



Following the LAFA AGM in November the Duffers held a spectacular Wine Evening in the Hall at Moor Park School organised by James Duffield. Over 100 people paid £15 to be quizzed on 6 red wines and 6 white wines. This was followed by a good meal of local produce and an auction ably run by Tim Jessop. The whole event rose in the order of £4000.

In January the London team organised a knees up in Fulham Town Hall, which was well attended and produced about another £2000.

2009 EVENTS

- **Dawn chorus/river walk and farmhouse breakfast (£10)**
4:30am! Sat May 9th, The Leen, Pembridge HR6 9HN
Contact Tony 01544388305 / tony@leenfarmorganics.co.uk
- **Evening Speaker on fishing and fish management - Simon Evans WUF (£10 with a free drink)**
7 pm Sat May 9th, New Inn, Pembridge HR6 9DZ
Contact Tony 01544388305 / tony@leenfarmorganics.co.uk
- **Family day - 'May Fly' on the Arrow (£5)**
A morning on the river at Pembridge.
Pond dipping, casting demonstration, duck race, fresh fish cooked on an open fire and more.....
10:30 onwards Sun 10th May. The village green Pembridge.
Contact luggandarrow@bigfoot.com
- **The LAFA fishing camp**
May 22nd- 24th, Mowley Valley – £100 per fisherman.
Contact luggandarrow@bigfoot.com
- **Annual cricket competition (£130 per team £15 spectator)**
July 18th Contact Freddie fredduffgordon@hotmail.com
- **Clay Shoot (Aug TBC)**
- **The Big Wine Quiz & Auction**
7pm Fri 30th October, Moor Park, Ludlow SY8 4DZ
Contact luggandarrow@bigfoot.com

These are the events listed for this year, but we need a little of YOUR help. We need raffle and auction prizes. So: you might own a bit of fishing, a holiday cottage, a bit of shooting, some tackle, some vintage bottles of wine or port, signed books or simply be able to teach or guide someone for a day.

We are very grateful to those that have given so generously in the past. Your help helps us to help our rivers.



Stalking wild fish on the Arrow. The Duffers have two events planned for the Arrow this year, and if you would like some further fishing, beats are available through the Passport scheme

During the first year of their existence the Duffers have contributed massively towards the total of nearly £15,000 that LAFA have paid to WUF for ongoing fundraising. We would like to thank Tony Norman and his team, James Duffield, Beth Passey, Freddie Duff Gordon and Richard Norman for the time, effort, and enthusiasm they have put in on our behalf

One final thought on fundraising with the Duffers. If you are unable to attend any of the events, but would like to make a donation in support of their activities, then please visit www.justgiving.com/lafa

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LUGG AND ARROW FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (LAFA)

We now have nearly 100 members who make regular donations to LAFA or Gift Aid via The Wye and Usk Foundation. If you are interested in becoming a member, or learning more about the Association, please get in touch with The Membership Secretary, Rod Symondson at
The Hotchpotch
Husseys Lane
Kington
Herefordshire HR5 3FF
01544 231998
rodsymondson@kc3.co.uk



Our native species, Salmo Trutta, the wild brown trout.



The Rivers Lugg and Arrow Fisheries Association

Spring 2009

Number 8

WHAT'S IN STORE

David Forbes, Chairman of LAFA, reports on fundraising and our aims for the season ahead.

In these increasingly difficult times it is most comforting to see that we are still able to raise monies for worthy projects and LAFA is most grateful for the fantastic support that we have had over the past twelve months. This is in no small part due to the Duffers, our vibrant fund raising team whose organisational skills helped to enable us to reach last year's funding target of £15,000. The Duffers have put together another interesting and varied programme for 2009, details of which are included in this edition of our newsletter, and I am sure that there will be something that will appeal to everyone.

We have reduced our fund raising target for this year to £8,000, which will be our contribution to the Sita project, which continues the important work of improving fish access and restoring habitat within our catchment. This programme will run for the next two years and will build upon the valuable work already completed.



There have already been encouraging signs of improved fishing on both the Lugg and the Arrow. LAFA was formed in 2003 largely as a result of the concerns of fishermen and it is still fishermen on whom we rely to monitor and report back on the health of our rivers and streams

I am sure all our members will be pleased to hear that at our recent AGM, John Ross, our founding member/father was elected as President of LAFA. It was his enthusiasm that set the ball rolling and I hope that he is pleased to see the improvements to the fisheries and the witnessed migration of trout and salmon to their historic spawning grounds, evidence of an ongoing mission.

