing again this year. There are 15 places available each day. Please contact Christina via:
office@wildtrout.org or 023 9257 0985, to book a place for either or both days. Until 31 July priority will be given to members who have not fished a WTT Grayling Weekend before. The cost will be £35 per person per day which is payable on confirmation of a place.

Tuesday 13 to 15 October 2015

Institute of Fisheries Management Annual Conference,
Plymouth. <http://www.ifm.org.uk/>

Tuesday 20 to 22 October 2015

2nd International Sea Trout Symposium

Ireland. <http://seatroutsymposium.org/>

Tuesday 8 December 2015

WTT Raffle Draw

5 top-notch prizes, including a Sage rod, for just £1 per ticket. All proceeds go to support WTT's habitat improvement work.

Saturday 13 & 14 February 2016

British Fly Fair International
Staffordshire County Showground
www.bffi.co.uk or tel. 01782 388382.

March 2016

Wild Trout Trust Auction

A fantastic selection of lots including fishing, shooting, books, tackle and more, with all the proceeds supporting our work. Keep an eye on the website for details: www.wildtrout.org. If you would like to donate a lot please contact Denise Ashton dashton@wildtrout.org or tel. 07802 454157.

11 June 2016

WTT Annual Gathering
Langford

A day of fascinating talks and a chance to get together with WTT staff, trustees, volunteers and members. Details to be announced but watch the WTT website, www.wildtrout.org.

LOST MEMBERS

We have lost touch with the following members as they have moved and we do not have a current address. If anyone can help, please contact Christina via: office@wildtrout.org. Thank you.

- Nicholas Ferguson, Cirencester
- Thomas Goddard, Dorchester
- James Gout, Madrid
- Bevil Granville, Hungerford
- John Griffiths, Chepstow
- Mark Hancox, London
- Richard Hunter, Perth
- D S W Lee, Sheffield
- Douglas MacAdam, Glasgow
- Thomas de la Mare, London
- Ian Morris, Oswestry
- Jon Pratt, Melbourne
- Robert Shakespeare, London
- R J Smith, Camberley
- J Vater Oxford
- J Walton Newcastle upon Tyne
- Philip Wilkinson, London
- M R D Yates, Wallingford

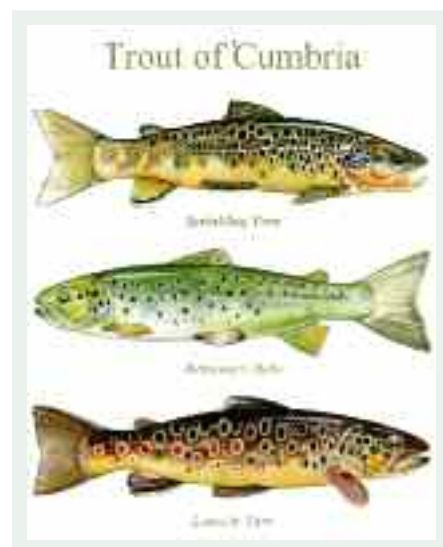
IMPORTANT REMINDER
PLEASE REMEMBER TO TELL US IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS!



STUNNING TROUT OF CUMBRIA

This piece outlines the work of artist, Scott Winstanley, who has set out to document, in water colours, the amazing variety in our wild trout, starting in Cumbria. Here's some of Scott's work and words to tell his tale...

Having witnessed a great diversity in the colouration and markings of Cumbria's wild trout, I have set out to document, in watercolour, the stunning beauty and variations of these fish and present the information in a series of limited edition prints. I have a passion for prospecting, finding those wild and unlikely waters, those mountain top tarns and hanging valleys where our wild brown trout have somehow found a way. Fascinated by the heritage and evolutionary paths of these fish and the ancient Cumbrian landscapes in which they survive, I like to record and crystallise my experiences through painting, drawing and the written word. I have narratives published in *Waterlog Magazine* and *Fallon's Angler*, and I'm currently working on a book documenting my wild fishing adventures. You can see more of my artwork and contact me through my Facebook page 'Scott Winstanley Art'.



Printed on Amadeus 100, a recycled paper containing 100% recycled waste

THE SUN REALLY DOES SHINE ON THE RIGHTEOUS...

Annual Gathering report continued from front page.

The Saturday kicked off with Shaun Leonard, WTT Director, opening proceedings with a review of WTT's year, with highlights including delivery of:

- 83 Advisory Visits, of which 4 out of 5 resulted in practical work on the ground.
- 35 practical demonstration events, 1 day to 2 weeks in length, undertaken from the Southwest of England to the Northwest of Scotland.
- 32 practical projects ranging from Somerset to Argyll, many funded by the Environment Agency (EA) and rod licence monies but always with great support from local groups.
- A number of major projects were undertaken including those on the River Lark in Suffolk and the Glaven in Norfolk.
- Mayfly in the Classroom was rolled out into 40 settings engaging over 1,000 kids from Inverness to South Wales.
- The Wild Trout Trust Auction raised the new record sum of over £70,000.
- Shaun thanked the team and welcomed Gareth Pedley and Jon Grey as full time Conservation Officers for the North.

Shaun stressed the vital importance to WTT of its many partners, including EA in England, water companies such as Thames Water, the John Ellerman Foundation and all the clubs and other locals who make WTT's work possible.

The first presentation of the day was by Karen Potter, University of Liverpool. 'Floodplain Restoration – Something Fishy Going On' was a fascinating presentation on the impact of development on flood plains and rivers, recent changes in policy integrating flood planning into floodplain development and the concept of living with water. An interesting insight on how policy becomes entrenched or 'institutionalised' and how to change that.

Karen was followed by Vaughan Lewis of Windrush AEC, stepping in for David Jenkins of Coed Cymru, talking about

the Pontben Project in mid-Wales. A grassroots project driven bottom-up by a small group of upland farmers. Vaughan opened 'Trees, Soils & Water: Good News & Bad' with an exploration of how post-war timber management practices had impacted on river catchments before going on to explain the lessons that have come out of the Pontben Project. These included the value of broadleaf shelter belts, incorporating stock fencing, to provide cover for sheep, the value of ponds and wetlands for watering, wildlife benefit and drainage interception, the importance of tree planting to prevent overland run off by increasing water infiltration into soils through tree roots and the role of streamside fencing to keep sheep in accessible areas with enormous collateral benefits for the streams' ecology.

After coffee, Kyle Young from Aberystwyth University, formerly of the EA and Natural Resources Wales (NRW), took to the stage. This was an interesting and entertaining perspective on 5 years at the EA and NRW and the problematic relationship between anglers and the agencies. Kyle ended with a celebration of the WTT, on the way noting the power that the angling fraternity holds and can direct to get things done for the river. Kyle will move to Switzerland later in the summer, a huge loss to the pantheon of the UK's fishery scientists.

Next up was Jack Spees, Director of the Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT). 'The Pain of Passing a Trout' covered the challenges trout face in terms of barriers to migration and movement, why addressing barriers is important and what the RRT is doing to address them. Jack acknowledged the work of Mike Forty (a PhD student with Durham University) who, with RRT, has been tracking trout (and salmon) attempting to navigate the many weirs on the Ribble system. Mike's work has shown that not only can some weirs stop most trout from moving upstream (e.g. to spawn) but even supposedly passable structures can greatly delay that movement. In one case, a single weir took on average 102 hours for



trout to get over! Different approaches, from complete removal to modification, have resulted in significant improvements in fish passage.

Neil Handy, fisheries officer with the EA, then shared his practical experience on trout stocking on the Ribble. Working closely with Manchester Angling Association (MAA), Neil was able to demonstrate the dis-benefits of stocking on the upper Ribble and as a result MAA ceased stocking in 2004, resulting in significant increases in the numbers caught by rods of wild brown trout. Subsequently, Settle Anglers also voted to stop stocking in 2012 and other clubs on the river have followed



churches and ministers, girlfriends with rivers, pies, dippers breeding habits, stocking, idiots, Oliver Cromwell, railway viaducts, mills and weirs. A packed 30 minutes; great fun!

After a wonderful lunch accompanied by much debate, discussion and laughter, the WTT Conservation Officers led attendees on a river walk. We saw the fish pass with its counter on the weir at Waddow; the counter has been pivotal in the Ribble spring salmon study, completed in 2014. We then moved upstream to the waters of Ribblesdale Anglers, seeing and discussing issues arising from impoundment of the river by the Waddow weir and examples of good and poor habitat in this reach.

