



SALMON & TROUT CONSERVATION UK

SUSSEX BRANCH

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NEWSLETTER January 2021

Dear Sussex Branch Members,

I'm sure it is not news to anyone that this year has been a year unlike any other. The first year in most of our lives when we have had to deal with a pandemic with the severity of Covid-19.

Like me, I'm sure a good number of you are in the vulnerable category and the way we live our lives has changed considerably. It goes without saying that the usual annual activities of the Sussex Branch have also been drastically affected. You will recall that in the early part of the year what we were allowed to do was severely restricted and fishing was prohibited for several months at a time when it is usually at its best. Being a sport where close contact with other people is not usual or likely, the ban was lifted just before the summer which helped to ease the claustrophobia of having to stay at home day after day.

AGM:

On the 7th March, just before the imposition of the isolation restrictions, we held our Annual General Meeting at Chailey Village Hall, immediately before the Cinder Hill Fly Fishing AGM.

I'm sorry to say that we only just had sufficient members present for the meeting to go ahead and following the separation of Cinder Hill Fly Fishing from the Branch activities, similar to the 2019 event, the meeting was very short and there were very few items on the Agenda, with no new Committee nominations or business to discuss and the 2019 Committee was re-elected unopposed.

Arrangements for the 2021 meeting will need to be considered nearer to the time dependant on the local Covid-19 restrictions in force at the time.

Shows:

We had expected to attend the South of England Show in June 2020 but due to the pandemic this was cancelled, as was the schools Connect With the Countryside day in July. The Autumn Show and Game Fair was in doubt for sometime, but eventually the Agricultural Society decided to go ahead with it. However, we and the Cinder Hill Fly Fishing Committee considered very carefully whether we could safely attend the show, but after long deliberations, we decided that we would be unable to undertake our usual show activities and maintain appropriate infection control precautions. Regrettably, it was therefore decided not to attend the Autumn Show this year.

Annual Match with the Sussex Branch of the Fly Dressers Guild:

This popular event is usually held in April or May every year and this year it would have been the turn of the Sussex Branch of the Fly Dresser's Guild to organise it. Sadly, like all of the other events on our calendar, this also had to be cancelled. We'll keep our fingers crossed and hope it can take place in 2021.

Membership:

I make no apology for repeating my annual message about Gift Aiding your S&TC UK Membership subscription.

Salmon & Trout Conservation UK is a registered charity and it is estimated that if every member Gift Aided their subscription this could be worth an additional £40,000 per year to the organisation.

It only takes a minute or so to do it online, just go to the S&TC UK website (<https://www.salmon-trout.org/support-us/gift-aid>), fill in your details and click "Send".

Alternatively, it can be done by post, or you can contact Kim Sargeant in the S&TC Administration Office (Tel: 01425 652461, email: kim@salmon-trout.org). You must, however, be a UK taxpayer.

Cinder Hill Fly Fishing:

Branch members are invited to join or renew membership of the Cinder Hill Fly Fishing Syndicate for the 2021 season. For information, please visit their website (<http://www.cinder-hill-trout.uk>) where you can download a membership application form, or contact Robert Nathan, telephone 01892 770903, email: r.nathan@btinternet.com.

Courses:

A number of people expressed an interest in taking part in a novice Fly Fishing Course at the 2019 Autumn Show. Two attempts were made to hold a course during October and again in November 2019, but on both occasions high winds and heavy rain made it unsafe to go ahead with the course. We had hoped to try again in the Spring of 2020, but unfortunately events precluded that for this year.

Arlington Reservoir Fishery Membership:

Similar to previous years and as an additional benefit of S&TC UK Sussex Branch membership, we again purchased two memberships at Arlington Reservoir Fishery, thereby enabling our members to enjoy a generous £10 discount off the normal day ticket and boat hire prices.

29 members registered their interest in the scheme, but unfortunately, due to the poor weather in the early part of the year and the subsequent closure of the fishery on the 24th March due to the Covid-19 restrictions, only re-opening on the 15th May, therefore missing out on the best part of the season and just 27 visits were made by our members during the year.

The fishery usually closes at the end of June, but this year they remained open until the 31st October although with low water levels, high temperatures and no boats available, as was usual at Arlington, very few fish were caught.

Perhaps we should have guessed that something was afoot, because as soon as the season finished we were advised that after well over 40 years of fly fishing at Arlington, the fishery would be closed down, South East Water saying that it was "unsustainable". Presumably this was from a financial aspect, but despite many representations from ourselves, the Sussex Branch of the Fly Dressers Guild and others and also contacting all our local MP's to solicit their support, South East Water are unwilling to reconsider their decision or to provide any figures to justify their actions.

They have said that they will be engaging with interested parties in the future to explore recreational activities at the reservoir, but from their responses to our communications, the inclusion of angling seems rather doubtful. What is pretty certain is that there will be no fishing at Arlington in 2021.

2021 Programme:

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus situation, at this time it is not possible to put together a meaningful programme of events for 2021. However, provided we are still allowed to go fishing, the Cinder Hill Fly Fishing lakes at Piplye will open on Monday 1st March, with those at Cinder Hill a month later on Thursday 1st April. The SEAS Summer Show at Ardingly is scheduled for Friday the 11th, Saturday 12th and Sunday the 13th June, while the Connect with the Countryside day for schoolchildren is set for Wednesday 7th July, all obviously subject to whatever rules and regulations are in force nearer the time. No date has yet been set for the Autumn Show and Game Fair.

We will keep you all posted via email or our website as the situation changes and fixtures are confirmed or postponed / cancelled as the regulations dictate.

Websites:

Don't forget to look at the National S&TC UK website (<https://www.salmon-trout.org>) occasionally as well as the Sussex Branch website (<https://www.salmon-trout-sussex.org.uk>) to keep up to date with what is happening nationally as well as locally.

Thanks:

Thanks are due again to the now few stalwarts who give up precious time in helping to keep the Branch running.

Communication:

We obviously wish to maintain effective communication with our members and because of the costs and time involved, it is not easily possible to do this using the postal system, so, if you have access to internet facilities and are happy for us to contact you via email, please ensure that we have an up to date and correct email address for you. Most importantly, please don't forget to let us know if you change your email address or if there are any other changes to your contact details.

Let us all hope that 2021 will be a just a little bit better for us all and for the Sussex Branch and Salmon & Trout Conservation UK as a whole. Please look after yourselves and stay safe.

With best wishes.



Rod Yuill

Chairman, S&TC UK, Sussex Branch.