



# **The Wilton Fly Fishing Club**

## **Information and Club Rules**

A Folio for Prospective Members

2018



*A wild brown trout of 21" (well over 4lbs by Sturdy's scale) taken from the Wilton Club water in 1999. The fish was returned alive.*

...." If pressed, I can picture a world where the wild critters are all gone, and if we fish at all we'll be after big, dumb, test-tube creations that look and act a lot like domestic turkeys.

It might be okay if you don't remember what it used to be like, but the loss will be very real." ....

*From  
'Another Lousy Day in Paradise'  
John Gierach*

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## **2. PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS**

Thank you for enquiring about The Wilton Fly Fishing Club. We trust that the information contained in this folio is adequate to tell you all you may want to know about the vision and aims of the Club and the running of the fishery.

Also, we hope that you will be sufficiently interested to want to talk to us more and to pursue membership. You are welcome to contact the Honorary Secretary in the first instance or any of the Club's officers as set out below. Please make contact by letter, email or telephone if you are seeking further information or clarification on any points. In addition, if you would like to view the fishery, this may be arranged (please contact the Hon Sec. Mike Tebbs).

## **3. KEY CONTACTS**

**President** – Roger Fagan

Tel: 01373 812617      email: rogerfagan@btconnect.com

**Honorary Secretary** – Michael Tebbs

Tel: 01985 841192      email: miketebbs@btinternet.com

**Habitat Manager** – Bob Male

Tel: 01722 503939      email: rmale123@virginmedia.com

**River Keeper** – Dave Griffiths

Tel: 07707 484654      email: davidgriffiths422@btinternet.com

## **4. THE CURRENT WAITING LIST**

We have a short waiting list, and it remains possible to get to the top with a little patience! Please refer to Page 29 of this Folio for information on the level of the current annual subscription and joining fees.

## 5. OVERVIEW

Founded originally as The Hungerford Club on the River Kennet in Berkshire during the 1870s by a group of leading fly fishermen, the Club moved to Wiltshire in 1891 where it was renamed The Wilton Fly Fishing Club. Since then we have preserved and enjoyed the fishing on what is now seven miles of the lower River Wylfe, and took on a further 3 miles of the tributary River Till a few years ago.

The history of the Club is narrated in John Knott's book 'The History of the Wilton Fly Fishing Club' published in 2013 by Medlar Press.

In 1898 G.A.B. Dewar ('The South Country Trout Streams') wrote;

*"The Wilton Club has re-stocked the Wylfe on an extensive scale, putting in many thousands of fario and levenensis of various ages brought from different parts of the country .... The average weight of the trout killed on this water would be about 3/4lb."....*

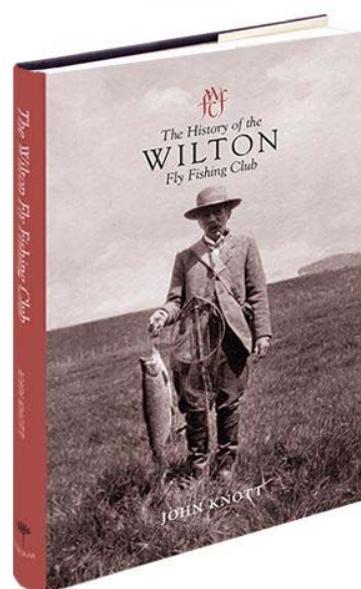
From recent DNA analysis it looks as though our fish have reverted to the original genotype, judging from comparisons with other local populations – and got somewhat bigger.

Since then, the Club has rarely found it necessary to stock with takeable fish. Today, the river supports a healthy population of brown trout averaging ¾lb to 1¼lb (c.12-14ins.). Each season, some specimen wild trout of 2lbs and over (17 ins.) are encountered, together with the occasional fish of 19/20 ins. and over (at 3lbs plus). More rarely, trout in excess of 21ins. (4/5lbs.) are still caught and released.

The largest trout recorded on the water was a wild trout of 7lb 5½oz caught in 2008. Another of 7lb 4oz was caught in 2005. Both were safely returned to the water. Fish of 7lb 2½oz and 7lb 1oz were caught in 1924 and 1953 respectively and a 5lb 1oz fish in 1992. Several other large trout in excess of 4lb have appeared in the last 20 years, and during most seasons grayling to 20" have been caught and fish over 17" are a realistic target for the keen angler.

The River Wylfe is famous as one of the smaller and more intimate of the true, southern chalk streams. The general water quality is of a very high standard: clarity is good, flows are constant relative to rain fed rivers, and flooding is uncommon. Fertility and the river's consistent ability to support excellent trout and grayling populations is exceptional. In common with the other chalk streams over recent years, abstraction from the aquifer has reduced flow in dry conditions. This together with swan grazing, has affected the growth of Ranunculus (Water Crowfoot) and other water plants in dry years in some stretches.

In spite of this, the River Wylfe remains an extremely attractive, top quality habitat and



offers some of the best natural chalk stream fishing available today. Indeed, there are few other stretches of chalk stream which are managed on the same principles as those of the Wilton Club.

The reduction in flow has to some extent affected the River Wylye's few tributaries, such as the River Till and the Chitterne Brook, which historically were heavily relied upon as spawning sites.

Because of its importance as a spawning stream The Wilton Club took over the fishing rights on the River Till a few years ago. Natural spawning occurs at various points along the main river as well as its tributaries, and in the carriers. It was against this background that a programme of fry stocking from the Club's own incubator boxes was undertaken some years ago. This exercise achieved its purpose in bringing stocks to self-sustaining levels and is no longer required for the maintenance of a healthy head of wild brown trout, to around 750 a year (trout 11" and over) and from 400 a year to 1500 a year (trout 10" and under). Grayling catches vary, but are usually three to five times the number of trout.

For the past nineteen years the Club has been implementing an extensive and successful programme of habitat rehabilitation and enhancement.

Habitat work is undertaken in collaboration with the Wilton Estate and its tenant farmers and within the framework of a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) Management Agreement. Advice and funding is also obtained from the Environment Agency and other organizations such as the Wild Trout Trust and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.



The Club monitors the impact of these improvements on the water plants and insect life of the river in addition to the population structure and density of the resident population of brown trout and was one of the first organizations to implement the Anglers Monitoring Initiative, taking insect counts each month for the past six years.

The Wilton Club offers challenging fishing for essentially wild fish and:

- Is limited to a maximum of 45 full rod members.
- Employs a full-time river keeper.
- Has a small Club Room at Great Wishford.
- Provides unrestricted access for trout fly fishing between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> October and for grayling fishing in the autumn and winter.
- Encourages catch & release.

## 6. CLUB PHILOSOPHY

There is a widespread, yet ecologically unsound view that the preferred method to improve chalk stream fishing is to stock with more and larger takeable fish.

The Wilton Club does not accept this view.

We will continue to adopt what we believe is a more enlightened strategy and instead;

- We will collaborate with all interested parties in order to restore and to maintain the lower River Wylde as a habitat capable of supporting the natural reproduction and growth of Brown Trout and of Grayling.
- We will continue to promote what we believe are the true sporting traditions of upstream fishing with imitative dry fly and nymph patterns.
- Based on comments from members, The Club maintains that:
  - ....“Anything over one pound in weight is a good fish”....
  - ....“Anything over two pounds is a prize fish”....
  - ....“It shouldn’t be about how many or how large the fish are”....
  - ....“It’s the way in which you catch them that’s important”....
  - ....“If you want to catch a lot of easy stock fish there are plenty of small stillwaters available. In contrast, if you want to experience traditional chalk stream fishing for difficult wild fish in un-crowded surroundings, then join The Wilton Club”....
- We will regulate the impact of angling pressure by:
  - restricting the membership of the Club.
  - monitoring and limiting the number of fish killed.
  - promoting ‘catch & release while members are allowed to kill fish for the table, in practice this is rarely done today).
- The Wilton Club is long established and is known to more discerning fly fishermen.

We aim to achieve wider recognition as the pre-eminent club providing the most challenging and highest quality of chalk stream fly fishing, based on the philosophy of maintaining an essentially wild fishery.

## 7. LOCATION and MAPS

The Wilton Club enjoys the fishing on more than 7 miles of the main River Wylde and carriers upstream from Wilton, just north west of Salisbury, together with most of the River Till, an additional 3 miles of classic winterbourne chalk stream.

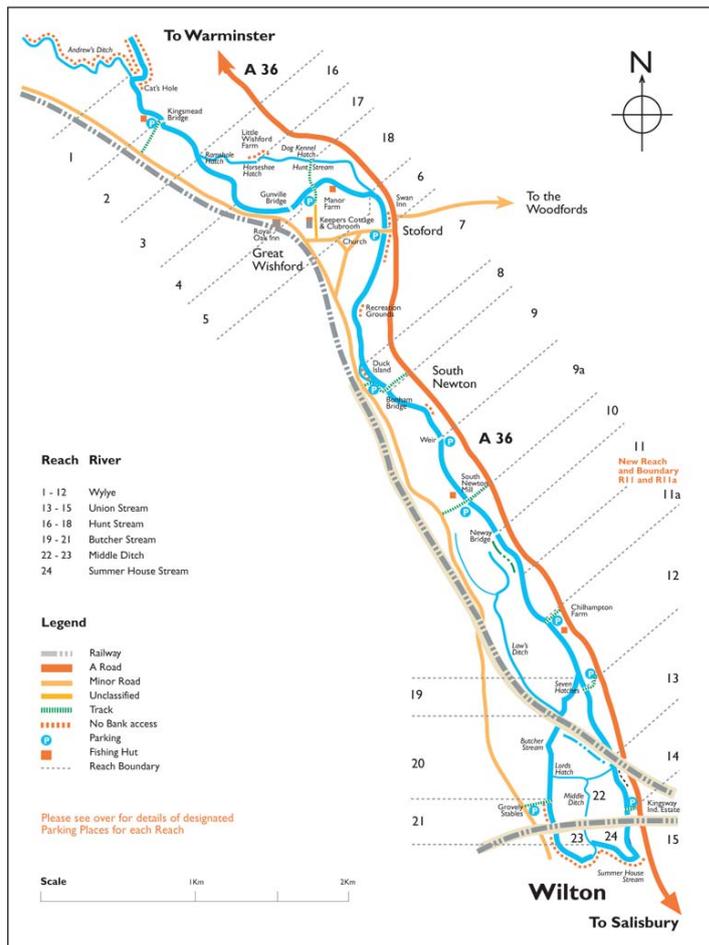
The River Wylde water is divided into 26 varied beats, the upper water being quite different in character from the fishing near Wilton. The Club employs a full-time River Keeper who lives at Great Wishford.

The water offers a continuous length of almost wholly double bank fishing for wild Brown Trout and for Grayling.

There are no half rods or day tickets, except for Members' guest tickets.

There is a small Club Room adjacent to the Keeper's Cottage where the fishing log is kept and a new fishing hut at Kingsmead, where tea and coffee making facilities are located for the use of Club Members and their guests.

**Wilton Fly Fishing Club**  
Extent of fishings 2018



## 8. FISHING SEASONS

The trout fishing season runs:

From 1st April to 15th October, both dates are inclusive.

The grayling fishing season runs:

From 16th June to 14th March in the year following, both dates are inclusive.

The river is closed:

Between 15th March and 31st March, both dates are inclusive.

An Environment Agency rod licence is required and this can be obtained on-line at: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) or from most major Post Offices.



*View downstream from Stoford Bridge following weed cut*

## 9. CLUB HISTORY

The Wilton Fly Fishing Club is one of the oldest clubs in the country, having been formed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There is a great sense of history to the Club and its fishing.



*Print of watercolour by Lionel Edwards, top of Reach Three (Pub. Country Life, 1927)*

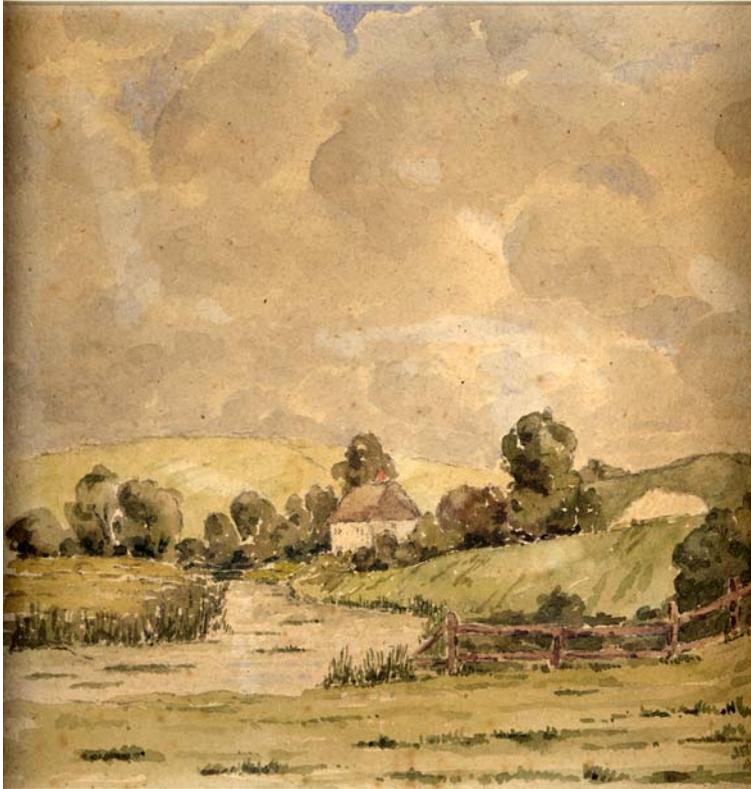
Henry Sinclair Hall was one of the four founder members of the London Fly Fisher's Club in 1884. It was Hall who developed the eyed hook for flies, and in collaboration with George Selwyn Marryat evolved the split wing dressing method for tying dry flies.

Hall was an active Member of The Wilton Club for many years and was elected President in 1918.

Irwin E.B. Cox was Club President between 1910 and 1914. He had also controlled the Abbot's Barton water on the River Itchen and in 1883, introduced G.E.M. Skues to that stretch of river, where Skues then fished for most of the rest of his life.

However, Skues tells the story of having caught his last ever trout on the Wilton Club water in 1945, at a place called Niagara Falls (see 'Angling Letters of G.E.M. Skues' – Ed. Walker 1956).

It was an event also mentioned by Oliver Kite in his 'A Fisherman's Diary' which was published posthumously in 1969. Sadly, this spot no longer exists as a result of mandatory drainage work carried out in the 1960s.



*Wylye Cottage, 1951*

The well known writer and broadcaster of the 1950's, A.G. Street, farmed our banks at Ditchampton and Street's Bridge is used by farm traffic and by Club members to this day.

Many other authors and fly fishermen of note have been members of the Club, or have fished as guests. Oliver Kite was himself a visitor to our water and records;

...."At mayfly time earlier in the season, had a most enjoyable day on The Wilton Club water with Sir John Paskin".... (From 'Nymph Fishing in Practice', 1963).

Today's members use a bench outside the Club Room which has been engraved as a memorial to Sir John Paskin (purchased as an alternative to the old Paskin's Bridge which was demolished by a build-up of cut, floating weed in the summer of 1995).

The bronze plaque from that bridge has been retained in the Club Room.

There are many other examples we could cite, but suffice to say that with this long tradition in mind, we maintain a strict policy of fishing upstream with imitative dry fly and nymph patterns only. However, the Club is not backward looking and seeks to balance tradition with a futuristic vision and pursues an imaginative policy of habitat management.



*Top of Reach Three, 2009: New gravel riffle installed, and bankside trees allowed to grow.*

## 10. MILESTONES

A résumé of milestones in the Club's history is provided below.  
 Also included is a listing of notable wild brown trout in excess of 4/5 lbs. in weight.  
 Fish of this calibre have always been rare, but are still encountered occasionally today.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Notable Fish</u>
1878-91	Hungerford Club on the R. Kennet	
1890/91	The Wilton Fly Fishing Club is formed	First netting - 2112 Pike!
	F.M. Halford makes a 3 day visit of inspection	
1900	10 miles of fishing and 3 Keepers. Only 20 Members	
	Wilton Club established as a pre-eminent fishery	
1910	£20 joining fee. Annual subscription £30	
1911	Irwin Cox elected President	
1915		5 lbs 15oz
1920	H.S. Hall elected President	
1922		7 lbs 1oz
1922		6 lbs 11 oz
1927		6 lbs.11 ozs.
1945	Skues catches his last ever trout at S.Newton	
	Fishery reduced from 10 to 6 miles and 1 Keeper	
1949		5 lbs.8 ozs.
1950	Post-war Membership 15. An all-time low!	
1950		6 lbs.0 ozs.
1960	Oliver Kite fishes regularly as a guest	
1970	Frank Sawyer visits to give advice	
	Gordon Mackie elected President	
1980	Programme of fry and fingerling stocking starts	
1980		4lbs.6ozs.
1986	Rex Wilkinson elected as President	
1987		4lbs.4ozs.
1990		4lbs.4ozs.
1992	Catch & release adopted increasingly by Members	5lbs.1oz. 'set-up'
1995.	The Club wins the first Wild Trout Soc. Habitat award	21" returned
1999.		21½" returned
2001	Norman Smith retires as keeper after 36 years	
	Club wins English Nature SSSI Conservation Award	
	Adrian Simmons employed as River Keeper	
2005		7lb 4oz returned
2006	Rex Wilkinson Retires after 20 years as President	
	Peter Hayes elected President	
	Club is runner-up in WTT Habitat Award	
	Club wins Charles C Ritz Habitat Award	
2008		7lb 5.5oz returned
2010	Mike Tebbs elected Honorary Secretary	

## 11. PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES and KEEPERS

<b>Date</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Hon. Sec.&amp;Treasurer</b>
1877-1883	Simonds H.J.	1887-	Collins H. & Barker
1884-1886	Simonds H.A.	1878-1898	Collins H. & Veitch
1887-1890	Plews	1899-1914	Collins H.
1891-1909	Simonds H.A.	1915-1917	Collins B.A.
1910-1914	Cox	1918-1923	Shand
1915-1917	Bailward	1924-1927	Collins C.B.
1918-1927	Hall H.S.	1928-1931	Wise
1928-1933	Marling	1932-1933	Haviland
1934-1938	Haviland	1933-1939	Boutflower
1939-1946	Hall A.H.	1940-1941	Roughead F.M.
1947-1950	Seaward	1941-1950	Hance
1951-1963	Roughead W.N.	1951-1961	Paskin
1964-1970	Bell	1962-1964	Buckland
1971-1973	Wrey	1965-1977	Fraser
1974-1980	Mackie	1978-1990	White
1981-2006	Rex Wilkinson	1991-1992	Hunt
2006 - 2017	Peter Hayes	1993-2004	J. McGill
2017	Tom Davis	2004-2005	J. Waters
2018 -	Roger Fagan	2005-2010	R. J. Cullum-Kenyon
		<i>Hon. Sec</i>	
		2010 -	Mike Tebbs

<b>Date</b>	<b>Head Keeper</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Under Keepers</b>
1878 -	Withers	1878-	Turberville & Hawkins
1879 -	Withers	1879-	Smith
1880-1881	Robertson	1880-1881	Smith
1882-1883	Wallace J.	1882-1883	Smith
1884-1889	Wallace J.	1884-1889	Lock
1890-1891	Wallace J.	1890-1891	Wallace R.
1892-1893	Wallace J.	1892-1893	Canning C. & Saint
1894-1895	Wallace J.	1894-1895	Canning C. & Canning E.
1896-1899	Canning C.	1896-1899	Canning E. & West
1900-1904	Canning C.	1900-1904	Canning E. & Marks
1905-	Canning E.	1905-	Marks & Canning T.
1906-1914	Canning E.	1906-1914	Marks & Down
1915-1919	Canning E.	1915-1919	Marks & Canning W.
1920-1927	Canning E.	1920-1927	Down & Canning W.
1928-	Smart	1928-	Down & Canning W.
1929-1940	Smart	1929-1940	Down & Hockey
1941-1945	Smart	1941-1945	-
1946-	Smart	1946 -	Hockey
1947-1964	Hockey		
1965-2001	N. Smith		
2001 - 2017	A. Simmons		
2018 -	D. Griffiths		

## 12. WILD BROWN TROUT

The Club's waters now constitute an entirely wild fishery, the only exceptions being rare interloper stock fish from above or below our water. These will soon be infertile triploids only, bringing in no risk to our unique genotype.

The wild Wylve trout has typically metallic blue-green sides and back, few spots and very few if any, red spots, at least when full-grown. Interloper stock fish are generally recognisable by having one or more bent fins, pectoral fins under 15% of body length and softer flesh. Throughout the Club's history the main stem river population has been added to with wild trout rescued from the winterbournes as their upper reaches dried up naturally in summer.



It has been the policy of the Club not to stock, but as a result of the reduction in the viability of main river natural redds thanks to siltation, we did augment the Brown Trout population either by the introduction of fed-fry (2/3" long) or of fingerlings (3/4" long maximum) for a short period up to 1998. After that, for ten years the only stocking was with up to 100,000 'unfed' fry per year, hatched from the Club's own incubator boxes and stocked throughout the fishery in the manner originally recommended to the Club by Frank Sawyer in the 1960s. Restoration work encompassing most of the fishery has now overcome much of the siltation problem, and numbers of river-bred young trout have increased dramatically.

The size limit is set at 11" and one brace (2 fish) of trout may be killed in any one day according to the rules. However, it is unusual today for members to kill any trout at all, as we become increasingly aware of the scarcity and value of this type of fishing. Today members' fishing is influenced more by the catch limit of six fish of 11" or more. After six fish have been caught and released (including a maximum of two killed), members are asked to cease fishing for trout for that day.

### **13. CATCH & RELEASE**

Members are encouraged to consider using barbless, de-barbed or barb-flattened hooks and to employ catch & release.

It is particularly important that:

- Not too fine a cast point is used (3lbs breaking strain would normally be the minimum).
- The fish is played quickly.
- A knotless landing net is used.
- The fish is released without touching it if possible.
- If the fish is held, then the hand should be wetted and cooled in the river beforehand. On no account should the fish be squeezed.
- The fish is held facing the current until it is sufficiently recovered to swim away (this may take an extended period of time with large fish or in high water temperatures).

## 14. CATCHES

The Club records Members' catches in a fishing log, which is kept in the Club Room specifically for that purpose. Clearly, the number of fish recorded is dependent, in part, on the skill of members and the frequency with which they fish. This varies from year to year. For a fish to be of takeable size it must have survived in the river for at least 3-4 years. With the exception of the occasional and very obvious stock fish, which might have wandered into our water, all of the fish you will catch will be 'fin perfect' and essentially wild in terms of feeding preferences and survival instinct.

We believe that fish and fishing of this quality are difficult to find and are of high value. It is for this reason, more than any other, that catch and release has grown so rapidly in popularity with our members. The tendency for members to release their trout has been growing steadily for the past several seasons. Almost 100% of the potentially takeable trout which are caught are now returned alive.

Prior to 1995 we used to record details of the trout killed and just list those returned by total number. Since 1995, as more trout are returned than are killed, we record details (by length and then convert to weight by Sturdy's scale) of all fish returned. The few fish that are killed can still be weighed in the Club Room.

A table of catch statistics, based on fishing log records, is provided each year to all members. From these you will see that the annual total catch fluctuates above and below the long-term average and is affected by a number of environmental factors, particularly winter rainfall.

The majority of the fish caught are around 1lb. in weight, this being the size that the River Wylde grows the majority to, under natural conditions. It was the same at the time that the Club was formed, in the late 1800s.

This is why fish of over 2 lbs. are regarded as prize fish, and fish of over 3 lbs. are considered scarce. A wild Brown Trout of over 4 lbs. can be considered the fish of a lifetime.

Frank Sawyer, writing of the size range of trout in the upper Hampshire Avon, was of the same opinion (e.g. see 'Masters on the Nymph' Ed. Migel & Wright, 1979 - page 159).



## 15. HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Club adopts an holistic approach to management of the river habitat in day-to-day maintenance and river-keeper activities as well as in major habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects. This reflects an underlying belief that a healthy environment for wild trout and grayling is by necessity a healthy environment for all other components of the ecosystem including plants, invertebrates, waterfowl and other wildlife.

This philosophy embraces not just the river channel, but its margins and riverbanks and includes considerations of riparian land use and effects which originate more broadly within the river's catchment area.

Chalk streams as we know them and value them are very different from the natural state which existed before man's first interventions some 1000 years ago. Since that time they have been intensively engineered and managed for a variety of economic uses, including power for milling and to supply water for extensive water meadow systems. Much of the biodiversity value which we place on the chalk streams today owes its existence to the changes which were brought about as a result. However, two particular activities over the last half century or so have resulted in significant damage. These were, dredging for land drainage and for defence purposes and the increasing stress on river flows arising from abstraction for public water supply. It is to counteract the effects of these activities, as well as certain agricultural and land use practices, that much of the habitat enhancement



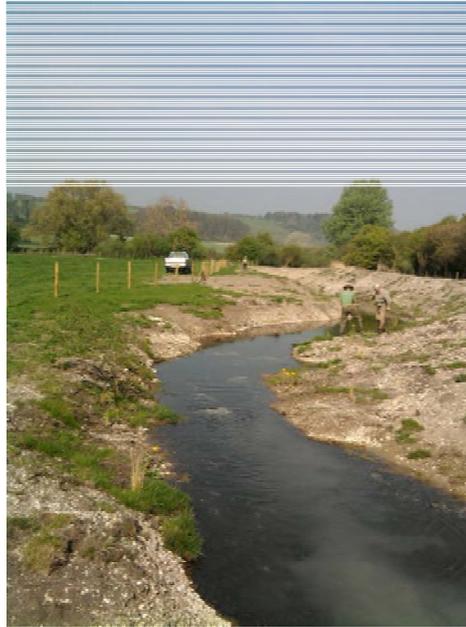
strategy of the Club is directed.

All work is planned and executed within the framework of a Management Agreement drawn up with English Nature (now Natural England), and an ongoing habitat enhancement strategy. In addition, consents are obtained as necessary for aspects such as flood defence, tree felling and in rare cases town and country planning.

The Club's Habitat Management Strategy includes all of the following components:

- Channel narrowing, to maintain water depth and flow velocity. New bank lines have been created using various techniques over the years including timber, and woven faggot revetments, either backfilled with chalk or designed to promote natural infilling and consolidation of river-borne sediment. More than 40% of the fishery has been narrowed in this way to date.
- Revetment of banks to address the over-widening effects of cattle poaching.
- Introduction of large woody debris, groynes and other structures into the river channel to improve diversity of channel morphology and flow and to create suitable feeding lies for trout
- Improvement of spawning habitat by gravel cleaning
- Introduction of fresh gravel to create riffles and improve spawning habitat
- Creation of backwaters and improvement of tributary streams to increase the available nursery habitat for young trout
- Management of bankside shrubs and trees to provide cover for fish whilst allowing adequate light for healthy Ranunculus growth
- Encouragement of weed growth, particularly Ranunculus spp. through selective planting, and the creation of optimum growing conditions.
- Encouragement of fly life by the use of traditional fly boards tethered to bridges and paving slabs for egg laying Baetis spinners.
- Scientific monitoring through liaison with various consultants and agencies who, on an ad-hoc basis, will be monitoring the collective effects of the programme both before and after work is carried-out.





In 2010, with the assistance of the Environment Agency, we created 400m of new tributary stream redirecting flow out of a culvert and reconnecting a valuable spawning territory with the main river.

New and prospective members should be aware that we manage the river as a wild fishery, which is mainly fished by wading. The banks are shaggy and the fishing is not easy. It requires a degree of stealth and agility. It is challenging but highly rewarding. It is quite different from the manicured, stocked environment associated with some beats on the famous chalk streams to the east of us.

Through the Wiltshire Fisheries Association (WFA), members of the Club have taken a leading role in recent years in lobbying for reductions in levels of abstraction, improvements in the quality of sewage treatment discharges and actions to address diffuse pollution from agriculture, amongst other issues. Recent successes have been hard won but nonetheless very much welcomed. The Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust, of which the Club is a founder member, with a Club Committee member as its Director, and which is part of the national rivers trust movement, works hand in glove with the WFA bringing political weight as well as professional resources to tackle such matters. It also serves to assist river owners with on-the-ground river improvements and access to funding for them.

In view of the more scientific approach now being taken, it is more important than ever that the Club's members make every effort to record their catches of all species and during any period of the year in the fishing log, both of takeable and undersized fish.

The development of a Habitat Management Strategy, liaison with official agencies and

other interested parties and the supervision of works by the Club's river keeper or by outside contractors is the responsibility of the Habitat Manager.

Although the Club had an Honorary River Manager for some time who used to assist the Keeper, the definitive post of Habitat Manager was created as recently as 1996 and is firm evidence of the Club's commitment to managing a wild fishery.

The Wilton Club's innovative work in this field was recognised in 1998 through the award of The Wild Trout Society's first Habitat Management Award (sponsored by The Famous Grouse Scotch whisky).

Also a prestigious English Nature (now Natural England) SSSI Conservation Award was presented to the Club in 2001.

In 2006 the Club was awarded 'runner-up' in the Wild Trout Trust Conservation awards competition (Amateur Category). This was for the work done on the Wishford and Stoford reaches.

It didn't stop there, for the Club also entered the 'Prix Charles C Ritz Award' which is the Paris based 'International Fario Club's' conservation award scheme, and was awarded second prize, also in 2006.



## 16. FLY LIFE

**The Early Season** - During the early part of the season, members will see the Large Dark Olive (LDO) together with Hawthorn Flies and other land-bred species such as Black Gnats. The Grannom, being the first of the Sedges to appear, is present and hatches in numbers, but its distribution is localised and you have to be in the right place at the right time to benefit.

**Mayfly Time** - There is a good mayfly hatch throughout the length of our fishing which starts in late May and peaks during early June, but which continues throughout June and into July. Indeed, odd mayflies can be seen on the wing right through to August and into September in some years. The mayfly hatch tends to start at the top of the fishery and to work progressively downstream over the 2 to 3 week peak period.

**The Summer** – During the summer, regular hatches of the smaller olives, the BWOs and the Pale Wateries can be expected. Various Sedges are also abundant including the Welshman's Button.

**The Dog Days** – During the dog days of July and August, evening fishing with sedge or spent spinner patterns may prove more rewarding than fishing in the hottest and brightest part of the day, when it is difficult to raise fish other than to very small Black Gnats, nymphs or similar patterns.

**Later in the Season** – The back-end of the season sees the emergence of late and often second broods of several species of Olives of all sizes.

This late summer or early autumn fishing can be excellent as the grayling are then coming into the peak of condition and the trout are still a legitimate quarry. Indeed, some of the larger trout, which may have appeared conspicuous by their absence during the summer, may then re-appear and feed hard, ahead of upstream migration and spawning.

**The Autumn** – After the end of the season in mid October, the grayling can still be caught on the surface as they rise to hatches of Pale Wateries, Large Dark Olives, Medium Olives and (increasingly rare) Iron Blues. Sedges may also be in evidence.

**The Winter** – During the winter, only the Large Dark Olive and the Medium Olive will be encountered in any numbers.

## 17. FLY HATCHES

Main Hatches ■ Occasional Hatches ■ Sparse Hatches ■												
Month	M A R	A P R	M A Y	J U N	J U L	A U G	S E P	O C T	N O V	Suggested Hook Size		
<b>BLACK FLIES - Diptera</b>												
Hawthorn ( <i>Bibio marci</i> ) land bred		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		14, 16		
Black Gnat ( <i>Bibio johannis</i> ) land bred		■	■	■	■	■	■			16, 18, 20		
Reed Smuts ( <i>Simulium</i> spp.) water bred		■	■							20, 22, 24		
<b>OLIVES - Ephemeroptera</b>												
Large Dark Olive ( <i>Baetis rhodani</i> )	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	14, 16		
Small Dark Olive ( <i>Baetis scambus</i> )			■	■	■	■	■			18, 20		
Medium Olive ( <i>Baetis vernus</i> )		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	16, 18		
Blue Winged Olive ( <i>Ephemerella ignita</i> )				■			■	■		16		
Iron Blue Dun ( <i>Baetis niger</i> )		■	■	■			■	■	■	18, 20		
<b>PALE WATERIES - Ephemeroptera</b>												
Small Spurwing ( <i>Centroptilum luteolum</i> )	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	18		
Pale Evening Dun ( <i>Procloeon bifidum</i> )			■	■	■	■	■			16, 18		
Pale Watery ( <i>Baetis fuscatus</i> )		■	■	■	■		■	■		18		
<b>MAYFLIES – Ephemeroptera</b>												
Mayfly ( <i>Ephemera danica</i> )			■	■	■	■				10, 12		
<b>BROADWINGS - Ephemeroptera</b>												
Caenis spp.			■	■	■	■	■			20, 22		
<b>SEDGES - Trichoptera</b>												
Grannom ( <i>Brachycentrus subnubilus</i> )	■	■								14, 16		
Welshman's Button ( <i>Sericostoma personatum</i> )			■	■	■	■	■			16		
Sedges ( <i>Hydropsyche</i> , <i>Limnephilus</i> , <i>Halesus</i> etc.)			■	■	■	■	■	■		12, 14, 16		

Our water provides some of the finest grayling fishing in the country and members are encouraged to fish in the autumn and winter months, when fly and bait fishing are allowed.



## **18. CHALLENGING FISHING**

The trout fishing is, at times, very challenging and it is necessary to both conceal yourself behind the screen of bank-side herbage where this is left for that purpose or by careful wading and also to fish fine and far-off.

Other than for the mayfly and some sedges, a size 14 hook can be considered large for the river and artificials tied on size 16, 18 and even smaller hooks may prove more effective.

## **19. FEW RESTRICTIONS**

The fishing is unrestricted as to days or beats, but members are encouraged to confine their fishing to one or two adjacent beats if they are vacant, so as to avoid inadvertently harassing another member. We operate a system whereby each member leaves a marked, encapsulated, beat card inside the windscreen of their car and only parks in the nominated parking places for particular reaches of the fishery, aiding the selection of reach for other members.

## **20. GUEST TICKETS**

Rod sharing with a friend is allowed at any time (two rods may be carried) but we would stress that only one person is to fish at any one time and members are trusted not to abuse this privilege.

In addition, each member is entitled to six full guest tickets to fish for trout each season. However, these are only valid from 16th June onwards.

Four of these guest tickets are available for use on weekdays only and the remaining two tickets may be used on any day, including weekends.

Guest tickets to fish for grayling are also available between 16th October and 14th March in the year following, both dates are inclusive. Two guest tickets are provided for grayling fishing, along with the normal allocation of trout guest Tickets each Spring.

## **21. MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

The Wilton Fly Fishing Club is:

- A Founder Member of The Wild Trout Society (W.T.S.) - now The Wild Trout Trust.
- A Member of Salmon and Trout Conservation
- A Member of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal (formerly the A.C.A.).
- A Member of the Grayling Society.
- A Member of the Wiltshire Fishery Association.
- A founder member of The Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust

Each member of The Wilton Fly Fishing Club receives an individual copy of the W.F.A.'s annual newsletter and an invitation to their A.G.M. each autumn.

## **22. CLUB ETHOS and COMMUNICATIONS**

You will find members both courteous and considerate. We aim to maintain the tradition of being a Club of like-minded individuals and to this end, it is the custom for the President and/or a member of the Committee to meet and to talk with prospective members prior to their joining.

We also aim to meet as a group at least twice each year at a venue close to the river.

An A.G.M. is held each spring and a Club Dinner each year - usually in the autumn.

Our newsletter - 'Riffles & Runs', includes items of interest for members and is circulated at least twice a year, in addition to the more routine correspondence, including regular river reports from the River Keeper.

The members of The Wilton Fly Fishing Club intend always to uphold and to promote the true sporting traditions of chalk stream fly fishing for both trout and for grayling.

Ours is not a water where you will encounter numbers of large, uneducated stock fish and expect to be able to take limit bags as a norm.

Thus the aims of the Club are re-stated here:

- To maintain an essentially wild fishery and to provide the highest quality of chalk stream fly fishing.
- To preserve the true sporting traditions of upstream fishing with imitative dry fly and nymph patterns.
- To control the impact of fishing pressure by limiting the membership of the Club; by monitoring and limiting the number of fish killed; by encouraging self - moderation in the catching of fish by observing the catch limit and killing (by promoting catch and release).

## 23. THE CLUB'S CONVENTIONS

Rules are not unduly restrictive and below is a helpful summary of hints on manners and form for prospective members:

- Access to the fishery is not restricted as to days or reaches.
- Members must ensure that they and their guests are fully familiar with the reach boundaries and with the rules of the Club.
- If a member or guest has settled to a particular reach, they should be left to enjoy undisturbed occupation of that reach. Members should always leave a marked Reach Card clearly visible in the car and park in one of the recognised parking places.
- It follows that if a member finds that a reach is already occupied, they should leave and seek a vacant reach elsewhere.
- When rod sharing, the member and guest are expected to occupy the same reach and only one person will fish at any one time.
- Two reaches may only be fished at the same time when one is fished by a guest and the other by their host member
- Members are also asked to ensure that they only issue one guest ticket for use on any one day.
- It is preferable if members and their guests confine themselves to one or two adjacent reaches, especially if there are several other members fishing that day.
- Members and guests must not, unless invited to do so, attempt to fish on a beat already occupied by another Member or guest.
- Members may only fish a combined total of two reaches from the River Wylfe and River Till in any one day's fishing during the period of the Mayfly, being from 15<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June. The same restriction may be imposed, at the discretion of the Committee, for the last few weeks of the season when visits can pile up.
- However, it is recognised that new members, wishing to familiarise themselves with the geography of a new river, may wish to make a more extended examination of the fishery.
- The important point is always to proceed upstream, beginning at the bottom of the reach, in order to ensure that no member is already in occupation before commencing fishing.
- Wandering about the fishery without discretion at any time is unwise. Walking downstream, close to the bank, is particularly disruptive as it may spook fish for others coming later

- The Club promotes imitative fishing with single dry fly and/or nymph patterns, fished selectively to individual fish.
- The Club does not allow the use of fry imitations, lures and other attractor patterns, neither do we allow fishing the water in a methodical, downstream and across direction during the trout season. (Winter grayling and pike fly fisherman sometimes employ these techniques).
- A full set of Club Rules is provided to all members on joining.

## **24. HOW TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP**

We hope that you have found this Folio useful and that you are interested in the Club, its history and traditions, its aims and its approach to managing the fishery. If you would like to make a formal application for membership, then please do so by letter or by email as soon as possible to the Honorary Secretary.

Please include your full contact details and an indication of your fishing experience to date.

We will then be able to put you in contact with a member of the Committee should a vacancy exist, or if not, to place your name on the Club's Waiting List.

The annual subscription for the 2019 Season is £1685.00, payable on 1st January. New members are required to pay a fee of half the annual subscription on joining.

Lastly, we would like to offer you our best wishes for the coming seasons and hopefully look forward to welcoming you soon on the Wilton Fly Fishing Club water of the River Wylfe.

If after reading this Folio you would like further information please contact the Honorary Secretary, Michael Tebbs, at Rivendell, Newtown, Heytesbury, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0HN, telephone: 01985 841192, e-mail: [miketebbs@btinternet.com](mailto:miketebbs@btinternet.com)

## **25. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **1. Health and Safety Policy Statement**

The Wilton Fly Fishing Club is committed to ensuring that it will do all that is reasonably practicable, within the context of managing the river as a wildlife habitat, to protect the health and safety of its members, those working the river and other authorized visitors when on or about the river.

The Club considers it important that a culture of risk awareness is developed and maintained: in the decision making of the Committee; in all river management and maintenance activities and whilst enjoying the fishery.

### **2. Implementing our Health and Safety Policy**

In implementing our Health and Safety Policy we will:

- Advise our members that there are inherent risks associated with fishing and otherwise being on or about the river, and that they should take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others around them
- Assess the health and safety risks associated with specific river management and maintenance activities, specify requirements to address them and review both on a regular basis
- Ensure that due care and attention to health and safety is applied in all river maintenance and project work
- Ensure that the River Keeper and others working on the river have adequate safety training/ instruction for the tasks they undertake
- Provide appropriate safety equipment for the River Keeper and others assisting in river management activities
- Inspect all safety equipment on at least an annual basis and repair, replace or take out of use any defective items
- Provide first aid equipment
- Record any incidents accidents and injuries and regularly review these records to identify any necessary action in follow up or to prevent future occurrences

... 'The skilled angler does not need dead trout in his basket to feel satisfaction ....

... Dead trout are just so much meat, however deliciously they might be prepared for the table ....

... Non fishermen seldom understand why we fish when we usually release our catch, and too many fishermen sadly share their myopia. They fail to grasp that the live trout, lying in its sun-dappled riffles, rising over its bright-gravel shallows, and fighting the delicate rod, gives our sport its entire meaning ....

... Our problems are unquestionably a matter of ethics and self-discipline. William Michael phrased it perfectly in 'Dry Fly Fishing', when he defined it as a matter of limiting our kill instead of killing our limit....

... Few things are as empty as trout streams without trout'' ....

*From 'Trout Strategies' by Ernest Schwiebert*





...."I had a wonderful day during the Mayfly hatch ....  
.... six sizeable wild trout, all on the dry fly and all released.  
.... They varied in size between 13" and 17" ....

.... I weighed the largest fish in a well wetted, knotless landing net .... 2 lbs.3ozs.

.... The Wilton Club ? ....  
... As far as I'm concerned, this is as good as it gets."

Club Member comments.



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