

## A PRODUCTIVE YEAR

*As another fishing season comes to its close, David Forbes, Chairman of LARA, reviews current activities within the LARA family.*

It is often difficult to keep up with the number of projects that WUF have succeeded in match funding, or are applying for, but this past season has seen a great deal of work carried out within the LARA (Lugg and River Arrow Project). There has been a proliferation of fish pass construction, which Stephen Marsh-Smith describes in this edition of our Newsletter, as well as coppicing, fencing and barrier removal on the Pinsley, Curl and Tippets Brooks. We are also working with the Lugg IDB to improve habitats and spawning on the Broad and Aston Brooks. In all the total expenditure this year has increased to £362,000 due to major fish pass construction.

A new project on the books is HARP, Herefordshire's Asset Restoration Project which will help to fund improvements to fisheries within WUF's Passport Scheme. There are conditions, but having been in the passport scheme for 3 years and already benefited from assistance, I can highly recommend this scheme to fishery owners who have under utilised water or who are considering putting part or all of their beats into either the Booking Office or Roving Voucher scheme. Contact Seth Johnson Marshall on 01982 560788.

It never ceases to amaze me that we are able, with the help of our fundraising arm 'The Duffers' to continually fight above our weight in raising funds for the various river improving projects. Times are hard and if anything harder than when I last made this statement and I would like to express my thanks to all who have contributed towards the restoration of our rivers. We are continually looking to increase our membership, whether it is from fishermen or riparian owners or those who have interests in our rivers. Please spread the word.

## THE WUF PERSPECTIVE

*Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith, Executive Director of the Wye and Usk Foundation, with an update on projects underway and planned for our rivers*

In the previous newsletters we highlighted what we hoped to achieve in the two rivers and it is a very great pleasure to report considerable success with this years' work programme. The most important task has been to restore fish access to what is a veritable "Grand National" obstacle course for ascending fish. In earlier projects, we put fish passes on the lower Arrow at Eardisland, Folly farm and Grove farm allowing fish (salmon and trout) to ascend as far as Hunton, but still struggling at New Mills, Pembridge, the "Beechers Brook" of weirs. Similarly, the Environment Agency put passes on the lower and middle Lugg weirs, which they own.

With the help of Defra funding, we have completed four new fish passes: New Mills and Hunton, plus two at Kington, including one on the Back brook. In theory, the whole Arrow is now open again to ascending fish. It was briefly so in the mid '80s when some of the weirs were temporarily in a state of collapse. Please let us know if salmon are seen above Hunton this winter.

On the Lugg, we have been lobbying for improvements to weirs below Kingsland. The terrible three, Lugg Green, Holgate's and Gilbert's were of an "earlier design" and the fish passes were very prone to being blocked by debris.



*Holgate weir before modification*

We drew up plans to modify these 1980's monsters two years ago but were unable to convince the Agency to let us loose on them. However, we are very pleased to let you know that these have now been altered satisfactorily by Agency contractors.



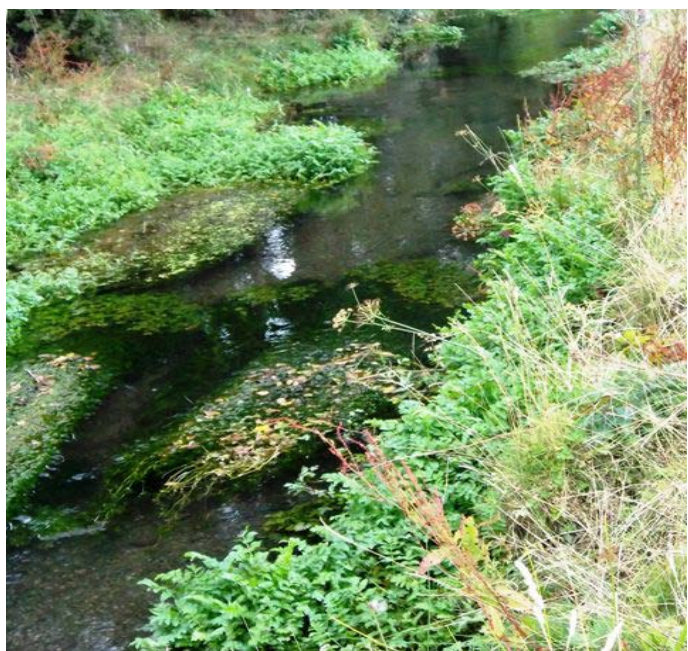
*The alterations involved reshaping the leading edge of the pass to prevent debris building up and replacing the pipe with a notched weir to improve access for fish.*

At Lingen, on the Lime brook, we restored the original fish pass to full function to let salmon and trout ascend this productive stream. This work and further improvements to the Pinsley Brook were funded by Sita



*Fencing off the Pinsley Brook.*

Last year, we modified the flow to prevent fish taking the wrong turn into an impassable section. We have now completed works to make this permanent and were rewarded with the news that salmon had spawned upstream. Fencing has been completed on several reaches and the stream now has the appearance of a chalk stream, with some respectable sized trout to match.



*The fish habitat has improved significantly now that livestock has been excluded, with plenty of bankside cover and ranunculus to deepen the flow and prevent silting up. Just like a proper chalkstream!*

Habitat work continues on the Tippets brook and is scheduled for the Lime brook this winter, subject to consents. Finally, we are pressing ahead with another important aspect of river management and that is reducing diffuse pollution. The Lugg catchment has developed a reputation for being what one observer described as an "agricultural sewer". Pesticide levels remain high while silt and phosphates are causing problems down as far as the estuary of the Wye. This is our next challenge.

## DIPPERS

*Felicity Burge is a member of the Herefordshire Ornithological Club*

Dippers are dumpy looking birds with short wings and a black-brown plumage with a broad white throat and chest. They are unique in the UK in that they are the only passerine (perching bird) capable of swimming underwater. They use their short wings as flippers and have nasal flaps like other aquatic birds to prevent water entering their nostrils. They particularly feed on caddis larva, mayfly nymphs and stoneflies and can overturn small stones underwater with their strong claws to get at these invertebrates and insects.



*With thanks to George Ewart for permission to use this picture*

The birds pair up earlier than many other passerines and will defend territories throughout the winter, with nest building sometimes as early as Nov/Dec. but generally around Jan/Feb. The nest is about the size of a football, constructed mainly of moss. Nests are almost invariably built by or over running water. They readily use artificial sites and in many cases prefer bridges to their more natural sites of rock ledges and tree roots

My interest in these fascinating birds began during the early 1980s and by 1988 I decided it was time I learnt to ring the young myself and was trained through the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) bird ringing scheme. In 2004 with more time on my hands I visited all the road and footbridges along the Lugg and Arrow.

By monitoring the breeding activities of Dippers, and with the help of the data submitted to the BTO from all the other sites around the UK, we can record the state of the population on a national and annual basis. The breeding sites on the Lugg, Arrow and Hindwell Brook that I cover have been fairly consistent since 2005, with much of this dependent on the quality of the water, as Dippers are excellent indicators of the waterways.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the catchment of the river Lugg, researchers estimate that the total sediment load being run off annually from farmland to the river could be sufficient to fill up enough 20 ton load trucks to form a queue stretching 165 miles.

## THE PASSPORT SCHEME

Anyone fishing through the Passport this summer will at one time or another found the fishing hard going, with sustained low flows and very little rain to freshen things up. Those willing to hang on until the last light of day were the most likely to achieve any notable success. The spring and summer conditions, however, didn't seem to dampen spirits on the Lugg and Arrow and there have been numerous catch reports where tough days have still been described as 'gorgeous' and 'the most satisfying blank ever'. The experience of some fantastic fly hatches, particularly mayfly, perhaps was enough sustenance to get through a fishless afternoon!

Despite the low water conditions, there were still some impressive wild brown trout catches to report. One particular catch was from Titley during June - 34 trout to 10" were caught, all taken on an Iron Blue fly. The angler only gave the beat 9.9 out 10 though, as there was no pub along the beat for light refreshment! In addition, there have been numerous catches of over 10 trout in a session, with individual fish reported up to 14".

Voucher sales for the Passport have been approximately 10% down on this time last year; almost certainly due to the conditions. With the rain that arrived at the end of August, however, we are hopeful for a good last month of the trout season.



Lugg and Arrow grayling fishing promises to be as good as ever this autumn, already with reports of fish to 16" caught in August.

We hope to see plenty of 2lb fish with the odd grayling pushing the 3lb mark when the winter eventually takes hold. Enquiries about grayling fishing are becoming ever more frequent, and the consensus from Passport users is that the Lugg and Arrow are prime locations to fish and catch this beautiful species.

We are glad to report of at least three new Lugg beats that could be joining the Booking Office this autumn but, in the meantime, we would be delighted to hear from any other prospective owners who might wish to discuss putting their waters in the Passport for 2011.

## CRAYFISH TRAPS AND OTTERS

*We have been sent this picture and a request for care when setting crayfish traps from Darylle Hardy, Water Voles and Wetlands Officer, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. 01597 823298.*



## EA REORGANISATION

As of 1st April 2010 the management of the River Wye, and its tributaries, in England transferred from Environment Agency Wales (EAW) to the Midlands Region of the Environment Agency (EA). Fisheries management matters are now handled by the West Area Fisheries Recreation and Biodiversity (FRB) Team.

Members of the team working in the Lugg and Arrow Catchments are Jason Jones, Pete Giles and Gill Walters. Jason specialises in Habitat Improvement Projects and Water Framework Directive/Diffuse Pollution issues and will be the first point of contact within the EA. Pete has extensive experience of all types of fisheries management issues while Gill specialises in Habitats Directive and SSSI work. The team are very keen to work closely with LAFA and are keen to re-establish a "Salmon Homecoming" type project in the area.

In addition, Peter Gough (Fisheries Technical Specialist EAW) maintains a keen interest in the Lugg and Arrow and has an ongoing role to co-ordinate fisheries work in the whole of the Wye catchment.

With regard to fisheries monitoring, they are currently doing some collaborative work with the Wye and Usk Foundation looking at the benefits of the LARA Project and the impacts of the many weirs in the catchment as well as the benefits of the recently constructed easements and baulk passes etc.

Fisheries enforcement in West Area is carried out by our Environmental Crime Team (Fish) which is dedicated 100% to fisheries enforcement. Al Watson is the Team leader and he can be contacted on 01684 864375. To report specific incidents of illegal activity you should ring 0800 807060, which is a 24hour number, and your call will be logged on the incident management system

Please feel free to contact Jason Jones on 01743 283552/07770 846967 or at [j.jones@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:j.jones@environment-agency.gov.uk) if you would like any further information.



## THE ANNUAL DUFFERS CRICKET TOURNAMENT

The 2010 Duffers cricket tournament was held at Downton House, New Radnor, by kind invitation of Sir Andrew and Lady Evie Duff Gordon, and family.

10 local teams battled it out in a day long tournament fringed by Tug of War and ferret racing from Jim the Ferret. Teams came from near and far and played for one hour per match, before retiring for tea & cakes, a barbecue with delicious burgers from Paul Lewis, the butchers, and baps from Jayne's Parlour in Kington, washed down by beer, Pimms and lemonade.

Raffle prizes included a fishing rod, DVD's of the *End of the line*, cakes from [www.kissandcakeup.com](http://www.kissandcakeup.com), vouchers from [www.moonpig.com](http://www.moonpig.com), boxes of fresh fruit, veg & flowers and wine. The cup was won by Milly and Christopher Bowen's team, who beat Jack Davenport's team by a very close shave, in a highly exciting final. Congratulations to them both, and to all players and spectators who took part. Almost £2000 was raised, which we hope will be matched by a philanthropic foundation.

Do join us next year for the event which will take place again in June or July.

And don't forget **THE BIG WINE QUIZ 2010**. Yes it's back and bigger than ever.....

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October. Moor Park near Ludlow.

Good Wine, award winning local food, auction, interactive quiz, Duffer's Turbo raffle and much more.

To book your place email [duffs@bigfoot.com](mailto:duffs@bigfoot.com) or call 07970 833678.

### JUST GIVING.COM

And even if you can't come along don't forget that you can make a donation by visiting the Just Giving website at [www.justgiving.com/lafa](http://www.justgiving.com/lafa)

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE LUGG AND ARROW FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (LAFA)

We now have over 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](mailto:rodsymondson@kc3.co.uk)



The Rivers Lugg and Arrow  
Fisheries Association



KNOW YOUR WINES OR JUST WANT TO LEARN MORE?

# THE BIG WINE QUIZ

## 2010

A EVENING OF FUN ON BEHALF OF THE

'DUFFERS'

RAISING MONEY FOR RESTORING THE HABITAT, WATER QUALITY AND FISHERIES OF THE RIVERS LUGG & ARROW - [WWW.JUSTGIVING.COM/LAFA](http://WWW.JUSTGIVING.COM/LAFA)

FRIDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 7:00PM

5 REDS, 5 WHITES, EXPERT TASTING GUIDANCE, LOCAL BREAD & CHEESE,  
AN AUCTION OF PROMISES AND DUFFERS TRICK OR TREAT RAFFLE

HENDERSON HALL  
MOOR PARK  
LUDLOW  
SY8 4DZ

£16.00 PER PERSON OR £90 FOR A TEAM OF 6

FOR TICKETS AND DETAILS- EMAIL: [DUFFS@BIGFOOT.COM](mailto:DUFFS@BIGFOOT.COM) OR CALL: 07970 833678