Saturday evening saw an excellent supper enjoyed by over 30 WTT members and friends with a great after-supper talk by Steve Cooper of Cookshill Fly Tying: Confessions of a Fly Tying Materials Salesman. Steve's brand of humour and tales from his world went down a storm with the audience.

Sunday saw twenty or so of our guests head for the hills to sample the Ribble valley's wild trout fishing. They were not disappointed, with plenty of fish to 2lbs reported from a number of beats. Massive thanks to Bowland Game, Manchester Anglers, Ribblesdale Anglers and the Ribble Rivers Trust for allowing our guests access to their special waters. Director's comment: "Even I caught fish, including one good one, shortly before snapping the tip section of my beloved Sage VXP."

The annual Get-Together, wandering as it does around the country from year to year, is an excellent opportunity for WTT to cement still further its contacts with angling clubs, EA and others in the area. Many thanks to Ribble Rivers Trust, the local Ribble clubs, EA staff and visiting WTT members for making this such a great weekend. Thanks too to United Utilities for so generously supporting the weekend.

We look forward to the event, at Langford on 11 June 2016.



suit. A number of clubs have reported intriguing increases in grayling numbers as they have ceased trout stocking. MAA, for example, reported an annual catch of 600 grayling, up from a handful when their river was stocked with trout.

The daytime session came to a crescendo with WTT Vice-President, Malcolm Greenhalgh and 'The Ribble: Me & My River'. This covered Malcolm's life spent by and in the Ribble from the estuary to the tributaries, tagging birds and fishing for chub, dace and the occasional trout. Malcolm covered everything from abbeys and blanket weed to abstraction, dairy farming,

THE LARK SINGS

As many will know, last year the world of river restoration was dealt a terrible blow with the sad and untimely loss of Dr Nigel Holmes, a truly inspirational character and river-mender extraordinaire.

One of the projects recently tackled by Nigel was to work with the EA and the Bury St Edmunds Trout Club to radically improve a section of the River Lark in Westow Country Park. This project followed a long campaign by members of the club to follow up recommendations made in a 2010 WTT Advisory Visit report. Members of the club, ably supported by local EA Fisheries Officer James Hooker, eventually found the resources and political will to complete the project. Such was the success of the improvement works that further plans were drawn up by Nigel, this time working with the Lark Angling Preservation Society and EA to tackle another phase of work further downstream. With funding and plans in place, the project sadly faltered following Nigel's sudden death.

Fortunately for the Lark, two indomitable characters and WTT stalwarts, Glen Smithson and Tim Taylor, were not about to let the opportunity of finishing what they and Nigel had started slip from their grasp. I had previously had the pleasure of first meeting Glenn and Tim on the banks of the Lark way back in 2008 and together they have been setting about improving the Lark ever since. All they needed to complete Nigel's project was somebody to interpret Nigel's plans and supervise the delivery of the project with the aid of a 15m 360 excavator and 100 tonnes of local gravels, earmarked as reparation materials for a past pollution incident and just waiting to be used on the 'right' project. This was my chance to pay back all the work and enthusiasm put in by Tim and Glenn, as well as an opportunity for me to pay my own personal respects to a man that I liked and admired. For me, the chance to finish off Nigel's plan could only be described as an honour.

So with a budget in place, plans all drawn up and consented, what could possibly go wrong? Well, the first thing that Nigel, or I, had not expected was



Glen Smithson and Tim Taylor by the River Lark

for this section of the Lark to be absolutely riddled with water vole burrows. Great I hear you cry and it is indeed a good-news story that a species that was virtually absent from this river has come back with such a vengeance. Fortunately for ratty and unfortunately for me, crushing a vole burrow with the bucket of a large excavator is illegal. On the plus side we had Nick Mason from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust looking over us to advise on the areas we needed to avoid to stay out of prison!

Unfortunately for us, this meant that the bottom section earmarked by Nigel to have the top cut off and pushed into the toe of the bank could no longer be delivered. This was a low moment for the group but we rolled up our sleeves and did what Nigel would also have undoubtedly done and that's found another way. With the landowners agreement (Elvedon Estates) and the blessing of the EA, we set about radically changing the shape of 300m of channel running up from Temple Bridge in Lackford, as well as creating some in channel diversity on a further 400m running downstream.

A highlight for me was the enthusiastic way Tim volunteered to check out the bed of a reach that he knew 'like the back of his hand' only to fall flat on his face after less than ten

seconds of wading! I apologise now Tim if it took me some time to compose myself.

As for the project, well I won't pretend that it was an easy site to work on but we are all delighted to have created some much needed variation in channel shape and associated flow patterns that was at the very heart of Nigel's original plans. I hear from Tim that the trout quite like it as well which for me is really what it's all about. The brilliant news is that it seems to have galvanised the local clubs and the EA in wanting to deliver more improvements into the much underrated and delightful River Lark.

Andy Thomas

BIT LIKE LIVERPOOL LOSING GERARD?

Late summer 2015 will see Andy Thomas hit a serious age and a time when a chap should spend more time fishing and pottering in his garden.

Andy is going to step down to a three-day week with WTT. While we're

delighted to be keeping 3/5ths of him, losing 2/5ths of Andy is a big blow. He's a huge presence and unerring influence for good within the Trust and in the world of trout conservation. Bit like Liverpool losing Gerard? Yep, in part. But, Andy's move will create space for a protégé and we're working on that one. Bit like Rahim Stirling? Hope not.

Thank you, Andy and well played.



GLAISDALE BECK DEMO DAY

In late March, the Wild Trout Trust held a river management workshop at Glaisdale Beck (North Yorkshire Moors National Park) to demonstrate the importance of natural bankside and in-channel structure habitat and how it can be appropriately managed. All too often these features are over-managed and tidied by angling groups and riparian managers, leaving many rivers with a lack of low cover, trailing branches and little woody material within the river – all of which are vital fish habitat features.

Each of the two days consisted of a river walk highlighting the benefits of these habitats and covering how best to retain and promote such features with minimal impact upon other river and adjacent land users. Practical demonstrations of enhancing river margin habitat through laying saplings into the channel

and how woody brush material can be employed to reduce bank erosion rates and enhance habitat were also undertaken.

The workshops were attended by over 20 individuals, from a range of backgrounds, including local angling clubs and conservation volunteers. These events are just part of the wide range of work that WTT is involved with. For more information please visit the website, www.wildtrout.org

EDWARD TWIDDY

Many WTT members will know of Edward Twiddy over most years of WTT's existence, acting always in a voluntary capacity as our projects officer and since 2008, the Chairman of Trustees. In Salmo 2015, Edward signalled his intention to step down from the chair at some point in the year, so this piece offers some partial

recognition of his enormous contribution.

Edward has trout in his blood, without doubt committed to the fish and to the progress of WTT in working to make life better for that fish and its habitats. He has been a simply brilliant chairman and advocate for our work, overseeing the progressive rise of the Trust, from employing a part-time officer to now a team of ten, including seven full-time staff doing mountains of work for our trout. Edward has a dumbfoundingly incisive, logical brain, able to spot opportunities and the right thing to advise and do. Throughout his tenure, Edward has driven us to remain focused on what we do best: practical work, engaging people to look after their rivers and lakes for wild trout.

Edward may no longer sit among us with the chairman's hat on but he vows to continue to support the work of the Trust and we look forward to keeping him close and benefiting from his expertise.



Edward Twiddy doing what he loves: pretending to involve his elder son, Joe, in trout fishing!

BUTTS BEER MAKES LIFE BETTER FOR WILD TROUT

In 2014, Butts Brewery of Hungerford gave WTT a donation of nearly £500, arising from a contribution to WTT of 5p per bottle sold of their outstanding Barbus beer. We turned that donation into a set of chesties, adapted for chainsaw use, for our southwestern Conservation Officer, Mike Blackmore.

Well, Chris Butts has done it again. Early in 2015, Butts Brewery donated another £432, which we pledged to turn into a chainsaw for one of our northern Conservation Officers, Gareth Pedley. Here's the proof: Gareth, ornately orange, with his (shiny) new tool, at work on the Witham at Easton, Norfolk.

Thanks so much to Chris Butts and his beer. You can help WTT's cause by quaffing Chris's ale, obviously in moderation. See more on Butts Brewery at <http://www.buttsbrewery.com/>.

