

Pontardawe and Swansea Angling Society

50 YEARS!

£2-00 (free to Members)

The club which started life as the Pontardawe Angling Society in 1946, became the Pontardawe & District Angling Society in 1953 and then the Pontardawe & Swansea Angling Society in 1984 is 50 years old!



This magazine is one of a number of ways in which the occasion is being marked. Look out for details of the revival of the Casting Competition on 9th June and of the Anniversary Dinner on 1st November.

And an ingenuous Spaniard says that "Both Rivers, and the inhabitants of the watery Element, were created for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration". And though I am too wise to rank myself in the first number, yet give me leave to free myself from the last, by offering to thee a short contemplation, first of Rivers, and then of Fish; concerning which, I doubt not but to relate to you many things very considerable.

Izaak Walton, 1653

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Opinions expressed in articles are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Society

FOREWORD

by Club Chairman, Emlyn Lloyd

Yes, the Pontardawe & Swansea Angling Society, the foundations of which were laid down in 1946, is 50 years old. In marriage, 50 years is regarded as a pinnacle point from which one looks back over the past years. In angling, however, 50 years not only allows us to review past achievements and changes. It is also an opportunity to anticipate the challenges that the next 50 years will bring.

Who could have foretold in that heady, if somewhat austere, post-war year of 1946 of the greening of the valley, the return of sea trout and salmon, the Swansea Barrage, the growth of stillwater fisheries, the contribution the club was going to make to both national and international competitions and the formation of Tawe Disabled Fishers?

So, what of the future? It is always tempting in this context to let one's imagination have free reign and list a series of speculative but probably unattainable goals.

Firstly, in the immediate future the club will have to develop a working

relationship with the recently formed Environment Agency. Make no mistake, this Agency has a wider remit than the subsumed NRA.

We are all aware from past experience that river and fishery management is not a simple land drainage and flood control task but an increasingly sophisticated science. In this context the club must play an increasingly proactive part in our relationships with the new Environment Agency. Since we must look at our catchment area as a single entity, we must work more closely with other fishery owners to optimise a fishery management plan for the Tawe system.

Secondly, since much of our fishing is leased on an annual basis from the Neath & Port Talbot County Borough Council, either jointly with the Tawe & Tributaries club or on leases held solely by the Pontardawe & Swansea club, negotiations must begin with a view to obtaining greater long-term tenure of these fishing rights. Annual leases by their very nature mitigate against the desire by clubs to invest heavily in the development of that fishery. The controlling authority must be made aware of this problem. Such negotiations

must involve, in part, the Tawe & Tributaries club.

Lastly, let's be a little adventurous. What are we going to do with the Swansea Valley Canal? This waterway is the nearest thing we have in the valley to a lowland trout stream. The faster flowing weedy sections even have the appearance of an English chalkstream. Should we continue to neglect this resource?

In conclusion, it is only proper that we acknowledge our debt to those whose foresight led to the formation of the club in 1946. Dr Watkins, Bryn Jones, Glyn Phillips, Gerwyn Griffiths and EPH Hopkin, we salute you. How fortunate we are in having EPH Hopkin still providing us with that essential link with the past.

As for the present and the foreseeable future, the club is very fortunate in being served with such able officers as Raymond Lockyer (Secretary), Brian Glover (Treasurer) and Phil Jones (Minutes Sec). Chairmen come and go but there is one thing they very quickly learn: how dependent they are on these key Officers. With such stalwarts as these the club can face the next 50 years with confidence.



Game, Coarse & Sea Angling Centre

**Best wishes to Pontardawe & Swansea Angling Society
on your 50th anniversary
from Zuhair Majeed (former club Chairman) and staff.**

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THE EARLY YEARS

by EPH Hopkin

Pontardawe Angling Society came into being in the post-2nd World War year 1946. Before this there was the River Tawe and its two main tributaries, the Upper and Lower Clydach Rivers; their populations of brown trout, genetically pure and abundant; and some (comparatively few) fishermen, an estimated number amounting to some 40-50 men and youths.

Some of the fishermen were members of the Tawe & Tributaries Angling Association, which had been in being since prior to the 1st World War and was concerned mainly with fishing in the Upper Valley fishery, ie above Godre'rgrraig or Ystalyfera. Others were "free spirits", ie members of no Association.

The River Tawe was also a "free" river, subject to no fishing licence; no Fishery Board bailiffs nor Flood Management control. It was as free as nature itself and demonstrated this each wet winter with violent flooding. On a really big flood it was commonplace to see lakes of floodwater stretching almost unbroken over the valley flood plain from below Panteg down to Clydach and beyond. The eastern half of Pontardawe shopping centre in Herbert Street was periodically under water from the winter flooding. The record flood mark was reckoned to be halfway up the entrance door to Matthews' Billiards and Snooker Hall!

The nearest River Authority was the Tywi Fishery Board but the Board's writ ended on the River Llŵchwr. The only control over fishing on the River Tawe was by the Association bailiffs of Tawe & Tributaries AA. Fishermen were expected to take out the Association fishing Permit. Below Ystalyfera this control was weak and, as opinion had it, only the very loyal and honest fisherman took out a Tawe & Tribs fishing permit.

Pollution in these early years was an emotive subject to fishermen in the valley, though to few others!

Pollution sources were clearly recognised:- from the various tinplate and sheet mills on the banks of the river down to and including Morrision (dilute pickle acid from sheet and plate pickling baths); coal dirt from colliery washery lagoons; and effluent from overloaded sewage treatment works. There were periodic and repeated pollution "accidents" from these sources, when the river ran coloured black from coal or brown from pickle acid. In retrospect such incidents were periodic nuisances, interruptions to fishing for a short period of time, but no more.

From memory, in these early years there was never any great fish kill as a result of coal, acid nor sewage pollution. It was when cyanide treatment was used in the metal bashing firms, which came to the Valley when Industrial Estates were established, that major fish kills came about. Inco effluent into the river in Clydach at this time was always a major pollution problem but as Pontardawe fishermen had little interest in the main river below the Upper Clydach confluence (as was the attitude of their upper valley Tawe & Tributaries neighbours to the main river below Ystalyfera), no-one bothered about this.

The even greater poisonous pollution from industry in the Lower Swansea Valley - the Swansea Vale and the Copper Works - was also unseen by the fishermen upstream. That this pollution was the major cause of a dearth of salmon and sewin came to be understood as industrial history turned its pages in the 1960s and 1970s and salmon and sea trout returned to the River Tawe.

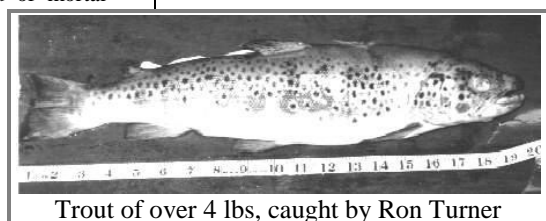
Before 1946 the youth of Pontardawe and the valley swam every summer in the main river without succumbing to any kind of mortal illness. The brown trout in the river continued to enjoy a tremendous abundance and quality. Kingfishers flourished as if in their own Garden of Eden; otters were so



Ron Turner with a Tawe brown trout in the "early years" over 4 lbs

many as to reach almost "vermin" proportions; minnows were present in their hundreds of thousands. The main tributaries - the Upper and Lower Clydach Rivers and the Cwmdu Brook - were crystal clear and full of brown trout, dippers and wagtails.

Against this benign environmental background the Pontardawe Angling Society was "an accident waiting to happen". It happened, quietly enough, when the feeling of dissatisfaction with and neglect by the managing committee of Tawe & Tribs AA (over the Tawe fishing below Godre'rgrraig) reached a peak among its Pontardawe membership. At the same time, a Pontardawe committeeman on the T&T committee quit on the grounds that he was unsupported in his efforts to develop the fishing on the lower waters. This was Bryn "Ginger" Jones, ex Welsh Boxing Champion, then Insurance Inspector with London & Manchester Assurance Company for Pontardawe and District with contacts all over the middle valley. He was the catalyst who energetically set about forming a Pontardawe Angling Association to repair the alleged "neglect" of the fishing environment in the middle waters of



Trout of over 4 lbs, caught by Ron Turner

the River Tawe. He was enthusiastically supported by Dr Lewis Watkins, a local GP learning to fish for the first time, and a few like-minded individuals who came together as a "steering committee", in order to form their own Angling Society.

The First 10 Years, 1946-1956.

The Steering Committee who formed around Dr Lewis J Watkins, as Chairman, and Bryn Jones, as Hon Secretary, were: Hon Treasurer - Glyn Phillips, accountant (Barclays Bank were our first bankers); Committee Members: Gerwyn Griffiths, local chemist; EPH Hopkin, undergraduate; Wm Parkhouse, newsagent.

As the news spread around Pontardawe, via the daily energies and enthusiasm of the Steering Committee, the first Committee was voted into office in the Commercial Room of the Dynevor Hotel. Bryn Davies, the landlord, was well known to be an enthusiastic angler of many years standing. For many, many years, once per month, on a Wednesday, the Committee met in the same Commercial Room for free.

The club now firmly established set about recruiting members, writing a constitution and, after acquiring verbal permission to fish Cwmdu Glen from Mr Charles Gilbertson, printing and issuing Fishing Permits and setting our Annual Membership Fee. It was the constant aim to increase the availability of fishing water for our members. Mr Charles Gilbertson became our first Life President.

It was during these first 10 years that

the Pontardawe Angling Society not only enjoyed dynamic growth internally but also made its presence felt externally in the wider world of Welsh Angling Circles.

1952 saw the setting up of the South West Wales River Authority and the River Tawe came under the control of Statutory Authority in such matters as Fishing Licences, Fishery Management, Pollution Control and drainage control. River Authority bailiffs walked the banks and established law and order.

In order to represent fishery and fishing interests on the SW Wales River Authority, the South West Wales Federation of Angling Clubs was formed on the prompting of Mr JCK Mercer, a Swansea solicitor, and Mr Tyrrel Morgan, a Swansea tea importer. Needless to say, both were fishermen. EPH Hopkin was ultimately to become Hon Sec of this Federation. Ray Lockyer, our present Hon Sec, succeeded EPH Hopkin as Hon Sec of the Federation. Our Association's contribution to fishing on a wider front than club waters was established during these early years.

Dr LJ Watkins was appointed to be a member of the first SWW River Authority and elected to represent our club on the SWW Federation. He was followed by our second Elected Life President, Mr Gildas Llewelyn.

1954 saw the birth of the Welsh Fly Fishing Association in Aberystwyth. The Pontardawe Angling Society was authoritatively instrumental in its formation. EPH Hopkin was elected to become its first Hon Secretary and Treasurer. This was

the beginning of the process of establishing a representative Governing Body for the fishermen and fishery owners in Wales and to establish democratic entry to the Welsh International Fly Fishing Team.

These years provided good fishing locally, all on a verbal permission basis, and good fellowship among a growing membership motivated by the twin aims of providing fishing for the men and youths of the Valley community on an "open door" basis and entry to International fly fishing on the basis of ability only. The routine of two fishing trips per season became established - venues were to the River Teifi upper and lower waters; the Usk in Abergavenny; the Wye in Builth wells; the River Irfon in Llanwrtyd Wells. Each Autumn the Annual Dinner was held in a convenient hotel, was well attended and enjoyed by all members who attended.

However, the growing and mature Association suffered its first major pollution challenge - the sinking and operation of the Abernant Colliery in Rhydyfro, on the headwaters of Cwmdu Glen. The Association lost this battle and suffered for it for 20 years or more. Only now (1996) is Cwmdu Glen slowly recovering from the effects of the Colliery after its shutdown.

It also lost the fishery management battle with the S W Wales River Authority over the decision to stock the river with sea trout ova once the pollution in the estuarial and lower waters of the river had diminished. Both angling clubs had feared the loss (or deterioration in the quality) of the brown trout fishing and



Presentations to some leading members at 1951 Dinner (as printed in Evening Post)
left to right: Bill Thomas, Gildas Llewelyn, Phil Richards, Howard Hopkin, Bryn "Ginger" Jones



Some members of the first Committee

Back: n/k, Bryn "Ginger" Jones (Sec), Howard Hopkin, Glyn Phillips (Treasurer), John Clement, Tim ?, Geoffrey Stock
Front: Johnny Roberts, Maldwyn Lloyd, Alf Steel, Dr Lewis Watkins (Chairman), John Powis, Dr Stan Hill, David Hywel James, Len Gimblett.

despite extensive consultation had vehemently opposed the proposal. The Water Authority went ahead however and today, with an established run of sea trout and salmon in the river, who remembers? More appropriately - who cares?

Finally, a few human interest stories from the early and first years of the Pontardawe & District Angling Society.

Two of the finest flyfishermen on their own waters were a Mr Stan House from Alltwen and Tommy Lewis from Trebanos. Stan House was a superb wet fly fisher. He used to carry a sack with him when he would walk over Gellionen Mountain to plunder the little Lower Clydach River of its brown trout. Tommy Lewis was an equally skilled dry fly fisher who only fished his own flies on the river and seemed incapable of not catching fish. His routine, followed during visits on 4 or 5 evenings every week when the water was clear, was to bus up valley from Trebanos to the old Workhouse bus stop in Brecon Road, Pontardawe. He then walked down to the river in Glantawe and fished upstream to the confluence of the Cwmdy Brook. One half pint in the "Quiet House", The Ynysmeudwy Arms, then bus back to Trebanos and home with a creel full of fish. Tommy Lewis was a dry fly

purist more extreme than any chalk stream fly fisher. He fished without a net (deliberately in order to give the fish more than an even chance of escape) and with a cast of the lowest possible breaking strain. The onset of monofil nylon casts was a godsend to him - 1 lb b/s cast immediately. His split cane fly rod, incidentally, was as soft as a cows tail, through fair wear and tear in use and in playing fish on low b/s casts.

In pre-war years I remember watching Tommy catching the largest trout in the Factory Pool near James St, routinely using a 10 ft greenheart rod with a cast of finest rabbit snaring wire shaped in an open loop. Once caught, snared over the tail, the fish was landed then released and returned unharmed.

Finally, no-one on the Llanwrtyd Wells annual trip, if sufficiently early in the season to catch the end of the rabbiting season, will forget the experience of travelling on the coach at peace with the world until suddenly one would be aware of a furry fearsome companion on one's shoulder. Dai James' ferret "Butch" was surveying his fellow travellers and making his acquaintance with any newcomers on the coach. His presence on the river bank was essential. If his owner failed to catch fish, Butch made sure that

there would be a bagful of rabbits. This was the "Fur and Fin" trip.

In conclusion, this has been an attempt to present a snapshot picture of the river, fishing and the club and its business in the beginning of its life. As a snapshot it automatically omits more than it reveals. It is inevitable that the snapshot process mentions some names but omits very many. Many Officers, Committeemen, Club Bailiffs who have given loyal and meritorious service for free over many years have not received a mention. I hope they will understand why and forgive. Their reward is (for many) and will be in Heaven?!

As the last surviving Founder-Member, I am conscious of how fortunate a fisher I have been to have enjoyed 50+ years, an integral part of the club organisation and of continual contact with fishing on club waters. "There's much more to fishing than catching fish" is a truism that I can vouch for 150%.

It is a striking fact also that the basics underlying fishing remain the same. Yet the last 50 years or more have been a period of very dynamic change. The river and valley environment has changed and is changing almost week by week. The salmon and sea trout are back and accepted as a normal fact (itself a miracle of nature); scientific control on pollution; and historical changes in industrial processes and manufacturing have had on balance a benign influence. The coal pits have gone; individual travel by car has supplanted public transport; technological progress with new science made materials has revolutionised fishing tackle. Change continues apace. Overall and despite failures and tragedies with the environment such as Dieldrin and opencast coal development, the fishing available is probably better than ever. More importantly it is available to all who wish to fish, despite the problems. Problems in a changing world will continue. As long as our Association maintains its dynamism and the support of its members, the problems will, as in the early years, be contained.



Annual Dinner at the Towy Cafe, Llandovery. Guess the year? How many do you know?
Can you imagine travelling all the way to Llandovery for a Dinner these days?!

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**For expert advice, speak to Ken Linnard,
former Pontardawe Chairman and Welsh International Flyfisherman**

THE CLUB ORGANISATION

by Phil Jones

This little piece is an attempt to explain the way in which the club is run and to let you know who does what behind the scenes.

We are a members' club, run for the benefit of the Members on a non-profit-making basis. We have a Constitution, drawn up in the early days and modified a little over the years. This sets out the objects of the Society ("the preservation and improvement of all the waters under its control and the extension of its waters") and specifies the way in which the business of the club is to be conducted. The Constitution can only be amended by the Members at a general meeting.

The business of the club is conducted by the Officers and Committee, who are appointed by the Members at the Annual General Meeting.

Four Trustees are appointed to sign legal documents, etc, on behalf of the club.

General meetings are held in November (Annual General Meeting) and May (Semi-Annual General Meeting) of each year. Details are given in the Member's Permit, issued to all Members.

The Officers of the Society are currently:

Trustees - Davy Hall, Len Edwards, Emlyn Lloyd and Vernon Thomas;
Life President - EPH (Howard) Hopkin, who has held the position since 1978;
Chairman - Emlyn Lloyd, currently in his first two-year term of office;
Vice-Chairman - Spencer Williams, due to take over as Chairman in 1997;
Secretary - Raymond Lockyer, who has held the position without a break since 1972;

Treasurer - Brian Glover, in post since 1979;
Minutes Secretary - Phil Jones, appointed 1983;
Social Secretary - Dave Hooper, appointed 1984.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are appointed for two years at a time and the Vice-Chairman succeeds the Chairman at the end of the two years. Other Members who have served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman in recent years are: Len Edwards (several terms), Tom Stephens, John P Rees (2 terms), John Lewis, Zuhair Majeed and Malcolm Scutchings. As can be seen, there is stability and experience at the helm.

Current Committee Members are: Malcolm Scutchings, Gerald Cutcliffe, Howard Cutcliffe, John W Rees, Paul Edwards, Jeremy Wolfe, Zuhair Majeed, Andy Phillips, Nigel Graham, Graham Bending, Mike Oliver, Gareth Evans, Terry Wayne Graham, John P Rees, Raymond Christopher and Ian Graham. Most of these have served for a number of years.

In addition a number of Members have been elected as Life Committee Members in recognition of their "long and faithful service". These include: Gwyn Bowen, Davy Hall, Bill Rees, R Rees, Len Edwards, Tom Stephens, Ray Lockyer and Terry K Graham.

Committee Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month (except August) at the Dillwyn Arms, Pontardawe. At such meetings, which are always conducted in a very business-like way, the Committee deals with such matters as the protection and extension of the Society's fishing rights, managing the club's fishing on the Tawe, dealing with threats to the fishery (such as pollution, developments, etc), organising fishing trips, competitions and social activities, controlling income and expenditure, as well as regional and national matters (such as rod

CLUB ACTIVITIES

- Obtain access to fishing
 - ⇒ purchase of freehold title
 - ⇒ leases
 - ⇒ annual agreements
- Negotiations with
 - ⇒ farmers
 - ⇒ Councils
 - ⇒ companies
 - ⇒ other landowners
- Organise AGMs
 - ⇒ appoint Officers / Committee
 - ⇒ appoint Club Bailiffs
 - ⇒ appoint Trustees
 - ⇒ fix membership fees
 - ⇒ control club finances
- Administer membership
 - ⇒ set out the fishing rules
 - ⇒ produce and distribute permits
- Arrange social activities
 - ⇒ dinners
 - ⇒ guest speakers
 - ⇒ film & video shows
 - ⇒ tackle auctions
 - ⇒ quizzes
 - ⇒ fly tying classes
- Arrange fishing
 - ⇒ boat on Usk Reservoir
 - ⇒ fishing trips
 - ⇒ fishing competitions
 - ⇒ activities for disabled
- Manage and protect the fishery
 - ⇒ Monitor water quality
 - ⇒ control poaching
 - ⇒ carry out restocking
 - ⇒ control predation
- Liaise with Environment Agency (NRA's successor)
 - ⇒ fishery byelaws
 - ⇒ land drainage
 - ⇒ flood protection
 - ⇒ pollution
 - ⇒ environmental projects
 - ⇒ damaging developments
 - ⇒ river management plans
 - ⇒ fisheries funding
- Work with WSTAA (Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association)
 - ⇒ influence national policies
 - ⇒ take part in national and international events
- And lots more!

licence duties, byelaws, netting, etc).

The Committee also appoints Sub-Committees to deal with certain matters, such as

Extension of Waters, Competitions and (currently) our 50th Anniversary.

Club Bailiffs are appointed annually at the AGM to police club waters. The current Bailiffs are: Nigel Graham, Spencer Williams, Phil Rawle,

Ray Christopher, Dave Hooper, Ron Ahearn and Ian Graham.

The club is also affiliated to and represented on various other bodies, such as the Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association (Pontardawe Members have always been active and influential in this

organisation), the Anglers' Conservation Association (a body which fights water pollution) and consultative committees of the National Rivers Authority (and its predecessors and recent successor, the Environment Agency).

1996 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

14 Jan	Sun	Bank clearance, Trebanos Park, 10.00am (& following Sundays)
19 Jan	Fri	Guest Speaker / Quiz, Vardre Rugby Club, 7.30pm
9 Feb	Fri	Tackle Auction, Vardre Rugby Club. Open at 6.30pm to compile catalogue; sale to start at approximately 7.30pm
17 Feb	Sat	Restocking; 11.00am, Pontardawe Leisure Centre
1 Mar	Fri	Annual Dinner / Dance - Glyn Clydach Hotel
3 Mar	Sun	Trout season opens - hooray
9 Mar	Sat	Junior Competition, Pontardawe Leisure Centre, 12 noon
17 Mar	Sun	Open competition, River Tawe, meet Fairfield Clydach, 10.00am
20 Mar	Wed	Salmon & seatrout season opens
14 Apr	Sun	Boat selection match, Llysyfran - WSTAA spring + Bensons 97
20 Apr	Sat	River trip - Teifi at Tregaron
8 May	Wed	Semi Annual Meeting
19 May	Sun	MFL Cup, River Wye, Builth Wells
9 Jun	Sun	Casting Competition, White Springs
23 Jun	Sun	Boat selection match, Llandegfedd - WSTAA autumn 96 + Bensons 97
14 Jul	Sun	Chew boat trip; first 30 names to the Social Secretary
26 Jul	Fri	Sewin competition, meet Fairfield, Clydach 9.30pm
30 Aug	Fri	Sewin competition, meet Fairfield, Clydach 8.30pm
8 Sep	Sun	Club day out, Elan Valley
29 Sep	Sun	WSTAA Half Moon Competition - Clywedog
30 Sep	Mon	Trout season closes
13 Oct	Sun	Competition fund raising day at Llandegfedd (boats)
17 Oct	Thurs	Salmon & seatrout season closes
1 Nov	Fri	50th Anniversary Dinner, Glyn Clydach Hotel
27 Nov	Wed	Annual General Meeting
Nov - Mar	Mon evenings, 7pm - 9pm	Fly Tying, followed by a pint and chat

A QUIZ! Here are 50 of the questions drawn up for an enjoyable quiz at the Vardre Rugby Club a few months ago. Answers on the inside of the back page.

NO	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name the author of "The Way of a Trout With a Fly"	
2	Give another name for the Great Red Sedge	
3	What were the average yearly rod catches declared on the Tawe, 1982-1991, of salmon and sewin	
4	What is the common name for Anguilla Anguilla?	
5	What is the scientific name for the sewin?	
6	How much can you be fined for shooting a cormorant?	
7	Who first tied the Greenwells Glory?	
8	Who wrote "The Compleat Angler" and when was the first edition published?	
9	How many species of upwinged flies are there in the UK?	
10	Name these hackles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ginger, black centre; • dark red / brown, black centre, black tips; • black and white barred. 	
11	Where is the flow gauging station on the river Tawe and what is the average flow in the Tawe (in cumecs)?	
12	What are the first and last days allowed for worming for salmon and sewin on the Tawe?	
13	When was the Hardy Perfect reel first made?	
14	What colour is the blue damselfly when first hatched?	
15	Where did the Ke-He originate?	
16	How did the Ke-He get its name?	
17	Name the area around the aerators at Chew.	
18	What is the area of the Tawe catchment?	
19	What is the common name for Thymallus Thymallus?	
20	What is the scientific name for the rainbow trout?	
21	Where was the British record brown trout caught (in 1993)? How heavy was it? How many spots did it have on its tail?	
22	Name the hotel at Tal-y-llyn.	
23	What is the largest predicted tidal range at Swansea?	
24	Who caught the first salmon in the Tawe this century and when did he catch it (month and year)?	
25	What were the average yearly catches declared for the whole of Wales, 1982-1991, of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salmon by rods • salmon by nets • sewin by rods • sewin by nets 	
26	Who invented the Peter Ross fly?	
27	How many scales can be counted between the adipose fin and the lateral line on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salmon • sewin 	
28	How can female sea lice on migratory fish be recognised?	
29	What is the other anglers' name for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Alder Fly • the Grannom 	
30	How is a Redditch "old scale" size 16 hook described in the "new scale"?	
31	Name the fly that was banned on some waters for a period earlier this century as being too successful.	
32	Who invented the Tups Indispensable and what is a tup?	
33	Who invented the original Pheasant Tail Nymph?	
34	Who was the famous fly tier with a business in the town of Usk?	
35	What does the Straddle Bug imitate	
36	Who is Chairman of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund?	
37	What does ACA stand for?	
38	What was Dick Walker's profession?	
39	Who introduced the Muddler Minnow to the UK?	
40	What is the Richard Wheatley company famous for?	
41	What does the Datsun imitate?	
42	Who invented the Blagdon Amber Nymph?	
43	Loch Leven is situated near which town?	
44	Name three Pontardawe club anglers who were Welsh International anglers before 1980.	
45	What year did Blagdon open for fishing?	
46	Which Scottish river runs through Dunkeld?	
47	Which company manufactures Hardy's lines?	
48	Which rock star owns the Lakedown fishery in Sussex?	
49	What does UDN stand for and what is it?	
50	What is the Environment Agency's Freefone number for reporting poaching / pollution incidents, 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week?	

Why not come to the next quiz?

SOME PHOTOS FROM THE ALBUM



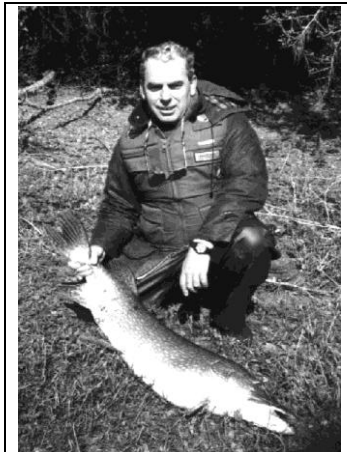
Dennis Peake and participants in the Junior Competition - mid 70s?
And they say we should be encouraging more girls to join!



Tom Stephens and Seward Sammalls being interviewed by Moc Morgan at a Game Fair



An "unofficial" club trip to the Orkneys (better attended than some "official" trips!)
Ray Lockyer, John "Metz", Zuhair Majeed, Len Edwards, Brian Glover, John Lewis,
Wayne ("two arms") Lewis, John Rees, Spencer Williams, John Lewis



Ray Lockyer with a pike (estimated at 30 lbs plus) caught on a trout fly and 6 lb cast at Llandegfedd. The fish was returned unharmed, as you would expect!
(The rangers were watching)



A flytting class in progress at the Cross Community Centre, Pontardawe



A successful day for Tawe Disabled Fishers at Eglwys Nunydd



Another Annual Dinner - this time at the Mackworth in Swansea High St



A big flood in Clydach, going through the footbridge and about to go over the wall (but they come even bigger than this!)



A few different faces this time - presentations at a Dinner in the early - mid '80s
Phil Rawle, Terry Graham, Gerry Cutcliffe, Phil Jones, Gareth Harris, Peter Healey



Life President, Howard Hopkin, making a presentation to Ray Lockyer, Secretary, at the 1992 Annual Dinner, to mark 25 years service as an Officer of the club. Described by one Chairman as "the rock upon which the club is founded", Ray became Minutes Sec in 1967 and Secretary in 1972. He has also been active throughout that time in Welsh fishing generally, and is currently a Vice Chairman of the Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association, having been its Chairman for two years from 1992 to 1994. He can fish, as well, and has been in the Welsh Team twice. (The book being presented was a first edition of "The Natural Trout Fly and Its Imitation" by Leonard West).

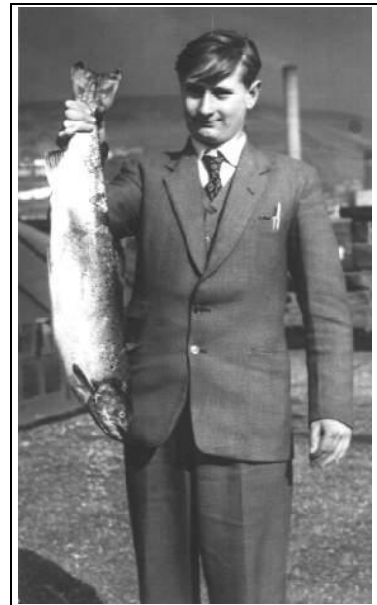
A MEMORABLE FISH

Chris Thomas of Clydach will never forget the 3rd March 1961, the third day of the 1961 season. Quite unexpectedly he caught the first salmon to be taken on the Tawe for over 80 years.

Chris and his friend Richard Barrett were fishing between Panteg Weir and the Signal Box Pool. It was snowing and a bitterly cold southeast wind was blowing. Chris was spinning for trout with a natural minnow when he saw a splash near a rock where he knew there was a big trout. He tried for it and hooked his first salmon!

Chris recalls that there was a football match going on nearby and that within a few minutes word had got around. A long, high slag tip ran along the bank at that point and it was soon lined with about 150 football fans and both teams watching the struggle! Three other anglers turned up and one of them, Mal Mainwaring from Panteg, helped to land the fish after about 15 minutes. It was 9 lbs 7 oz and 2 ft 6 inches.

The fish was taken away for tests by the South West Wales River Board, who reported that it was a hen "blue-back" which had not yet spawned. Because of rainfall the river had been high for a considerable time and Chris believes that this had diluted the pollution in the lower river sufficiently for the fish to get through. Unfortunately, however, the fish "stank of chemicals and was totally inedible".



Chris Thomas with his fish on the roof of the Evening Post building at Swansea Castle after its return from SWWRB - days after its capture but still looking good

50 YEARS OF FISHING THE TAWE

by Terry Graham

I first fished the Tawe and its tributaries in 1946 at the age of 11. In those days many of us as youngsters began our apprenticeship to the art of angling on the Lower and Upper Clydach rivers at Clydach and Pontardawe, these being the main tributaries on our water. We fished upstream worm with hazel stick, bamboo and even WWII tank aerals. Both these streams were teeming with trout of all sizes in those days. Fortunately there were very few anglers and a plentiful supply of trout. We learned the art very quickly indeed.

It was soon time for us to get a "proper" fishing rod, reel and line. A typical rod at this time was a two-piece greenheart fly rod measuring about seven to eight feet with brass ferrules and reel fittings. The reel, again of brass, was loaded with a No 2 Kingfisher line or similar. About 1½ yards of 2 or 3lb BS monofilament or gut was attached to the flyline with

a figure-of-eight knot, a size 10 or 8 hook tied on, a few split shot pinched on about 18 inches above the hook, a worm threaded on and upstream worming tackle was complete. The upstream method was deadly on small rivers but, except in spate conditions, one soon tired of it. Between floods, from about May onwards, when trout were beginning to rise readily to the surface, the urge to learn to use the fly was paramount.

Basic casting skills were soon achieved and by trial and error one soon learned to be fairly proficient with the upstream wet fly. In the early days the given method of fishing the upstream fly was to impale a maggot on each hook. This technique was used by all the "old hands" and a very deadly method it proved to be too. A 2lb or 3lb BS leader of 5 feet with two flies 18 inches apart. Typical flies for this method were a Greenwell's or Blue Dun on the point and a Coch-y-bonddu or Black

Gnat on the dropper. A maggot was impaled by its thick end on each hook. If maggots were in short supply, maggot-sized sections of the pith from the inside of reeds were used and were almost as good as the real thing. A fairly soft-actioned rod was necessary for fly and maggot fishing and one learned to cast gently or the maggot tore from the hook.

As deadly as the fly and maggot technique proved to be, one felt that this was not really fly fishing. Once the river fly life was understood and flies were identified, fly fishing "proper" commenced and the maggot was abandoned. Due to the smallness of the stream and overhang from bushes and trees, long casting was out of the question. One had to learn to cast from all angles - side casting from the right or left, underarm and even "flick" casting. Stealth and accuracy were essential when stalking these keen-eyed river

trout. The use of background foliage or casting from a kneeling position was advantageous. It is a pity really that today's young anglers tend to ignore the small streams. Basic skills and river craft are better learned on a small river than on a large one.

The time soon came for us to master the art of fly dressing. Basic tuition was acquired and flies were dressed by hand. Vices were not used much in those days. Flies tied were old favourites and are still high on the list for river trout today. They included: Greenwell's Glory, Blue Dun, Blue Quill, Olive Quill, Iron Blue Dun, March Brown, Pheasant Tail, Black Gnat, Coch-y-bonddu, Red Spinner, Partridge & Orange, Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear and Snipe & Purple.

The tributaries at Clydach and Pontardawe were full of natural brown trout of all sizes. It was not unusual to take trout of 1/2lb or so and even trout to 1lb or over. On the Upper Clydach at Cwmdu Glen fishing was eventually spoilt for many years. The pretty little river became polluted due to spillage from the coal washeries at Abernant Colliery. Fortunately the colliery has now finished and the river is clean again. Some pollution also occurred on the Lower Clydach. The Graig Merthyr Collieries near Craig Cefn Parc often pumped dirty water from the mines direct into the river. When this happened, anglers who wished to fish the fly were forced to fish higher up the river and above the outflow. Eventually the collieries ceased to exist and this river also ran clean and sweet.

Throughout the '50s and into the '60s the trout fishing on the Tawe was excellent. Trout averaged 3/4lb and the fishing was as good as that available on the Usk, which was one of the best trout rivers in Wales.

The bag limit during this time was 16 fish, which gives an indication of the quality of fishing available. The dry fly was practised by just a handful of anglers on the Tawe. A

stiffer-actioned rod of around 9 feet was required for this delightful form of fishing. The river was teeming with trout and during low-water conditions the dry fly anglers were forced to use very fine leaders with an even finer point down to as little as 1lb BS. A little too hard on the strike and a break was inevitable.

On weekends in the early part of the season (March, April and May) dry fly anglers timed their arrival on the river. About noon was right. Fishing did not commence until the hatch appeared. Sometimes the hatch of fly was late starting, so one had to wait or fish the wet fly. Usually the hatch was over by 3.30 pm.

Dry flies used during the afternoon hatch in the early season were: Greenwell's, Blue Upright, Olive Quill, Blue Dun, Rough Olive, Iron Blue Dun, March Brown Spider, Grey Duster, etc. Later in the season came Ginger Quill, Tup's Indispensable, Black Gnat, Hawthorn, Alder, Coch-y-bonddu, Mayflies, Sedges, etc.

The evening rise during the summer months used to be tremendous. Dry flies used at this time were Pheasant Tail, Red Spinner, Pale Evening Dun, Lunn's Particular, Iron Blue Dun (hackled), hackled Greenwell's, Grey Duster, Ginger Quill and Sedges. It was not unusual to take several fish of 1lb to 1 1/2lb in weight. These fish often disgorged several minnows when killed. At this time the river teemed with minnows and the trout obviously fed well on them at some stage of the day or night.

As well as the good fishing available to us on the Tawe and its tributaries, the Society ran regular trips to other venues. These included the River Teifi at Newcastle Emlyn and Tregaron and the River Wye at Hay. Trips were also organised on stillwaters and we fished the Claerwen in the Elan Valley, the Beacons reservoirs, Usk Reservoir and Talybont Reservoir. Most reservoirs in the early days contained brown trout only.

There were otters on the Tawe during the '50s. Some Society members have seen them and knew where their holts were in the Glais area. A local man used to hunt them with dogs on a regular basis. One Society angler who still fishes today is said to have hooked an otter while fishing in the Glais area! In those days one often came across a dead trout which had a piece of flesh taken from the area near the dorsal fin. This is evidence of a playful otter, their main food item on the river being eels. Otters eventually disappeared but now, in the '90s, they are back in small numbers.

At this time the River Tawe contained huge quantities of eels, some of which were very large. Some anglers fished for these large eels with specially adapted worm tackle. A favourite pool was one near the golf course, directly below the Coal Bank Pool, where there used to be a backwater. Eels of 3 - 6lbs could be caught here.

During the period when trout fishing was at its best on the Tawe during the late '50s and early '60s there occurred a very bad case of pollution. The Perry Chain works above Ystradgynlais was responsible for a leakage or spillage of cyanide into the river. Consequently thousands of natural trout, minnows and all sorts of river life were killed over miles and miles of river. Trout of 3, 4, 5lbs and over were found dead along the length of river below Ystradgynlais. These large trout obviously played a very important part when spawning time came about. The loss of these fish hit us hard and subsequently the fishing clubs in the valley were forced to restock the river each season. As well as the loss of the trout, the huge stocks of minnows, a major source of food for the trout, were almost wiped out. Fly life also suffered badly for quite some time due to this pollution.

In the late '50s a few anglers, fishing dry fly in the evenings, caught their first sea trout. This was very encouraging and caused quite a "buzz" amongst some

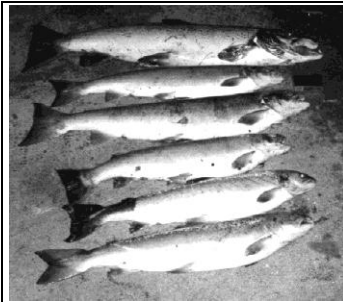
anglers. Several sea trout were caught in subsequent years and then the River Authority helped things along by planting eyed ova, fingerlings and parr in the headwaters. About this time it appeared that there were also some salmon in the river, as some anglers were being broken by very large fish whilst trout fishing with light tackle.

By now some club members had been bitten by the sea trout bug and much of our summer fishing was in pursuit of these magnificent game fish. A few of us fished the Tywi and Cothi, mainly by night, and were taking wonderful bags of sea trout on the fly. We never dreamt that soon we were to have excellent sea trout fishing on our own doorstep, on our own River Tawe.

Throughout the '70s and '80s the sea trout were well-established on the Tawe and fly fishing, especially after dark, was fabulous. Sea trout of 3 - 5lbs were in plentiful supply. A good sea trout angler could almost guarantee a fine bag of fish on most fishable nights. Flies were developed which enhanced our chances of catching fish even more. Some of experienced sea trout men introduced special home-made tandem lures and Waddingtons for use in high, clear water when the small fly was not too successful. These special patterns proved to be the downfall of many a good sea trout and salmon by night and by day.

Eventually both grilse and salmon were becoming more plentiful and many were being caught at night by sea trout anglers. In fact, in low-water conditions salmon were

easier to catch on fly after dark than during daylight.



Some outstanding salmon and sewin taken at night and early in the morning, Sept 1990 (caught by 3 anglers).

Although sea trout are still running the River Tawe, they are no longer in such great numbers. It appears that the river has become a salmon river rather than a sea trout river. The NRA have encouraged the quite large salmon run by depositing eyed ova and fingerlings in the headwaters on a regular basis.

Since the fairly recent completion of the Tawe Barrage at Swansea, at the mouth of the River Tawe, it appears that many of our sea trout have refused to enter the lagoon above the barrage. Water quality in the lagoon is so bad that, at times, sea trout and salmon refuse to enter the lagoon, turn about and travel to neighbouring rivers instead. These fish are lost to us forever. Hopefully the NRA will come up with something to remedy this disastrous situation.

Over the last 50 years many changes have occurred in the club. In the early days we suffered

pollution in many forms which upset angling and anglers. Fortunately, the river is now in good condition and, whereas the trout fishing has deteriorated considerably, we are compensated by having decent sea trout and salmon fishing. Much of the trout fishing available to us now is in the form of rainbow trout fishing on the many reservoirs and man-made lakes in the area.

All in all, the Society has been a very successful one. It has produced many excellent anglers over the years, including a dozen or more Welsh International Fly Fishermen. The next 50 years will surely be just as promising.



Terry Graham with a 12 lb salmon caught in Clydach, June 1981

See Page 23 for details of Terry's Black Ghost



THE COMPETITION SCENE

In the early days of the club there was nothing like the calendar of competition events that exists today. There were a few (very popular) club trips and there was the Welsh Fly Fishing Championships but there was little else.

Qualifying for the Welsh team was a very different affair in those days. Clubs sent four members to the Welsh Fly Fishing Championships at Claerwen and the leading anglers at that event had to go to Scotland (Loch Leven) to fish their way into the Welsh Team. They didn't know until the day before the International Match whether they would actually get into the Team!

After the Welsh Fly Fishing Championships, one of the next competitions to be set up was the Half Moon competition in the early 60s and Pontardawe club was very involved in that.. The landlord of the Half Moon in Llandyssul, Will DR Williams (Will Half Moon) had told Howard Hopkin, then Sec

of the Welsh Fly Fishing Association, that he was prepared to put up a cup for an inter-club event (teams of 6). Len Edwards, then Sec of Pontardawe's Fly Fishing Section, organised the first match at Clywedog, which was won by Tawe & Tribbs. Pontardawe have won it twice since then. The competition is now organised by the Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association (WSTAA).

These days the calendar is packed with national and international events and it's almost impossible for clubs to fit in their own!

The trials to select the Welsh Team for the Spring and Autumn Internationals are now fished from boats over 8 days (3 days plus a one-day final trial for each). Like most clubs Pontardawe have Spring and Autumn selection matches to find six anglers to represent the club.

The Welsh Fly Fishing Championship is still held, though it's now called the Welsh Open Bank Championship.

The Molly Sweet competition for teams of 3, once a separate



Terry Graham just before the International at Brenig in 1993 - his second time in the Welsh Team, having previously fished at Loch Leven in the '60s.

event, is now combined with the Half Moon.

As well as the "senior" Internationals there are now also Disabled, Youth, Ladies and Rivers International matches and a World Fly Fishing Championship, all with their own trials to select the Teams.

Wales also hosts a European Bank Championship at Clywedog each year.

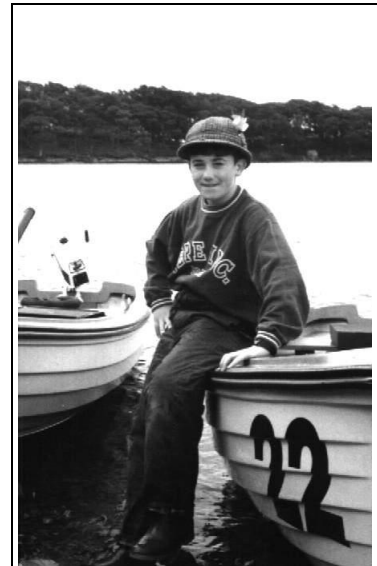
Then there is the very popular Benson & Hedges Fly Fishing Championship, a UK competition for teams of 6, with Regional qualifiers and a Final at Rutland, as well as a Welsh Water Team Competition (3 qualifiers and a Final) and a couple of matches each year in aid of SCOPE. And recently, the local small stillwaters have also started a team competition amongst themselves!



The first Pontardawe team to win the Half Moon
Back: Dennis Peake, John Lewis, John Rees,
Front: Ian Miller, Seward Sammals, Gwilym Moses



The second Pontardawe team to win the Half Moon
Back: Wayne Lewis, Colin Peake, Gerald Cutcliffe,
Front: Ian Roberts, John Rees, Howard Cutcliffe



James Graham
at Trawsfynydd - one of several
appearances in the Welsh Youth
Team

full calendar of club events is
printed on the club permit.

INTERNATIONALS

Club members who have
gained International honours
are: TK Graham, R Lockyer, K
Linnard, R Christopher, R
Osowicz, W Lewis, P Edwards,
S Graham, S Williams, N
Graham, M Rees, M Graham, J
Graham, R Hooper



Spencer Williams
"trying to ignore Bob Church"
whilst preparing for the Interna-
tional at Brenig 1993 - one of
several appearances in the
Welsh Team for Spencer

The club now has a Competi-
tions Sub-Committee (Secre-
tary, Terry Wayne Graham), as
well as the Social Secretary,
Dave Hooper, who organises
club events. If you are inter-
ested in competition fishing,
why not contact Terry on
844640 or Dave on 844887. A



The Welsh "senior" International Team at Brenig 1993
5 Pontardawe members present: Scott Graham, Spencer Williams and
Terry Graham (who had qualified as Pontardawe members), Roy Pascoe
(who had qualified via another club) and Ray Lockyer (then Chairman of
Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association).

THE FLY LIFE OF THE RIVER TAWE

by Ray Lockyer

The Freshwater Biological Association's identification key for upwinged flies lists some forty seven British species. To date, nineteen have been found in the Tawe and its tributaries; the details of these are listed in the following table:

GENUS	SPECIES	ANGLER'S NAME	SEASON	HOOK SIZE	NYMPH	WET	DRY - DUN	DRY - SPINNER
Centroptilum	luteolum	Small Spurwing	May - July	16	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear	Poalt Bloa or Tups Indispensable	Little Marryat or Tups Indispensable	Pheasant Tail or Lunn's Yellow Boy
Centroptilum	pennulatum	Large Spurwing	May - July	14	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear	Poalt Bloa	Tups Indispensable	Lunn's Yellow Boy
Procleon	bifidum	Pale Evening Dun	June - July	14	Light Olive Nymph		Pale Evening Dun	Yellow Evening Spinner
Beatis	fuscatus	Pale Watery Dun	May - Oct	16	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear	Tups Indispensable	Little Marryat	Lunn's Yellow Boy
Beatis	scambus	Small Dark Olive	May - Oct	16	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear or Olive Nymph	Snipe Bloa or Poul Bloa or Blue Upright	July Dun or Greenwell's Glory	Pheasant Tail or Lunn's Particular
Beatis	vernus	Medium Olive Dun	Apr - Oct	14	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear or Pheasant Tail	Greenwell's Glory or Olive Upright	Blue Dun or Olive Quill	Pheasant Tail or Lunn's Particular
Beatis	rhodani	Large Dark Olive	Mar - May	12 & 14	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear or Olive Nymph	Waterhen Bloa or Greenwell's Glory	Imperial, Blue Dun or Rough Olive	Pheasant Tail or Lunn's Particular
Beatis	muticus	Iron Blue Dun	Apr - June	14 & 16	Pheasant Tail	Snipe & Purple	Iron Blue Dun or Quill	Houghton Ruby
Rhithrogena	semicolorata	Olive Upright	May - June	12 & 14	Grey Nymph	Blue Bun	Yelluw Upright	Pheasant Tail
Rithrogena	germanica	March Brown	Mar - May	10 & 12	March Brown Nymph	March Brown	March Brown	Red Spinner
Heptagenia	lateralis	Dusky Yellow Streak	May - Sept	12 & 14	Pheasant Tail	Dark Watchet	Iron Blue Quill	Pheasant Tail
Ecdyonurus	venosus	Late March Brown	May - Oct	10 & 12	March Brown Nymph	March Brown	March Brown	Red Spinner
Ecdyonurus	torrentis	Large Brook Dun	Apr - Sept	10 & 12	March Brown Nymph	March Brown	March Brown & Claret	Red Spinner
Ecdyonurus	dispar	Autumn Dun	Aug - Sept	12 & 14	March Brown Nymph	August Brown	August Dun	Red Spinner
Ephemerella	ignita	Blue Winged Olive	May - Aug	14 & 16	Gold Ribbed Hares Ear	Poul Bloa	Orange Quill or B.W.O.	Sherry Spinner
Caenis	rivulorum	Caenis / Broadwings	June - Sept	20			Last Hope	Little Marryat
Ephemera	danica	Mayfly	May - June	8 & 10	Walkers Mayfly Nymph	Straddlebugs / Goslings	Mayfly	Spent Gnats
Leptophlebia	marginata	Sepia Dun	Apr - May	12 & 14			Sepia Dun	Pheasant Tail
Paraleptophebia	submarginata	Turkey Brown	May - June	12 & 14	March Brown Nymph	March Brown	March Brown	Pheasant Tail

The Turkey Brown, Sepia Dun and Late March Brown have only been identified in Envage (NRA) surveys of the Cwmdy Brook; there are no other records of them in the valley.

To date, the Medium Olive has only been found in the headwaters of the Lower Clydach River.

The Pale Evening Dun and the Small and Large Spurwings have been found only occasionally in the Ynystawe area.

In addition to the above, the angler should also be familiar with all the stoneflies, the sedge / caddis flies, midges & reed smuts, alderfly, various beetles, corixa and shrimp.

The land bred hawthornfly, the black gnat and the green and black aphids can also be important in their season.

WILDLIFE ON THE TAWE

by Terry K Graham

Amateur naturalists and bird-watchers would certainly have a "field day" along the banks of the Tawe and Tributaries. It is really amazing how prolific the wildlife is.

I have personally observed the following animals and birds along the banks and adjacent fields of our waters during the past 50 years.

I regularly came across groups of badgers at Ynystawe on the right bank of the Tawe below Ynystanglws Bridge. At Clydach, above the confluence pool, I came face to face with a fox whilst crossing the foot-bridge - the fox kindly allowed me right of way. Badgers and foxes being mainly nocturnal in their habits are more likely to be seen by the sea trout fisherman during darkness.

In the '40s and '50s otters were present on the Tawe in quite large numbers. They eventually disappeared but now in the '90s they are once more present on the Tawe. I do not think there are many but they are certainly present. I have heard the high-pitched whistling sound of otters at night and found some tracks and "spraints" during the daytime. Although the otter is a predator, I do not believe they cause much damage to fish stocks.¹ They may well take the odd trout, sea trout or even a

¹ Believe it or not, one of the earliest recorded decisions of the club was to pay a reward of 5 shillings (5/-) to anyone killing an otter on our waters and producing the tail as proof. The reward was increased to 10/- in 1956! **NO CLAIMS REQUIRED.**

salmon but their main diet is probably the freshwater eel and other aquatic animals.



Other predators to appear in the last decade are mink and polecats. The mink in particular has established itself along miles and miles of the Tawe and tributaries. They are growing in numbers and are therefore successfully breeding and thriving on our waters. Some animals and birds have been seriously "thinned out" due to the presence of the mink. These include rats, water voles, shrews, voles and mice; and of the birds: the moorhens, wild duck, wagtails, dippers and other species which nest and breed near the ground along the river bank. Mink enjoy birds' eggs, will kill and eat nestlings and will even despatch the adult birds. Mink are good swimmers and will occasionally take and enjoy fish, though perhaps not in great numbers.

I have seen a "wild" polecat on our waters but I do not believe they are plentiful. There was a time when the only area where

polecats could be found was the Tregaron Bog.

Other animals along the Tawe and tributaries include hares, rabbits and grey squirrels. The grey squirrels were introduced into this country from North America years ago and are now thriving in very large quantities. In the early days there were only red squirrels; sadly they have almost disappeared.

There are stoats and weasels, voles, moles, shrews but many species of mice, rats and water voles are not as plentiful as they once were.

I have seen grass snakes, adders and slow worms (legless lizard), lizards, newts, toads and frogs. At dusk, when there is sufficient fly life (summer months), many species of bats abound. Many a night fisherman, in pursuit of sea trout, has had the unpleasant task of liberating an unfortunate bat that had taken a fancy to a Teal, Blue & Silver or a Mallard & Claret and got impaled.

Keen birdwatchers would be overwhelmed with the vast amount of species available to them on our waters. Commencing with the birds of prey, we have the peregrine falcon in the valley of the Lower Clydach river. The falcon causes havoc amongst wild pigeons, feral pigeons and racing pigeons and it is said that it attacks its prey from above at speeds of up to 200 mph. Other birds of prey on our water include the kestrel. Some years ago I observed a

pair of kestrels nesting on one of the upper arms of an electricity pylon at Ynystawe, below the Clydach market. We have sparrow hawks and merlins, buzzards, barn owls, tawny owls and little owls. Recently I spotted a pair of red kites in Clydach. It seems that the RSPB may be responsible for introducing red kites to the area along the mid sections of the Lower Clydach. The red kite is an exciting inclusion to our bird population.

Of the crow family, we have the huge ravens (Lower Clydach river), carrion crows, rooks, jackdaws, magpies, jays and starlings (some starlings are winter visitors).

We have wild duck, which were once rare on the river. These include mallard, teal and two large species of fish eating duck called goosander and merganser. The mallard and goosanders are now breeding along the quieter stretches of the Tawe, especially on the left bank below Trebanos Park.

Unfortunately we have large numbers of cormorants frequenting the Tawe. These birds dive and catch and consume huge quantities of trout, sea trout and salmon parr and smolts. Other marine birds include black backed gulls, herring gulls and blackheaded gulls.

In the main, birdlife along the riverbank has improved over the years. The kingfishers are in abundance now that the minnows are back in strength.

One day, years ago, I was stupid enough to go fishing in Glais during a bad storm. The river was in flood and it was teeming with rain. I fished a worm in a favorite pool and

had placed my rod on a forked stick awaiting a bite. Suddenly a kingfisher appeared, as if by magic, and perched near the end of my rod. I "froze" and watched it dive into the river three times to catch a minnow. It succeeded on each occasion and had the cheek to despatch the small fish with a sharp tap on the top piece of my brand new cane rod. Eventually the bird spotted me and was off as suddenly as it had appeared.

Dippers are still fairly plentiful, feeding on nymphs, caddis, etc along the river edges. Herons are more numerous than they used to be and are regularly seen, especially at dawn and at dusk. They also feed at night and will fly from pool to pool in the dark. The main diet of the heron is the freshwater eel but they will take trout, small sea trout and parr.

The moorhens have suffered badly since the mink has appeared on the river. They are still present, only a lot fewer in number. During early summer, when fly life is abundant, we have martins, swallows and swifts, grey and pied wagtails (which are persecuted by mink), spotted flycatchers, chiff-chaff, robins hedge sparrows, wrens and goldcrests.

Of the finch family, we have goldfinches, bullfinches, greenfinches, chaffinches, gorse linnets, and yellowhammers. I have seen huge flocks of goldfinches alongside the Tawe where the thistle plant grows (these birds favour the seeds of the thistle).

We have wood pigeons (ring dove) and stock doves and on the Lower Clydach near the Lone at Craig Cefn Parc we have the rock dove. Another

dove which came here from Europe is now well-established - it is the collar dove.

There are nightjars, curlews, lapwings, green and lesser-spotted woodpeckers, nuthatch, tree creepers, skylarks, meadow pipits, reed buntings, reed warblers (I believe they sometimes sing beautifully in the dark), great tits, blue tits, log-tailed tits, marsh tits, coal tits, blackcaps, blackbirds, mistle thrushes, songthrushes. In the winter months can be seen siskins, redpolls and bramblings (finches), fieldfares and redwings (thrushes) and woodcocks and snipe.

The foregoing list of animals and birds is not complete - there are many more I have not mentioned.

Above our stretch on the Lower Clydach there is now an RSPB wildlife sanctuary which is well worth a visit by those who are interested. A pair of good binoculars and suitable attire would be an asset.

A HISTORY OF FISHERIES IN THE TAWE AND SWANSEA BAY

by Raymond Lockyer

Following the battle of Hastings in 1066, it took the Normans nearly forty years to reach and conquer the region subsequently known as the Lordship of Gower. The boundary to the west was divided from the Lordship of Cydweli by the River Lougher. From the Lougher, the boundary ran along Cwm Cathan, over the hills beneath Penller Castell to Garnant; then along the Amman and across to the River Twrch, which divided Gower from the Lordship of Brecon; and so to the junction of that river with the Tawe. The eastern border of Gower with the Lordship of Glamorgan followed the Tawe downstream to Glais. The Manor of Kilvey, east of the lower Tawe, extending to the Glais and Crymlyn streams was a separate appendage governed with Gower. By about the year 1106, with the Normans in firm control of Gower, Henry I granted the Lordship of Gower and Kilvey to Henry De Beaumont - Henry Earl of Warwick. However through an agreement between his descendant Thomas, Earl of Warwick and Henry II, Gower passed back to the Crown. In 1203 King John granted the Lordship to William de Braose and his descendants held it until the time of Edward II.

W.C.Rogers, writing about the Port of Swansea in Stewart Williams' Glamorgan historian, Volume Five records that: "King John gave Swansea to William de Braose in 1203 as part of 'Totam terram de Guher', this word terram connoted not merely the land of Gower, but all its foreshore too, from 'Pulcannon' to 'Logherne' which is to say from Pwll Cynon in Crymlyn Bog to the junction of the Lougher and Amman rivers, inclusive of the beds of the Tawe and Loughor rivers" By 1331 the Lordship of Gower had been mortgaged to such an extent that ownership had passed from William de Braose III to John de Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. In 1334, Edward III confirmed the earlier grants. On 12th February 1462, during the Wars of the Roses, Edward IV committed the custody of the Lordship of Gower and Kilvey during the then young Duke of Norfolk's minority to the most prominent Yorkist supporter in Wales, William Lord Herbert. In March 1465, John Duke of Norfolk was given his lands. But Lord Herbert remained in control of Gower probably as the Duke's tenant. In 1468 the Duke of Norfolk conveyed his Lordship of Gower and Kilvey to Lord Herbert; the conveyance was subsequently confirmed by Ed-

ward IV in 1469. In 1492 Sir Charles Somerset married Elizabeth Herbert and in 1514 Sir Charles was made Earl of Worcester; the hereditary Lordship of Gower and Kilvey remained in the Somerset family from that time. A direct descendant was made Duke of Beaufort in 1682.

Michael Gregory writing in 'Angling and the Law' on the rights of the public to fish in tidal waters states: "The public has no right to fish in any non-tidal waters, on the other hand, the public has a right to fish in all tidal waters, except where their right was lost before the Magna Carta, 1215, by the King granting fishing rights to a subject". The Magna Carta preventing the King from depriving the public of such fishing rights. Clearly all of the fishing rights in the River Tawe downstream of the confluence with the River Twrch at Ystalyfera were at one time in the ownership of the Beaufort estate including, as a result of King Johns grant in 1203, those in the tidal estuary and the foreshore. There are a number of sources of information that tend to confirm that the public were deprived of their right to fish in fish in these tidal waters: Alderman Edward Harris, in his book entitled 'Swansea', published in 1935, describes on page 94 the ancient fisheries in the Tawe: "In present days, the discoloured and polluted waters of the Tawe make it almost beyond belief that fish could ever have lived in it, much less that it was ever a fisherman's paradise, as reputed. The Exchequer MS however, show that before 1231, at the latest, John de Breus, Lord of Gouher, had granted to the Monks of Neath Abbey a moiety of two fisheries in his waters of Tawy 'whereof one lies near Swansea Castle and the other at Horegrove, where the Memroth stream falls into the Tawy'.

The records also show that the monks were also granted another fishery in the Tawe at Ynisymond or above Glais.

In 1686 there were four fishing weirs upon the salt sands opposite to St. Thomas chapel, within the Manor of Kilvey, which were held by Bussey Mansel at rentals payable to the Lord of the said Manor. The survey of Kilvey taken in that year states that one of these weirs had been lately erected upon a new foundation, and that no freeholder of the Manor could set up any weirs or

engines or device for the taking of fish without the consent of the Lord."

'Swansea' also provides further detail on page 128 of fishing weirs in the bay: "At that time and until very recent times, and probably by reason of ancient grants from the Lords of the Seignior, who were entitled to and had retained the right of taking all fish from the bay, many of the houses in and around Swansea and also at Mumbles had attached to them as appurtenances which passed with the property a weir or weirs situated between high and low water marks in the bay upon which they had the right to erect stake nets, and thus obtain their own supplies of fish". (Interestingly enough, the traps used on the foreshore of Swansea bay were, according to J.Geraint Jenkins in 'Nets and Coracles', of a distinctive design having very long V-shaped wicker wings with a basket trap attached at the apex. Wooden stumps that remain from these structures are still to be seen on low tides).

A dispute concerning ownership of part of the Tawe took place in 1756, and has been well documented by Prys Morgan in Volume Nine of Stewart Williams' Glamorgan Historian. Referred to as the 'Glais Boundary Dispute'; it centred around two insignificant little brooks, the Cynnach and Glais, which formed part of the ancient boundary between the lordships of Cadoxton and Kilvey. As we have seen, since the middle ages Kilvey had been controlled by the Lords of Gower; consequently the protagonists were Gabriel Powell, Steward of the Lordship of Gower and Kilvey and one Thomas Edwards, Steward of the Lordship of Cadoxton. Powell, having made an extensive study of the charts and grants of the land in the area owned by the Duke of Beaufort stoutly maintained that the boundary of Kilvey lay on the northern bank of the brooks; whilst Edwards attempted to establish that it lay at the centre line of their beds. On the 17th May, 1756 Edwards and party, representing the owners of Cadoxton, set off to mark the boundary, in the way that was traditional of the times, by placing stones along the centre line of the brooks. Starting at the very source of the Cynnach, working down its valley to the point where it joined the Glais Stream; then proceeding down the Glais to its confluence with the River Tawe at the village of Glais. To counter the claim, Gabriel Powell and his supporters did all that they could to obstruct their opponents passage along this route. On reaching the village of Glais, Thomas Edwards made it clear that the owners of Cadoxton made no claim to the River Tawe except for fishing rights in half of Glais Pool and Llyn Ymwn (the name Ymwn has been associated with Ynisymond). Cadoxton's title to these fishing rights being traced to the grants made by the Norman Lords of Gower to the monks of Neath Abbey. Now the Lordship of Cadoxton bordered on the Tawe between the Glais

Brook and Nant Llecha (at Alltwen) and it would appear that Thomas Edwards was by this statement acknowledging the fact that the eastern bank and not the centre of the river constituted the boundary between the two lordships. All of which tends to confirm what we already know of King John's grant of the Lordship of Gower to William de Braose.

The claim by Edwards, on behalf of Cadoxton, to two fisheries provides something of an inconsistency, as all the evidence indicates only a single location being granted in this area to the monks. Where was this fishery - Glais or Ynisymond? Well, in 1334, Edward III whilst confirming the earlier grants to the monks indicated that the fishing was confined to a region of forty perches above and forty perches below a weir (four hundred and forty yards in total) and this was at Ynisymond. In 1449, John ap Howell had a water driven corn mill at Ynyspenllwch and paid the Lord of Gower the sum of twelve pence for his water supply from a weir in the "Water of the Tawe near Enespenllogh". Some two hundred years later in 1647 an iron foundry was built at Ynyspenllwch, probably on the site of the corn mill, this also used water from a weir. Today the International Nickel Company covers the site of the mill and the only remnants of the earlier works is the dried up feeder from the weir skirting the western boundary of the INCO golf course. The location of the weir was situated just downstream of what is known to present day anglers as the Coal Pool, Ynisymond. It is reasonable to conclude that this was the likely site of the monks fishing weir and of course the location of Llyn Ymwn.

In June 1760 the Steward for the Lordship of Gower produced a "Statement of His Grace the Duke of Beaufort's Title to the River Tawey in the County of Glamorgan and Evidence to Support it". The statement demonstrates from the number of references to leases and rents for fisheries in the Tawe, many applying to freeholders with property bordering upon the river, that they were being run as 'Several fisheries' (that is private fisheries) owned by the Duke of Beaufort, some existing in the estuary and on the foreshore. The entry of 1746 records the renewal of a lease to one Lockwood Esquire for the fishing from Forrest Bridge to the sea. The statement also records other occasions when the Lordship of Gower's title to the fisheries were challenged by individuals. For example, in 1752, a Thomas Popkin inherited land on both sides of the river at Forrest, he immediately made claim to the river and the fishery where it passed through his property. To defend his title the Duke of Beaufort instigated legal proceedings against Popkin. In March 1755 the dispute came to trial at Hereford where the Court found judgement in favour of the Duke.

The report of the Royal Commission into Salmon Fisheries (England and Wales) produced in 1861, provides a substantial amount of information about the fisheries on the River Tawe, it was mainly collected from four individuals: Messers George Harry, