

WILD TROUT TRUST

News Update Spring 2023

Annual Spring Auction 17-26 March

www.auction.wildtrout.org



This year's is bigger than ever, with 401 lots covering every aspect of fishing, plus books, art, flies (including flies tied by Paul Procter, Peter Hayes and Don Stazicker) and tackle (including some wonderful hand-made rods and reels) and experience days. Most of the lots offer the chance to fish on a huge variety of waters from Sutherland to Cornwall, often with the help of a local fisherman and one or two writers and celebrities.

You can bid online at auction.wildtrout.org or by post using the bid form enclosed with the catalogue. From 1 March, you will be able to browse the lots on the auction site. Bidding on all lots opens at 9am on 17 March and lots will close sequentially on 26 March starting at 4pm.

If you have any queries, please contact Christina: office@wildtrout.org / 023 9257 0985. Thank you.

How will we spend the money raised?

The funds raised in the auction directly support the work of our Conservation Officers to deliver in-river habitat improvement projects and give practical advice to anyone who needs help – landowners, fishing clubs, community groups and other conservation bodies. We use the money raised to help keep our hard-working team equipped with tools like chainsaws and waders for them and for the volunteers we help. The funds also play an important role in getting projects off the ground; crucially, the money raised is increasingly leveraging more funds from other sources.

We will use wisely whatever money is raised; we keep overheads to an absolute minimum (for example, our staff all work from home) to maximise the amount we spend on practical improvement of habitat for wild trout. We run this auction on our own site, so costs are minimal, and we are blessed with fantastic volunteers who, like you, are vital to its success.



Auction stories

Auction lot buyers often tell us how much they have enjoyed their fishing days. Here's a selection from 2022:

John Simmonds, Lullingstone Fishery in Kent with Tony Paras and Jack Selwood: "I just wanted to say how much I appreciated your hospitality on Friday. For my part, I had a great day – lots of good fish from the lake and one special one from the river – good company, good advice, good food, well organised and in particular I wanted to thank you both for making me so welcome. Thank you also for the flies – I'm sorry a few ended up in the undergrowth! What a good day it was and how great to support the Trust at the same time – both at my end and yours."

Justin McConville fished the Baden-Powell Bentley FFA's beats of the River Wey, Hampshire: "Lovely stretch of water and very well hosted." You can read a report of Justin's day on his blog at: theriverbeat.blogspot.com

Bryan Angelinetta learnt a lot from his day with

Stuart Crofts: “Just to let you know that I had the best day learning about entomology and fishing with Stuart. What a fantastically generous man. I’ve learnt so much from today. What an absolute asset he is to the Wild Trout Trust and the world of fishing!”

The Golden Maggot. A story by George Wills, a

double champion of the Golden Maggot: “June 2022 saw the highly anticipated rematch of North v South in the much-coveted Golden Maggot competition. This was no friendly fixture, but a clash of siblings and friends, determined to outwit both their opponents and quarry. With revised and clarified rules, Shaun and his southern team were no doubt up against a refreshed and eager Tim in the north this year.

However, with a total of 16 species for Team South, including a remarkable tench on a fly, Tim and his team stood little chance, leading to the retention of the trophy by Team South. An honourable mention must be given to the North’s 16lb barbel – a remarkable lifetime fish. Currently 2-0 down in the series, we have no doubt that Tim is brewing up something special for 2023 to try and claw back the trophy (let us not forget Australia came back from being 2-0 down to win the Ashes... in 1936).

The Golden Maggot is the ultimate fishing competition, the connections of Shaun and Tim allow for a wonderful variation of fishing spots and their levels of knowledge ensure that all (legal) methods of fishing are practised and if needs be, taught to the teams. Onwards to 2023. Best of luck.”

Duncan Brown, the Pickering Fishery, Yorkshire,

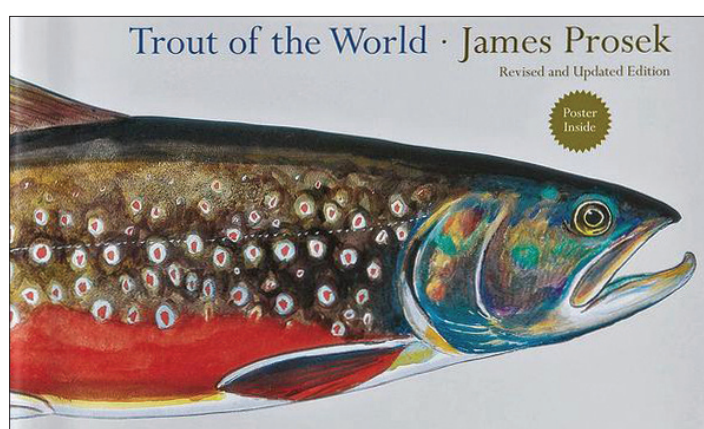
with Chris Smiles: “I enjoyed the day and although not hugely productive in terms of fish caught, it was a lovely day despite the fish and weather gods conspiring to deny me! Thank you again for the tiny flies and fish & chip lunch. In the afternoon after you left me, I caught three more fish, all small and wild and as you said, with the spectacular colouring. I was also lucky enough to see the steam train puffing by. All in all, I envy you this water.”



Christmas Get-Together with Talk by Jon Beer and Raffle Draw

Our Zoom Christmas Get-Together with Jon Beer’s talk and raffle draw was very good and enjoyed by around 60 members. Jon explained why trout display such fantastic variability in appearance, diet and spawning habits. It was a journey from Austria to the Galapagos via Slovenia, Turkey, Ireland, Wales and more.

Special thanks to James Prosek for the beautiful illustrations and to Jon for a talk that was both amusing and enlightening. You can watch a video of the talk with slides on the Wild Trout Trust You Tube channel, along with lots of other good videos: www.youtube.com/@WildTroutTrust/videos



Thank you so much to all those who donated the fabulous raffle prizes – Sage, The Peacock at Rowsley, Weston Farm Fishery and Adrian Latimer – and to everyone that kindly bought numbers, enabling us to raise a record and fabulous £11,318.

Congratulations to the winners:

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1st Prize | Andrew Nolan |
| 2nd Prize | George Morris |
| 3rd Prize | Tim Fenton |
| 4th Prize | Paul Himsworth |
| 5th Prize | Dominic Stoppani |

In Memory of Julian Brown

Thank you to Roger Elliot and the family of the late Julian Brown of the Chisenbury Syndicate on the Wiltshire Avon for donating the proceeds of an auction of their books to the Wild Trout Trust. Roger says, “We lost Julian at the beginning of Lockdown 1 in 2020 and were never able to get together to mark his passing, but we did club together to build a new hut and seat in his memory in a prime spot on the bank.”

'The Stephens Hoard' and Tackle Sales via our Website

Roger 'Steve' Stephens sadly died last year. He was a huge friend of the WTT and we will miss him. His widow, Edna, has donated Steve's fishing tackle to the WTT. Steve was a man of catholic tastes when it came to fishing and his tackle reflects his interests in everything from bonefish to carp – and trout of course. We call it 'The Stephens Hoard' and we have been busy with the epic job of sorting through it in preparation for selling via our website and in the auction. We have created a new section in the website shop called 'New to You: Fishy Stuff', so that we can sell Steve's tackle, along with any other donations gifted to us by our generous supporters.

If you'd like to donate to us in this way, we'd be delighted to accept good quality items that need a new home. Please contact Christina in the WTT office via: office@wildtrout.org.

Thank you to everyone who donates their beloved tackle and other items, giving it a new life. Every pound we get is one that trout conservation didn't have before.

Events in 2023

Dam Busters Conference

There will be a conference on dam removal at the Old Trafford cricket ground in Manchester, 18 & 19 May. WTT's Tim Jacklin will be speaking about his Snake Lane project on the River Ecclesbourne and also about Jonny Grey's project to remove Scotton Weir on the River Nidd. The conference is organised by Dam Removal Europe and bookings can be made on their website: damremoval.eu/ukdre-conference/

Three-Fly Challenge 17 June

This annual fundraiser is a great day at Meon Springs, Hampshire, brilliantly organised by WTT volunteer, Neil Mundy, and the excellent staff at the fishery.



You'll fish more-or-less competitively for some tremendous prizes. It is a tournament that will test your skills using three flies (one at a time), provided on the day. Points are awarded according to the fly used and the weight of the fish caught. A raffle and auction will be held at lunchtime.

Tickets cost £110 including breakfast, cooked lunch, a 4-fish ticket and flies. Book at www.meonsprings.com/three-fly-challenge.html or contact Neil for more information ncmundy@hotmail.co.uk / tel: 023 9225 4886 / 07964 379988.

Director's Report

WTT members will have seen, in our autumn newsletter, the range of work that we've been up to, from the mighty weir removals on the Yorkshire Nidd and Derbyshire Derwent through to the smaller-scale habitat stuff with wood and gravel in Cambridgeshire, Hampshire and Sussex. Since then, our Conservation Officers have done an "amazing job" on the Granta in Cambs (described so by none other than the Chairman of the Game Angling Instructors Association (GAIA), added another 1km of improvements to the Bourne of Plunket Greene fame, cut into the bunds of the main stem Aire to allow it to use its floodplain, as it should do, and prepared lots more work for the year(s) ahead in Sheffield, Somerset, Hampshire and Devon. Quite a lot of this work has attracted coverage in local and national media, including pieces on *Farming Today* and regional TV and radio.

As ever, none of this could have happened without extraordinary partnerships with landowners, fishery interests, local river and wildlife trusts and EA teams. Thank you all.

But, does this habitat 'improvement' improve anything? Yep: plenty of evidence in the scientific literature and from our previous projects – see the WTT blog and news items for more information. Usually, though, we don't have the money to monitor and measure; we rely on the tried-and-trusted principle that if we build in physical diversity to a bit of river, it'll respond with ecological diversity. All things (e.g. water quality and quantity) being equal, it would be plain odd if nature wasted the opportunity we can present and very often, we see in unequivocal terms that it doesn't miss that trick.

In October 2022, WTT's Tim Jacklin and EA's Ryan Taylor lead a team that took down a big weir in the River Ecclesbourne, known as a blocker to salmon that gathered in the winter below it. This project was a long time in gestation and left on a dusty shelf until WTT came along and, in Ryan Taylor's words, "made

the impossible, possible.” In a bittersweet epilogue, a dead, spawned-out hen salmon was found in December above where the weir had been – she’d evidently made it to new ground, opened up by the weir removal, and seemingly laid her eggs, driving future generations.

A very different project on a very different river: the Bourne Rivulet in Hampshire, a Test tributary and wading ground of Harry Plunket Greene. The photo (below left) is of the riverbank, fairly tightly mown by a flock of sheep in summer 2021. Later that year, WTT (working with Wessex Rivers Trust), lowered

sections of bank, put in big trees and some gravel and fenced off (thanks to a super-inside landowner), ten metres of the river’s edge along a whole, large field. Skip to May 2022, a tiny bit upstream in the same field (see photo below right). Other than the trees in their guard tubes, all this vegetation is from natural regeneration, safe from livestock grazing, in the first 10 weeks of the 2022 growing season.

Suddenly, the Bourne is ecologically reconnected to the world around it, its margins unequivocally a rich wildlife haven, especially for river flies as they complete their lifecycle! QED.



Stock Up On WTT Goodies For The Fishing Season

The goodies below, and various publications, are available from our Website Shop, or by posting an appropriate cheque (payable to Wild Trout Trust) to the Office.

Chilly’s Bottles with WTT logo
£20 + £3.50 p&p, UK.

Enamel Badges
£3.95 including p&p, UK.

Car Stickers
£1.95 including p&p, UK.



Fishing Caps £15 + £3.50 p&p, UK.

Enamel Mugs £9 + £3.50 p&p, UK.



Tel 023 9257 0985

Email office@wildtrout.org
Freepost WILD TROUT TRUST

www.wildtrout.org