If you would like to help our work with a donation, we'll always put your money to good use. For example, the latest recruit to our Conservation Officer team, Dr Jon Grey, started with us in April and he too needs a chainsaw and all the associated PPE. If you would like to help, please call Denise Ashton on 07802 454157 or e-mail dashton@wildtrout.org.



RIVER HABITAT WORKSHOP IN ARGYLL

Keen to expand Wild Trout Trust coverage in Scotland, an exciting project was initiated with assistance and financial support from Integrated Aquatic Resources Management Between Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland (IBIS). The project delivered a collaborative workshop, hosted and organised by Argyll Fisheries Trust, with technical guidance on river habitat management and installation of in-channel features provided by the Wild Trout Trust and Argyll Fisheries Trust. The event drew in participants from a range of fisheries trusts and forestry interests across central and Southern Scotland and Ireland.

An initial morning session entailed a series of presentations on the background and theory behind riparian management and habitat improvements, including the requirements of trout and improvements that can be made to increase fish survival and fish carrying capacity within a river; the importance of reinstating and managing more natural structure within a river and the consenting process for in-channel work in Scotland. The workshop was designed to be interactive, with discussion and comments welcomed throughout, engendering a friendly learning environment and chance to share experiences.

In the afternoon, the workshop moved to a tributary of the River Aray (a small spawning burn heavily impacted by straightening and forestry drainage) for some hands-on training. A brief walk and talk about the current habitat quality and issues was followed by a practical demonstration of methods for installing woody debris to diversify the channel, increase fish cover and kick-start more natural geomorphological processes. Attendees then tried the work themselves and saw how quickly and easily habitat and in-channel structure can be improved on a small spawning tributary, provided that there is a basic understanding of the ecological and geomorphological requirements of

the site and the species for which it is being improved.

The second day of practical training was on the larger River Shira, again impacted by significant straightening for land management and suffering from incision within its channel, but where natural input of large woody debris has begun to improve habitat and reinstate riverine processes. The importance of LWD in providing in-channel structure and diversity was discussed before a demonstration of how simple tree kickers and hinged trees can be employed and secured in place to accelerate river re-naturalisation by mimicking the natural processes already underway.

A final day with a local angling club on the River Goil saw the demonstration and practice of soft revetment techniques to stabilise eroding banks on upland rivers. This proved to be a good finish to the workshop, furnishing participants with a further skill for protecting riverbanks while improving habitat, rather than degrading it, as is so often the case with harder, engineered bank protection.

All the participants considered the workshop to be good news, with several representatives from fisheries trusts expressing an interest for future workshops and Wild Trout Trust assistance in their local areas, something we are very keen to support wherever possible.

For more information about these events, keep an eye on the WTT website, or to discuss the possibility of developing a similar workshop in the north of England, Scotland or Ireland, please contact gpedley@wildtrout.org.



Securing brash marginal habitat.

NORTH OF ENGLAND– JONATHAN GREY, WTT CONSERVATION OFFICER

What have I done? As I put digit to keyboard, I have been in the North for one month exactly, although officially I have been a 'Wildie' since Easter.

It's been a tumultuous few weeks, upping sticks and moving from Kent with the bluebells and wild garlic in full swing to settle in North Yorkshire where it has swung violently from glorious sunshine to driving snow! I've also left full time academia and its associated baggage; well, hopefully just the baggage that sucked at my soul, the admin tasks that are part and parcel of a successful department and expected from someone with a senior position. Part of my drive to pursue this new role with WTT was born from spending my time stuck behind a desk, applying for money to employ Post-Docs and PhD students to do the very practical, hands-on science in the field that I wanted to do, that drew me to my career in the first place.

So, what have I done? Of course there has been an element of bringing myself up to speed and shadowing some of the other COs. On the practical side of things I was lucky to spend a day (before I left Kent) with Andy Thomas on a challenging bit of water, the Adur. I've undertaken a couple of AVs with Gareth Pedley, my colleague in the North, the first of which I can almost consider my home water. The Aire at Coniston Cold is a classic Dales limestone river that is seriously under-performing. We spent the best part of

the day in the company of a very enthusiastic young Roddy Bannister, marvelling at the potential of a water absolutely hooching with trout food but severely lacking in cover and variety of habitat for all the life-stages of trout: impoundment above weirs and bowling green grazing to the water's edge, the usual suspects. Hopefully the suggestions we made can be taken forward as it would be great to have some projects to get my teeth into right on my doorstep. Indeed, having written to various angling clubs, societies, Rivers Trusts and the like to introduce my arrival, the response I have had from all concerned along the Aire is particularly heartening.

A further foray with Gareth, across the border to work with Alan Kettle-White and colleagues at Argyll Fisheries Trust, has also provided ample opportunity for getting wet and muddy. I'm very familiar with Large Woody Debris from within my 'ivory tower' and have dropped the odd piece into low energy systems in the South, but to be a trainer on a CPD workshop for Practical Habitat Improvements (funded by the IBIS project) on spate rivers with attendees from across Scotland and Ireland bringing their own experiences and expertise was extremely beneficial.

It was fantastic to finally meet Alan Kettle-White. We had exchanged emails in the 1990s re ferox trout when I was working on the food web of Loch Ness and publishing a study on using ferox as Russian dolls. Now there is a man

dedicated to his fish! I will be returning to Argyll to discuss potential projects with Alan, but may wait until there is high pressure and a prevailing wind to hopefully rouse one of his 'Awesome' trout. The workshop also gave me the opportunity to chat to Kenny Galt of the Tweed Foundation. He has been using stable isotopes to help identify the provenance of spawners throughout the Tweed catchment (see updates in the recent Salmo). After 26 years dedicated to an academic career in aquatic ecology and with stable isotopes being my 'bread and butter' for that time, I am not letting it all go! The Research part of my WTT title allows me to continue chasing interesting ideas, as well as via my part-time Professorship at the Lancaster Environment Centre. So, aside from reviewing the science behemoth that is the library section on the WTT website and starting to put together new ideas for synthesis papers with Paul Gaskell, I am developing a couple of practical research projects: one with Noel Hulmston to determine whether perch predation upon trout is a limiting factor to populations in some Welsh lakes; one with an MSc student at University College London on the diet of the fast growing trout of Malham Tarn; and one with an MSc student at my old university (Queen Mary University of London) testing simple sampling and storage options for providing samples for stable isotope and ploidy analysis from Citizen Science (aka anglers). I hope to be able to update on these, as well as more practical habitat work in future newsletters.

After a giddy six weeks then, I already feel comfortable and accepted by the great group of passionate people that is WTT. Don't get me wrong. My close academic colleagues are all extremely passionate about their particular science too but they are often stifled by the admin and bureaucracy that wore me down. Perhaps it is still early days but it feels like a 'What have I done?' rather than a 'What have I done!'.



Gareth Pedley demonstrating installation of LWD into an incised and straightened forestry channel to delegates on the IBIS-funded workshop, hosted by Argyll Fisheries Trust.

SOUTH WEST – MIKE BLACKMORE, WTT RESEARCH & CONSERVATION OFFICER

My first drop-in is to a habitat project on the River Allen at Witchampton near Wimborne Minster.

An old mill tail race had been cleared of encroaching vegetation using an excavator. This practice would be less than ideal in any chalk stream, but local residents were particularly concerned about the impact on native white-clawed crayfish along with trout and other wildlife. With the residents and Dorset Wildlife Trust, the straightened and over-wide channel was narrowed and given a new sinuous form by the introduction of brushwood berms, flow deflectors and hinged live willow limbs. Six months later and silt has been scoured from the bed and deposited into the brushwood berms which are beginning to be colonised by marginal plants. *Ranunculus* is growing over golden, clean gravel. Hopefully, the channel will cope well with lower summer flows and will be fully naturalised in another 12 months.

The following day, the next project started on the River Wylye at Steeple Langford between Salisbury and

Warminster. This was a Wiltshire Wildlife Trust-led project and I was glad to have only been involved in the planning in a very brief and advisory capacity! Martijn Antheunisse's team (that is himself and his faithful side-kick, Lev Dahl) had organised a monster project with Bryan Gordon-Smith and the Wylye Fly Fishing Club. From day one, Lev and I were on the chainsaws introducing trees into the river and following hot on our heels were Martijn, Bryan's team and a hoard of volunteers. My role (when not buzzing through tree limbs) was to lead on the construction of habitat features, helping supervise volunteers and showing them a few simple techniques and tricks of the trade.

Overall, 22 volunteer tasks were undertaken with 135 volunteer man-days of work. About 60 individual features were installed including flow deflectors, hinged willows and brushwood berms.

Next it was down to Dunster near Minehead in Somerset and a dredged and straightened section of the River

Avill. The river was straightened in the 1800s but more-recently, low flows caused by a poorly designed weir at the top of a 1970s flood relief channel had caused it to silt up and become choked with vegetation. This then prolonged 2012/13 flooding to the consternation of the locals. The Environment Agency agreed to dredge the river and as a result the channel was left completely bare and a really hostile place for fish. Fortunately, a local resident got in touch with the Angling Trust, who got in touch with WTT and John Philips and Matt Pang from the local EA team. A plan was hatched to get the channel back into a healthy condition, able to better cope with low flow events, and less likely to choke up with silt and vegetation.

With an absolute shoestring budget of approximately £3.5k, designs were made, materials were sourced from nearby woodland, and an army of volunteers from all over Somerset was assembled. 42 separate volunteers got involved and in just seven days we had returned a sinuous, scouring flow to about 450m of formerly bare channel.





The volunteer team gets to grip with a brushwood berm on the River Wylfe.

A winter’s flush through later and the river appears to be recovering well. New berms are beginning to be colonised and EA electrofishing surveys before and after the work suggest trout, including sea trout, have found the new habitat to their liking.

Species	R.Avill, April 2014	R.Avill, April 2015
Brown trout	0	10
Bullhead	36	79
Brook lamprey	45	50
Eel	32	25
Flounder	3	1
3-spined stickleback	15	13

EA electrofishing survey results from the River Avill at Dunster Marsh, before (April 2014) and after (April 2015) the habitat improvement work.

WTT IN THE POLITICAL WORLD

WTT tends to stick to its mission: protecting and improving habitat for wild trout, their associated species, the rivers and lakes where they live and engaging people that enjoy those places.

We work, generally behind the scenes, with the fisheries and conservation organisations whose role is to lobby on political issues, most notably the Angling Trust and Salmon & Trout Association and the other groups working in the Blueprint for Water coalition. We can do this effectively by supplying case studies on what our Conservation Officers see out there on the rivers and lakes. Using this ‘intelligence’, we’ve been

able to input to various consultations, e.g. the Environment Agency’s Standard Rules and its River Basin Management

Plan review, the Scottish Wild Fisheries review.



What the WTT Conservation Officer saw: probable illegal activity on a Devon river, the kind of on-the-ground examples that WTT can input to the fisheries and conservation lobbying organisations.

ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF STOCK FISH

This edited piece comes from WTT member, Terry Lawton, based on the early days of his experiences of marking and tagging stocked brown trout to identify and differentiate them from resident, wild browns.

As a fishing club secretary, I have wanted for some years to have our stock fish tagged, or marked, so that they can be identified quickly and easily by any club member or guest. Some anglers find it much easier to identify and distinguish between stock fish and native fish; others find it very difficult. But if all stock fish were marked, life would be very much easier. Unfortunately, until this season, we hadn't been able to mark our fish, partly due to the reluctance of hatcheries to spend the time and costs involved. Now that we will be stocking with triploid fish in the hope that in the near future we may be able to stop stocking altogether, it is even more important that we can all differentiate between stock and wild fish.

Why we need to be able to identify stock fish accurately?

Like many clubs, we ask all our members to keep a record of what they catch each day. But it has one major flaw: no accurate means of differentiation between stock and wild fish. Are we over-estimating how many wild fish are being caught? Are we under-estimating that number? To be able to make sensible and informed decisions about future stocking plans, we need accurate figures.

Different ways to tag or mark stock fish

I have been aware of the use of a needless injector called a Panjet to inject a spot of alcian blue dye onto the stomach of fish where it can – one hopes – be seen clearly. Unfortunately, Panjets are no longer available and similar injectors (e.g. the Dermojet injector) are very expensive at around £800, as are the dyes used in the injector. Although marking fish with dye is being done successfully by some clubs, it has two problems. The first is that the dye may not last long enough; it must be visible for at least one season and ideally

two; these marks do fade and they can be very difficult for anglers of a certain age to spot on the bank. The second problem is that because the mark is underneath the fish, when a fish is caught it will need to be turned over to check for the blue dot. This may mean that it has to be removed from the water.

I then researched the various methods available for marking and tagging fish; there is an interesting overview on the Arizona Game and Fish Department website (www.azgfd.gov/w_c/Fish_Tagging_Marking_Techniques).

One widely-used method, fin removal or clipping (e.g. of the adipose fin) is to me unacceptable for aesthetic reasons if no others, and, I understand, the clipped fin will heal and the mark may then not be visible.

Then I came across Anchor or Floy tags. These are nylon T-bar tags very similar to those used to attach price labels to clothing and similar soft goods or hold packs of socks together. The external part of a Floy tag is much thicker than a nylon T-bar tag as it will usually be printed with either a number or other information relevant to whoever inserted it. In the retail market, T-bar tags are known as Kimble tags and they are applied using a tagging gun which has a sharp, hollow needle. Tagging guns and tags are cheap. And coloured tags are available so a different colour could be used each year or to differentiate between stockings in the same year. As well as being cheap to buy, they are quick and easy to insert in the back of a fish close to the dorsal fin. An external tag, either Floy or T-bar, has one key benefit: it can be seen while your fish is still in the water if you have caught a stock fish. There should be little or no need to handle an un-tagged fish which can be released while still in the water.

You can buy tagging guns with different coloured tags on Ebay. Try searching for Avery Denison tagging guns as not all searches will find guns and coloured tags.

Trout wrangling

It is a wet job wrestling a lively fish,



straight out of the transport tank. Wearing a pair of thin cotton gloves, or similar, will help you to get a hold of a fish immediately in front of its tail and under its head. You can then lift it out of the water container and place it in your bespoke tagging station, on the ground. Once tagged, return the fish to the water container, again cradling it with both hands, ready to be put in the river.

A hammock-style tagging station to hold and steady the fish can be made

using a sheet of neoprene rubber which is soft and flexible. The hammock needs an end stop, with a cover over it, into which the fish's head is inserted. This restricts movement at one end while the fish wrangler holds the fish by the tail as it is being tagged.

Lessons learnt

Always have a spare gun with you in case you have a breakage and spare needles. While the Avery Denison needles are very sharp they have proved to be fragile and can break.

Fishing experience

You should be able to see the tag in the back of a fish once it is getting close enough to net; our early experience is that our coloured tags are visible from about 3m distant. Once you have seen a tag or lack of tag, you can decide whether to net the fish or unhook it and release it in the water.

A full version of this article will appear in the WTT's annual journal or the website.

IS IT A TRIPLOID?

The Environment Agency's National Trout & Grayling Strategy implemented a policy under which, from 1 January 2015, stocking of brown trout into rivers in England (& Wales) will only be consented with fish that are infertile (triploid), all-female fish or fertile fish produced in local broodstock schemes i.e. those that use parental stock from the same river into which the fish will be stocked.

Much has been written in the angling press about the 'evils' of triploids. The actual science that has been carried out on them (e.g. in a PhD study at the University of Stirling or the work by Cefas on the Itchen) seems to dispel much of the angling myth e.g. that triploids are smolt munchers or that they don't rise like diploids. The huge benefit they do bring to the river is that triploids will remove the risk of genetic contamination of wild stocks by fertile, farm-reared fish. There's a great deal more on this topic on the WTT

website:

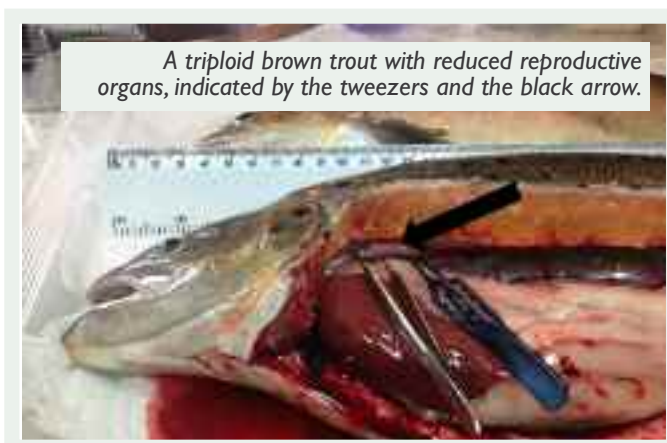
<http://www.wildtrout.org/content/trout-stocking>

But, if you catch a stocked fish, how can you tell if it's a diploid or a triploid? Well, with the whole fish in your hand, you can't. But, if you kill the stockie to eat, when you open it up, you can spot a difference in the reproductive organs. Look for these lying between the mass of the 'guts' of the fish and its swimbladder. If it's a male (highly unlikely because there are very few, if any, males in the restocking trout market), you will see the testes as long, white-ish, almost carrot-shaped organs. If it's a normal, fertile, diploid female, you will see orange ovaries, again almost carrot-shaped. The size of the testes and the ovaries will depend on the stage of sexual maturity of the particular fish, a function of age and size. If it's an immature fish, the organs will be small; if mature, they will be big and noticeable – refer to the pictures below.

But in an all-female triploid, eggs do not develop, so instead of developed or developing ovaries, there are small, often oddly-shaped, creamy coloured structures – see picture below.



An immature, one year old female brown trout, with developing, orange ovaries, indicated by the tweezers.



A triploid brown trout with reduced reproductive organs, indicated by the tweezers and the black arrow.



A 1.5lb female stocked brown trout, taken in May, with ovaries ready to develop in the following winter's spawning season.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT, VIVE LE DIFFÉRENCE – TASTING THE CHALK STREAMS OF NORMANDY

This piece on the joys of the WTT auction from member, Nick Heasman.

I left a copy of the WTT auction brochure with a good friend after an excited session in the pub where we had pawed the pages of delights. With the season seemingly a lifetime away, my gallant pal embarked on an earnest mission to secure some fishing in Normandy. A surprise and an absolute delight to hear when an email appeared stating his bidding success. A window of opportunity was found in diaries and scribed in blood for early May. Ferry strikes and demanding workloads aimed to scupper the intention of sampling the chalk streams of our Gallic cousins, but determination and boyish excitement kept us afloat.

With a wooded catchment of some 35,000 acres, the River Rouloir was our port of call. A groundwater-fed chalk geology, the Rouloir was an absolute joy to see from the large front panoramic window of 'Auntie', our faithful home on

small wheels for the next two days.

Historically, the stretch had been modified to service the mill which still stands having been restored to the family home of Christian and Jeanette, the pounding it took in WW2 now a distant memory. The stream seemed familiar with plants aquatic and terrestrial like home, the sound of cuckoo, the dart of a kingfisher and the watchful eye of a grey wagtail. The setting was exceptional, the lunch incredible and we were joined by Laurent of the Fario Club who explained the mission of the Club and the nature of pursuing wild trout and its conservation in France. The previous evening we were told of a prolific hatch of mayfly he had fished with another Brit who enjoyed the Normandy hospitality that night leading to, inevitably, an extra day. With three of us on the beat, an additional stretch had been negotiated with the neighbouring landowner, rumoured as a Baroness living on her own – to us she was a

widow of opportunity, a lady with some of the finest wild chalk stream fishing to be had in France. We sent our fellow countryman on his mission to return smiling four hours later, he says, due to successful fishing.

Our beaucoup mayfly hatch didn't occur that evening but sedge o'clock was fun and handsome fish up to 40cm were landed, with plenty of wild brownies rising well from evening until dusk.

That night fine local food with exceptionally well-cooked wild boar and a large night cap of local apple brandy made for sweet dreams. The promise of a return was made as we parted in the morning, sealed with big grins as 'Auntie' was persuaded out of the village and up the hill taking onwards two content fishermen with memories to savour and stories to share onto our next river, the Andelle. We felt lucky to have found an opportunity to experience the chalk streams of France and all in good cause, naturellement.

SCALES FOR ANYONE?

This contribution comes from WTT member, Richard Wright, learning the black art of scale reading.

Where we feel we need to stock, we now have no option but to use sterile triploid fish, or those reared through a local wild broodstock scheme. Both of these, the best evidence tells us, are the least harmful evils compared with the ideal of not stocking. What change will this have on the fish populations in our streams and rivers? How can we fishermen know what we are catching and killing or returning? How old are they? How fast are they growing? Which are wild and which are stock fish? All tricky questions.

Literature suggests that the long-established practice of examining scale samples could go some way to answering these questions. Is this a

practical proposition for the enthusiastic, amateur, small club, fisherman with modest resources and modest knowhow? The excellent masterclass by WTT Director, Shaun Leonard, on scale reading suggests it might be. A challenge then. Something to bring out the DIY naturalist in you? Something to do when it's even too inclement to go after those winter grayling?

Collecting scales, it turns out, is not difficult. The internet (WTT included) provides many examples of how it can be done. I will not pretend I have come across the definitive technique but logically the method which you find able to use quickly, consistently and most importantly, with the least stress to the fish, would be the one to go for. I first practised on a trout from Sainsbury's fish counter to feel more confident. Small, dry brown paper envelopes are all that is needed for permanent scale storage.

Was the next bit going to be

prohibitive? It didn't take too long to work out that a new microscope was going to be more than a bit difficult to justify to my wife, no matter how impressive looking a toy it was. Fortunately, from a microscopic point of view, trout scales are very big and only require a low power of magnification. Further still, microscopes have been around for 400 years and haven't changed substantively since I was at school 40-something years ago, so not having the latest model for these modest needs was not likely to be a problem. What was needed was an 'oldie but goodie'. After a bit of surfing, Guntree produced a retired lab microscope with missing high power objective. £65 – just the job (lucky?). If you're not sure how to set up a microscope there are plenty of web sites which, quickly, take you through it. It's quite straightforward.

The scales, I found, could be mounted by flattening them, sandwich style, between two ordinary microscope



slides held tightly together with ordinary sticky tape (a standard cover slip is far too thin to exert the necessary pressure). No staining, no fixing, no other fancy enhancement. In this respect scales are asking to be looked at. If necessary, prior to mounting, clumped and sticky scales can be washed clean of mucus and separated from each other by soaking them in slightly soapy water. They need to be rinsed and gently dried with tissue, before sandwiching, to prevent trapping bubbles in the scale ridges which makes interpretation difficult. This very simple method repeatedly produced a very viewable and readable sample. 'Simples': instant gratification biology.

The last phase is to record the information. The advice from the WTT masterclass, was that an image could be obtained by the very low tech' method of manually pointing an ordinary, small, digital camera straight down the microscope. Appropriate technology again; it worked remarkably well. A little fiddling determined that using this particular camera in B&W mode and slightly over-exposing the picture improved the quality a little more. (Tip: if, like me, you wear reading glasses, put your glasses back on and refocus the microscope before using the camera.

Without glasses I was focusing the microscope beyond infinity; it seemed to make my camera panic.)

Digital images are easily stored and of course, easily shared. Sharing will no doubt be important. It turns out that interpreting the scales is more demanding than the imaging process. Studies show that scale interpretation abilities vary from person to person and with degree of practice. Shaun Leonard not only gave his expertise at looking at my first images but also shared them with a professional contact and both agreed on the differing characteristics of the wild fish scale and stock fish scale which I sent him. It certainly needed the experienced eye to point out the salient details to me.

So, the answer to the question is yes, it can be done but like many answers,

poses more questions.

I and perhaps others can't send all their images to Shaun. When would he ever find time to go fishing?

Are there enough members out there interested enough to form a scale interpretation group /section? It is clear that scale interpretation is as much a craft as a science, improved with practice, discussion and mentoring. Some sort of scale pool or "I'll look at yours if you'll look at mine" system with some high level oversight for the tricky ones might be worth developing. Who's interested?

Anyone keen to join Richard's gang can mail him on:
richard@familywright.eclipse.co.uk



MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA – TIM JACKLIN, WTT CONSERVATION OFFICER

It has been a busy few months in the Midlands and East Anglia.

Advisory Visits have been carried out on the Trent (Staffordshire), Cam (Cambridgeshire), Rea (Shropshire), Teme (Herefordshire), upper Witham and Slea (Lincolnshire). The latter was to support Lincolnshire Rivers Trust's application for funding from the Catchment Partnerships Action Fund and it was very pleasing to find out recently that this has been successful and much needed river restoration work will go ahead. Advice has also been provided on the Lissan Water near Cookstown, Northern Ireland, a tributary of the Ballinderry River which drains the western side of Lough Neagh. The visit was hosted by Ballinderry River Enhancement Association (www.ballinderryriver.org), a rivers trust doing fantastic work on river protection and improvement, education and conservation of the endangered freshwater pearl mussel. The Ballinderry and its tributaries are the breeding grounds for the migratory dollaghan trout which inhabits Lough Neagh and it was fascinating to see first-hand the links between good habitat and water quality, healthy fish stocks and pearl mussels (the larvae of the latter hitch a ride on the gills of small trout before dropping off to mature in gravel beds).

On the practical front, a number of demonstration days have been carried out on Derbyshire rivers including the

Noe (Peak Forest AC), Derwent (Cromford FFC) and Dove (Norbury FC). Various techniques that can be employed on working parties were demonstrated, improving the cover and fish holding lies. A more extensive project has been carried out on the Bentley Brook, a Dove tributary, involving the removal of low weirs and installation of woody debris and in Staffordshire a bank re-profiling and gravel introduction project on the Endon Brook was completed on a very heavily engineered section of this River Churnet tributary. In Northamptonshire, habitat improvements resulting from a WTT Advisory Visit and project proposal were carried out by contractor Dominic Cawley on behalf of Welland Mayfly Fishers, funded by the local Environment Agency fisheries team.

In Lincolnshire, three demonstration days on the Dunston Beck were well-attended by volunteers who installed brushwood bundles to improve the habitat in this recently dredged watercourse. A Mayfly in the Classroom training event was held for teachers in local primary schools to raise awareness of the Beck and the importance for fish and wildlife.

Also in Lincolnshire, WTT advice and planning work culminated in the removal of a redundant weir on the upper Witham, improving opportunities for fish movement (for example to



access spawning habitat). There was something very satisfying about wielding the sledge hammer and watching the water flow freely again! Many thanks to Grantham Angling Association volunteers who helped with this work. The removal of the impoundment improved upstream habitat and allowed woody debris to be installed, creating cover, depth variation and scoured gravels. This work complements the extensive habitat improvements downstream on the Easton Estate carried out by the Environment Agency and WTT and is a further step in the recovery of the trout population which was hit by pollution a few years ago.

Still on the Witham, a couple of miles downstream of the above site, planning work has been progressing on an exciting project to create a 600m bypass channel around another weir. The work will restore the river to its natural course and the existing impounded, slow, silty channel will be backfilled, delivering great benefits for fish passage and in-stream habitat. This is a partnership project with the local Environment Agency team and WTT and the work is due to start in early July.

It's great to see projects being tackled which restore engineered rivers to a more natural state with increased sinuosity, connection to the floodplain



Freshwater pearl mussels raised in the Ballinderry hatchery



...and after on the upper Witham.



Weir removal before ...



...and after on the upper Witham.



Getting stuck in on the Dunston Beck, Lincolnshire.

1200m river channel at Bayfield completed last September starting to mature (see *Salmo trutta* magazine, 2015) and to see hatching flies and rising trout there only seven months after completion!

and a pool-riffle sequence. Another such project where WTT is involved is being led by the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project on the Waithe Beck near Grimsby which has also recently been granted funding from the Catchment Partnerships Action Fund. Past projects on the River Glaven in Norfolk have followed the same principles and WTT recently hosted a visit for EA staff from the Lincoln and Ipswich offices to see four sites on this river, providing an opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences and gain inspiration for future projects. During this visit it was gratifying to see the new



Environment Agency staff visit to the Glaven, Norfolk.

GATHERING EVIDENCE – THE ROLE OF BIOMETRIC FINGERPRINTING

This piece is a synopsis of a fascinating paper, by Dr Nick Everall of Aquascience Consultancy Ltd. (ACL), on the use of aquatic invertebrates to detect impacts (or improvements) in the ecological status of rivers.

I wonder how many of you have sat and pondered on times past when you remember greater richness and abundance of river flies in your watercourses, or pat yourselves on the back that the health of your rivers appears pretty good at present? The odds are that with or without any true quantum of factual information to support such thoughts, many of you reading this article will fall into one of these camps. Sadly, completely un-impacted watercourses are becoming increasingly rare because human modification of river systems is so pervasive that sites with a representative suite of minimally-disturbed watercourse conditions have become increasingly scarce. Recent scientific evidence has shown both gains and losses in aquatic ecological integrity across UK rivers, with a decline in species-rich riverfly groups across a number of UK watercourses in recent decades.

More and more fishery managers are realising that relying on environmental

protection from Regulatory bodies, with ever-depleting finances and resources, may not be the most pro-active approach to protecting their own fisheries. While there have been great strides in improving the ecological quality of many rivers in the UK over the last 50 years, relentless population expansion is putting more pressure upon finite aquatic resources through, for example the direct abstraction of water for drinking water; the disposal of human waste and associated intensity of agricultural operations impinging upon our wetlands. Indeed, many of these issues are variably responsible for why, in the UK, fewer than 40% of surface waters were in good ecological status in 2009, at an early stage of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and river basin management plans with only 5% more expected to reach good ecological status by 2015.

Dr Nick Everall at ACL has been at the cutting edge of recent advances in biometric fingerprinting which provide causal stress signatures responsible for detected impacts or improvements in aquatic ecological quality. With colleagues at the Environment Agency and Staffordshire University, Dr Everall and his associates at ACL have developed both the sample species level analysis and bespoke computer packages

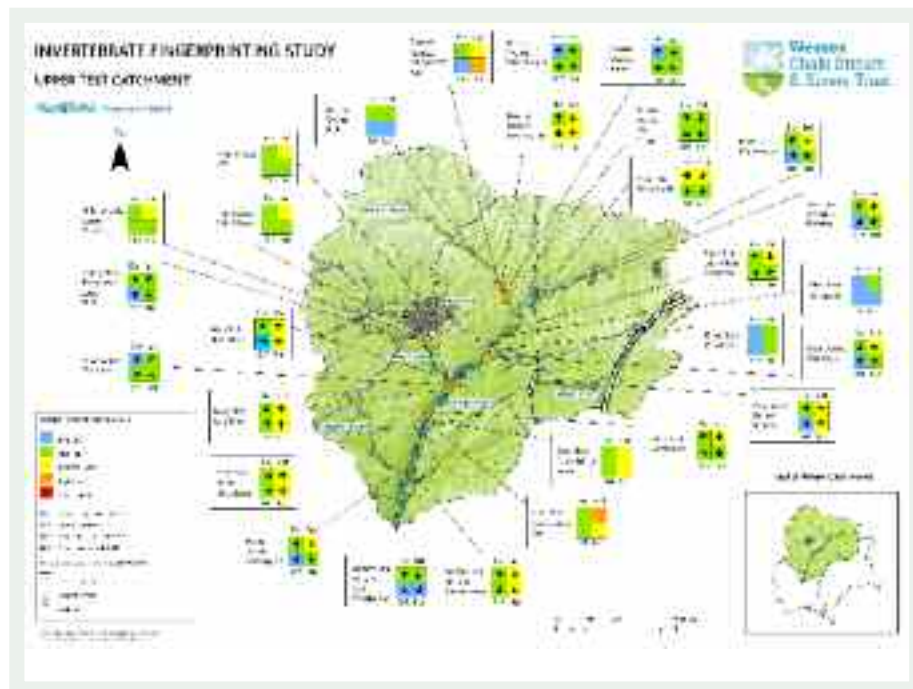
to facilitate multi-biometric fingerprinting of, for example sediment, flow, organic and nutrient biological signatures in watercourses from collected quantitative and species-level macroinvertebrate community survey data. While ACL regularly provide such services to regulators like the Environment Agency and Natural England or litigators like Fish Legal, they have in recent years been providing fishery-health benchmarking to an increasing number of independent riparian owners, rivers and wildlife trusts across England. A part-catchment level and 'traffic light' picture of the biological signature for silt, flow, organic and nutrient-enrichment fingerprints in the Hampshire River Test catchment, commissioned and mapped by the Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust, is shown (below left) where yellow-orange areas show increasingly impacted areas and blue shows respective un-impacted areas of the highlighted environmental stresses.

With the recent peer-reviewed advances in both the resolution of aquatic macroinvertebrate community sample analysis and associated pollution trait bio-fingerprinting we can now readily determine:

i. impacted fishery health and at the same time, identify the key root causes of the measured aquatic ecological condition in watercourses;

ii. with identified clean water conditions, a robust ecological benchmark or baseline for future litigation purposes should the unthinkable cloud of pollution darken a fisheries horizon in the future.

Many riparian owners have been able to sleep easier that should a pollution occur in the future they will have robust, detailed ecological data documenting what they have lost for litigation purposes or they have been factually enabled to engage with regulators and polluters using robust scientific evidence if this heightened resolution of investigation has highlighted more subtle signatures of deterioration in water quality. The regulators have come to realise the importance of both the resolution and

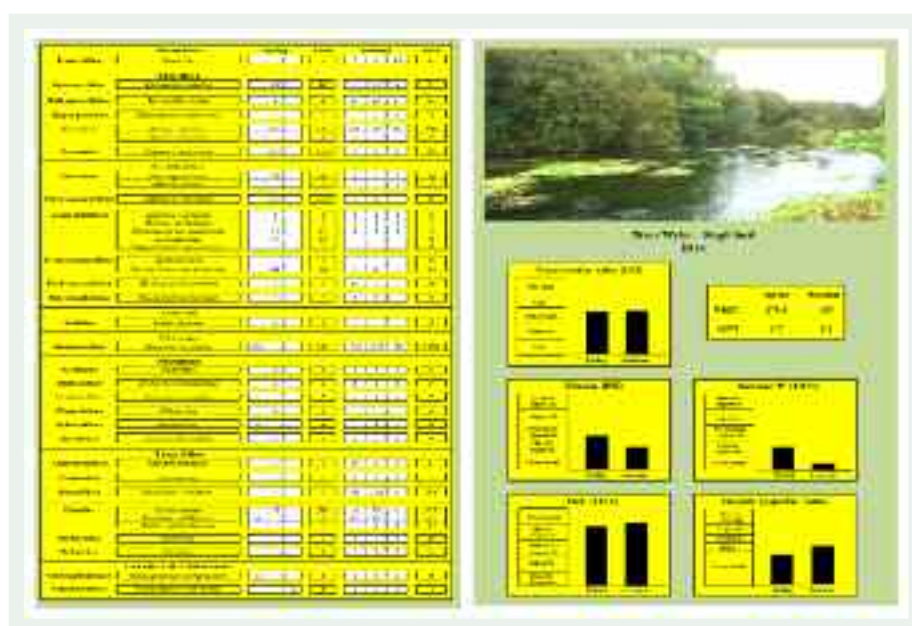
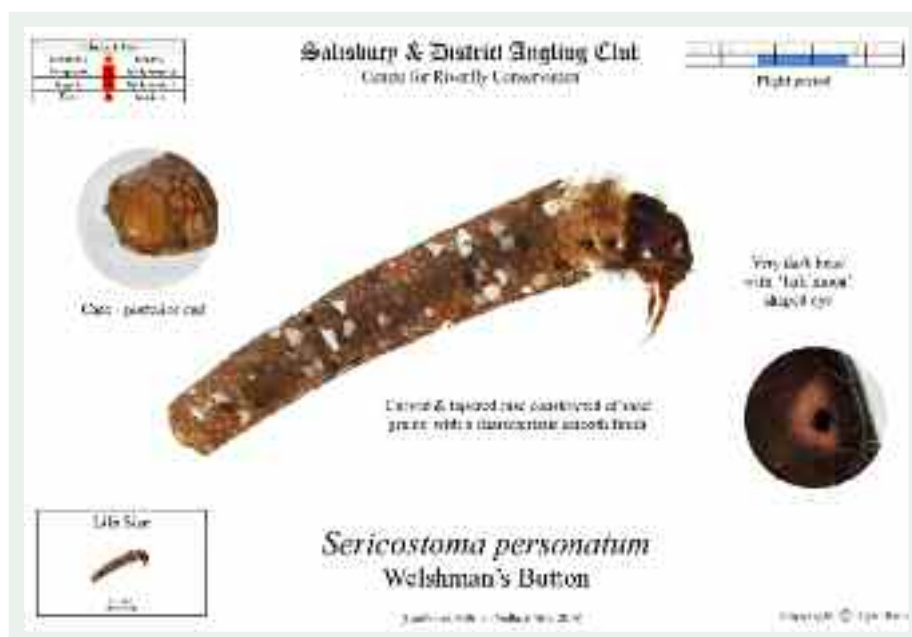


mapping of some biological signatures of environmental stresses in UK watercourses with both the sediment (PSI) and flow (LIFE) metrics being developed as Water Framework Directive drivers in the near future. Dr Nick Everall and Dr Cyril Bennett of the Riverfly Partnership are currently working together with Salisbury & District Angling Club in developing a species-level aquatic invertebrate identification and complementary fingerprinting package which will allow Riverfly Monitoring Groups, who want to take things a bit further than gross pollution monitoring, to undertake more subtle biological water quality fingerprinting in their study reaches of rivers.

An example of one of the species photographic keys is shown in the photograph (top-right) and a print out from the bespoke biological fingerprinting package below that.

Under the WFD umbrella of 'good ecological condition' this relatively recent multi-biometric fingerprinting work is starting to show that many such watercourses throughout the UK are often a mix of un-impacted and impacted reaches where detailed spatial mapping of the latter is facilitating targeted regulatory, in-stream remedial work and litigation if required. So, whether you want an expert benchmark and/or you fancy doing your own biological water quality assessment into the future, the question is can you factually quantify what state your reach of river is in?

Dr Nick Everall can be contacted at Aquascience Consultancy Limited on 01246 239344, or email: rnaquaconsult@aol.com, and his website is: www.aquascienceconsultancy.co.uk.



REMEMBERING A WILD TROUT HERO...

A commemorative tea party in Spring 2015 at Godington House in Kent remembered Paul Bates who sadly, died last autumn.

Paul was an avid, determined and tenacious champion for his river, the Great Stour in Kent. As WTT Conservation Officer, Andy Thomas, often notes "Every river and every club could do with a Paul Bates."

In 2011, following a WTT Advisory Visit, work started on a reach of the Great Stour near Ashford, under the formidable pairing of Paul and Andy. The river had been hammered by land drainage engineers and had in-filled with reeds, with very little recognisable as chalk stream habitat. In phases and through an extraordinary partnership between Paul's fishing club (the Godinton Piscators), the local (and excellent) Environment Agency fisheries



The Great Stour in 2012, before plenty of TLC.



Paul Bates working at the end of his rainbow on the Great Stour.



Andy Thomas points to a functioning stream in 2015, complete with Ranunculus and wild trout. Note the telegraph pole top right of both shots.

team, the Godinton House Preservation Trust, WTT and with additional funding from the Ninevah Trust and SITA Trust, the river began to regain life and function.

Paul's commemorative party walked the river to see how it was doing 20 months after the last phase of work – we were greeted at our first stop-off point by a passing trout and, at our last stop, a passing kingfisher. Good news. Even better to see that the river is looking fabulous. Wild trout are being seen and caught in the river; they are now in the caring hands of Clive Pavely and his chums in the Godinton Piscators. Paul must be chuffed to be looking down on his mended river...

UPDATE FROM TROUT IN THE TOWN – PAUL GASKELL, PROGRAMME MANAGER

Challenges and Opportunities: Llanrwst and Lyme Brook

I went to visit Stuart Llewellyn and other members of Llanrwst Angling Club recently in order to assess sections of the main river Conwy – as well as a previously invaluable sea-trout spawning tributary, the Afon Caes Person in Llanrwst itself. The hugely positive impacts of works to fill in approximately 200km (and counting) of drainage ditches on Mignient Moor and return a natural 'sponge' effect to the top of the Conwy catchment were visible in the clarity of the (rising!) water following rains. Such enlightened progress makes it even more inexplicable that one of the most important sea-trout spawning tributaries on the system has been trashed through an entirely inappropriate flood-prevention scheme. The culvert that was previously responsible for one prior recorded flooding event on the Afon Caes Person had already been tackled prior to the scheme's construction. Moreover, alternative schemes to provide additional channel capacity could have been implemented without need to concrete over the natural stream-bed. Not only has the spawning habitat in this reach been lost – but the concrete works have introduced additional barriers to any migrating fish attempting to reach better habitat upstream. We await with interest the impacts upon both erosion and actual (rather than perceived) flood risk arising from the works.

In stark contrast, a fantastic joint effort between the WTT, Groundwork West Midlands and other members of the Trent Catchment Partnership – including regional and local EA staff volunteers – recently improved a section of the Lyme Brook. This small tributary to the River Trent in Newcastle-under-Lyme in the heart of the Potteries region has the interesting distinction of being artificially straightened so as to run through an old land-fill site. The existing 'substrate' is a very interesting mix of sand, bricks, broken pottery and not a few refuse sacks! It does, however, teem with shrimp and olive nymphs and trout are



Installing a marginal brash berm on Lyme Brook.

present in the main river below the confluence of the Lyme Brook and River Trent. Tim Jacklin and I demonstrated habitat works' techniques to a willing group of volunteers that were brilliantly hosted and managed by Stephen Cook and Lynne Morgan of Groundwork West Midlands. The techniques, installed according to a project design prepared by the WTT, included woody debris and a gravel riffle installation as well as marginal brash-berm creation. These complemented the previous works completed to our design in which a mini-digger was used to re-profile the straightened brook and create meanders, berms and self-scouring pool habitat. The end result is new provision for all three critical lifecycle stages of

the same 'blueprint' in the near future. This will be a great boon to the prospects of wild trout making their way back into this urban tributary stream.



This photo – the Afon Caes Person being fitted in its concrete straight jacket, and above the finished job – 'trashed through an entirely inappropriate flood prevention scheme'.

trout: spawning habitat (with adjacent cover for adult fish waiting to spawn), juvenile cover and adult scour pool and overhead cover habitat.

Following this successful initial event, there will be more (and bigger) habitat works

completed to

SAGE ROD MAKES HABITAT ON CORRIB'S STREAMS



WTT's Rods for Conservation scheme offers a (very!) limited number of fabulous Sage rods to clubs that they can raffle to raise funds for habitat improvement work. Here's a great story of what can be

done with the proceeds, from Philip Comber of the Lough Corrib Angling Federation.

Many thanks from the Lough Corrib Angling Federation for the Sage rod WTT provided us as first prize in our

winter raffle. In total, we raised just over €2,000 for our Cairde Loch Coiribe (Friends of Lough Corrib) development account.

These monies will go towards our ongoing stream development programme which is run in conjunction with the Clydagh Foundation, who provide us with matching funds so the €2,000 raised in the draw will be converted to €4,000 for works on the ground.

The majority of the monies will be spent purchasing materials such as spawning gravel, armour rock, tree transplants and fencing for an enhancement project. The development programme has been running with the Clydagh Foundation for the last four years and to date over €80,000 has been spent on enhancement works in the Corrib catchment.

We are seeing some impressive returns on our investment with many new spawning sites being identified on an annual basis after work has been carried out. We hope that this project will run long into the future to help us maintain Lough Corrib as one of the primary wild brown trout lakes in Europe.



LONGLEAT

FISHING – RIVER WYLYE

A rare opportunity has arisen for Rods on 2 ½ miles of catch & release wild trout fishing on the River Wylfe.

For more information, please contact Alice Baker on 01985 845535 or e-mail: alice.baker@longleat.co.uk

IT JUST GETS BETTER & BETTER – THE 2015 WTT 3 FLY CHALLENGE FUNDRAISER AT MEON SPRINGS TROUT FISHERY RAISES £3770

CA sunny Saturday in June saw the sixth, annual WTT 3 Fly Challenge fundraiser run at the splendid Meon Springs Trout Fishery in Hampshire, in memory of avid Meon fisher, Pasco James. 31 anglers fished the event, raising an incredible £3770 for WTT and over £500 for the injured servicemen's charity, Fishing for Forces.

The competition allows anglers to fish with three flies – a Kite's Imperial, a buzzer and a GHE nymph – with different point scores awarded for fish size and each pattern. This year, the fishery contained some 'bonus' fish: brown trout and golden rainbows.

WTT is hugely indebted to Neil Mundy, a WTT volunteer who yet again brilliantly organised the day, with generous support from Waitrose and the John Lewis Partnership Fly Fishing Club. The fishery at Meon Springs looked stunning and produced excellent fish and facilities, including a great lunch (details of the fishery at <http://meonsprings.com/>). Phil Marr, the silversmith, created beautiful commemorative silver salvers as prizes and Pasco's mum, Harriet Poland, presented the prizes at the day's end.

This year saw a new competition winner, with Chris Hodge pipping to the post twice-previous winner, David King. In addition to second place, David also took the biggest fish prize.

For your diaries, next years 3 Fly Challenge fundraiser will be on Saturday 18 June 2016 – if you'd like details, keep in touch with Neil Mundy at nc-mundy@hotmail.co.uk.

Pasco James was a super-keen fisher and riverman on the Meon, whose life ended tragically early in 2010 at the age of 22. Since then, WTT has run the 3 Fly Challenge fundraiser in his honour and used the monies for habitat work on the Meon.



Bill Howell, founder of Fishing for Forces and great WTT supporter, fishing his heart out at Meon Springs. Bill will have better days on the bank...(photo Mike Edwards)



Chris Hodge (centre), winner of the 2015 WTT 3 Fly Challenge, flanked to his right by event organiser, Neil Mundy and to his left, Harriet Poland. Chris's winning horde included a superb Sage One rod, a Phil Marr silver salver and a commemorative tankard.

MERCHANDISE

All WTT merchandise can be ordered via the Shop on our website at <http://www.wildtrout.org/>; by sending your order and cheque to the WTT Office; or by debit/credit

card over the phone – call the WTT Office on 023 9257 0985. All postage prices are for the UK, please enquire for overseas.

ORVIS cap
£15 + £3.20
p&p one size



Snowbee Fishing Shirt
£39.99 + £3.20 p&p
sizes M, L, XL, XXL



Rod measures and length/weight cards
£3.50 per set



T-shirts from Eat, Sleep, Fish Direct from
<http://eat-sleep-fish.co.uk/content/2014/09/eat-sleep-fish-t-shirts>
£19.99 plus £2 p&p



Trout cushions
£12 + £3.20
p&p



Car stickers and mugs
Car stickers – £1.50
Pin badges – £3.75
Cloth badges – £4.50
Mugs – £9 + £3.20 p&p



Fold-out chart
Freshwater name trail (a guide to animals found in streams and ponds)
£3 + £1.50 p&p

Fulling Mill Evening Rise Fly Selection
£9 + £3.20
p&p



CDs

- The Uplands River Habitat Manual £10 + £2 p&p
- The Chalkstream Habitat Manual £10 + £2 p&p
- Urban Rivers Restoration Guidelines £10 + £2 p&p
- Rivers – Working for Wild Trout £10 + £2 p&p



Paperbacks

- Simple Guide to Caddis Larvae – £6 + £1.50 p&p
- Guide to the Adult Caddis Flies or Sedge Flies – £3.80 + £1.50 p&p
- Guide to the British Stonefly (Plecoptera) families – £3.80 + £1.50 p&p
- The Wild Trout Survival Guide – £10 + £2.16 p&p



THE WILD TROUT TRUST

Registered Charity No. 1162478
Charitable Company No. 03345901
Registered in England & Wales

President
Jon Beer

Vice-Presidents

Professor David Bellamy, Brian Clarke, Sir Gareth Edwards, Oliver Edwards, Dr Malcolm Greenhalgh, Dennis Moss, Pat O'Reilly, Peter O'Reilly, Jeremy Paxman, Paul Procter, Charles Rangeley-Wilson, The Rt Hon Lord (David) Steel of Aikwood

Chairman
Edward Twiddy

Trust Secretary
David Marriott
office@wildtrout.org

Director and Conservation for Scotland & Ireland
Shaun Leonard
director@wildtrout.org
07974 861908

Conservation Officers

Tim Jacklin
Northern England, Midlands, Anglian, North Wales
tjacklin@wildtrout.org
07876 525457

Andy Thomas
Southern, Thames, South West, South & Mid-Wales
athomas@wildtrout.org
07876 525499

Paul Gaskell
Trout in the Town
pgaskell@wildtrout.org
07919 157267

Gareth Pedley
The North
gpedley@wildtrout.org
07500 870583

Mike Blackmore
Southern, Thames, South West, South & Mid-Wales
mblackmore@wildtrout.org
07881 248789

Research & Conservation Officer

Jon Grey
The North
jgrey@wildtrout.org
07969 337808

Newsletter

Shaun Leonard, Christina Bryant and Richard Handley

Sponsorship & Communications

Denise Ashton
dashton@wildtrout.org
07802 454157

Wild Trout Trust Office

Christina Bryant,
Trust Administrator
office@wildtrout.org
023 9257 0985

The Wild Trout Trust, PO Box 120,
Waterlooville PO8 0WZ
Christina normally works 09:00–16:00, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday.
When this is not possible and at all other times, please leave a message on the answerphone.