NEW PROJECTS

Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith, Executive Director of WUF has some good news on further funding for the Lugg and Arrow

We are pleased to report that a further substantial tranche of project funding has been secured from the Sita Trust under the landfill tax scheme for the Lugg and Arrow. The project is concerned with enhancing the biodiversity of important habitats and species, in this case, rivers and streams. These habitats have recently (2007) been elevated in importance in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan along with brown trout, salmon and eels and this is one of the first projects to take advantage of this long overdue change. At last fish, streams and rivers now compete on a 'level playing field' with other vaunted species.



Habitat improvement works on the Lugg at Mortimer's Cross will form part of the Sita Project

Working within a ten mile radius of the landfill site at Leominster, the project will continue the restoration of fish access to the Lugg and Arrow and their tributaries, habitat restoration (8km) and will fix some of the agricultural causes of diffuse pollution. It is an opportunity to extend and synergise with the work of the two previous projects downstream towards Leominster

The overall budget is £225K and the project is called "LARA" – The Lugg and River Arrow project. It will last for a little over two years. Work will start in late March and we are particularly excited about the prospect of continuing the upward progress of fish passage on the Arrow. Last year, fish were found to have ascended almost as far as Tittley, but the majority were held back just below Pembridge.

On top of that, a part of the Foundation's Water Framework Directive Funding will be used in a parallel scheme to reduce the effects of diffuse farm pollution within these catchments.

THE PASSPORT SCHEME

Seth Johnson-Marshall reports on another year of progress for the Passport scheme. The 2009 edition is now available from the Wye and Usk Foundation

The Passport's Lugg & Arrow contribution grew again in 2008. 13 fisheries participated in the Roving Voucher scheme and 3 in the Booking Office (10 and 2 respectively in 2007). Some of the Arrow beats were among the best performers in the Roving Voucher scheme, claiming 3 of the top 6 most visited out of the 41 in total. The Litton beat of the Upper Lugg claimed the highest catch average of the entire voucher scheme: a staggering 12.8 fish per visit (the next highest was 6.25). The Mowley Wood beat of the Arrow also produced one of the biggest fish of the year, a superb brown trout of 3lbs. Thankfully, it is still there!

Overall, 577 visits were made to the Lugg and Arrow beats during 2009, with 1,714 fish caught and a release rate of nearly 99%.

The 2008 statistics are certainly encouraging with regard to the productivity and popularity of the Lugg and Arrow system. What is just as heartening, however, have been the comments and feedback received from visiting anglers. One fisherman gave the following report from the upper Lugg in May:

"54 trout - retired hurt (sore arm!). Big mayfly hatch throughout the afternoon and most taken on Grey Wulf, biggest fish 11½". Could have fished for a few more hours - unbelievably good! Saw a dipper halfway up the beat. Lovely day's fishing - thanks!"



Grayling fishing on the Lugg at Lypole. The grayling fishing on the Lugg is excellent in the upper river.

The Lugg also proved very popular for winter grayling fishing in 2008. With the high water levels during October, November and December rendering much of the upper Wye unfishable, the Lypole and Mortimer's Cross beats were a safe haven for anglers reluctant to pack away the gear after the end of the trout season. Our thanks go to Midland Fly Fishers who have generously donated the revenue from Mortimer's Cross to LAFA, raising over £500 for Lugg and Arrow projects.

With the 2009 season now underway, many of the Arrow beats will have been made considerably easier to fish by tree clearance work carried out before the season opened on March 3rd.

SALMON REDDS ON THE ARROW

At the end of last season Tony Norman went looking for redds.

As the Arrow is only 50 yards from my door, when the water drops low and clear after a flood in November, I watch the river carefully for signs of Salmon spawning, particularly when we have seen them trying to jump the weirs during the flood. This was very much the case this year with the new fish passes installed below us at Eardisland. Numbers of both salmon and trout trying to get over our weirs had increased dramatically.

The Salmon move an extraordinary amount of gravel, usually on the upstream side of a gravel bed at the end of a pool. The hen fish lies on her side and ferociously moves her tail to dislodge the gravel. Depending on her size and the state of the gravel she will move anything between a large bucket of spoil to a good barrow load. She lays her eggs accompanied by one or more cock fish and then moves a similar amount of gravel again to cover her eggs so that they are in such a position that they get the maximum amount of oxygen.



A newly completed redd can easily be identified by the accustomed eye. A depression in the gravel indicates where the female has been digging and the deposit of loose clean stones covers the incubating eggs.

Luckily I had a bit of time when conditions were perfect and I managed to survey about 8 miles of the river. So on with the Polaroid's! Starting at the top my score was 2 at Titley Court and 2 at Mowley (which were encouraging and show that fish were getting through the new fish pass at Staunton), 3 at Noke, 2 at Leen, 16 at New Mills, 6 at Pembridge Village Green and 16 at Twyford. These last 3 clearly show that although a few fish got over New Mills weir, it is really a 'blocker'.

The salmon on these redds would lay about 250,000 eggs which should allow about 2,500 (1%) smolts to go to sea, but only if the conditions are right in the river.

It is interesting to look back over the old EA/NRA/Wye reports to see that when the bailiffs used to count the redds, in 1975 they counted 851 in the Lugg system. By 1985 the sad tale is that they only managed to find 8 redds as the situation had gradually got worse due to the closing of the pass at Hampton Court. The situation improved in the late 80's, with the opening of the weir, and 250 redds were counted. Latterly the counting has not been carried out by the EA at all. So perhaps we should organise our own in future?

THOUGHTS FROM A CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING OFFICER

Sarah Olney works for Natural England as a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer for the River Lugg.

The England Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative, ECSFDI, has two more years to run, subject to funding. There are three main sources of funding for the Initiative to achieve the main aim of the Water Framework Directive – Good Ecological Status. These include the internal funds of the ECSFDI for extension and advice, the Capital Grant Scheme and Higher Level Environmental Scheme. The main problem however is to engage the farmers who may be causing significant levels of damage but who will never seek out these sources of funding and may not even be claiming the Single Farm Payment.

There are, in these instances, other methods of achieving the levels of buffering necessary for watercourses and these are Water Protection Zones, WPZs, and another tool available for the EA which is a notice to carry out works, a tool available prior to prosecution.

The WPZs may become a very useful tool in the instance of potato farmers who insist repeatedly on growing potatoes on the flood plain. These potatoes are now rotting in the Severn Estuary together with thousands of tonnes of Herefordshire's precious top soil, this I think justifies the imposition of WPZs on anyone who chooses to abuse land use so wantonly, with no regard to future generations.

Another method of improving water quality is to reduce abstraction – dilution is the solution to pollution - and one of the ways of achieving this is to increase the opportunities to Winter Water Harvest. This is not a new idea, indeed it has been discussed for decades. Farmers growing high value crops need to be mindful of the fact that in drought years they may be forbidden from abstracting from the rivers and should be planning now to store their own winter water so that they can irrigate harvest their crops, rather than losing them due to an abstraction ban. In fact it would enable them to grow crops away from the rivers and may be the flood plains can go back to being water meadows, something our ancestors did get right. Waiting for funding for this may not be a good idea.

RIVER FLY UPDATE

Tony Norman has been busy and LAFA now have an established group monitoring water quality.

Thanks to Natural England, who contributed £1200, we were able to train 24 people for the Riverfly Partnership <http://www.riverflies.org/>. Of these, sixteen have agreed to take part in regularly monthly monitoring surveys, working in pairs, on two sites each on a river or stream. Their results are forwarded to Bruce Pyott at the E.A. in Monmouth to help build up a picture of the health of our rivers over time.

We have teams looking at the Hindwell Brook, the Lugg above and below Presteigne, the Middle and Lower Lugg, the Arrow above and below Kington, Tippets Brook, Curl Brook, The Pinsley Brook and Stretford brook.



A mobile laboratory at work on the Lugg at Mortimer's Cross. The turkey baster is a useful tool for collecting the invertebrate samples which are then identified and sorted for counting. "Stanley" never knew their toolbox would be so useful!

All of the work is carefully directed by the EA and LAFA to help identify possible problems in water quality.

Several people were unable to attend the training sessions and unfortunately the EA will only accept results from people who have been on the course. However we do need more monitors and we would be pleased to get more people trained. If anyone is interested, please contact me: tony@leenfarmorganics.co.uk

I am not sure if I can get another grant –but I can try.



And here is what the trout will be eating this year. The big one on the left (actually about 3mm long) is a flat bodied heptageniidae (a yellow may dun) and the little one alongside is a baetidae (olive)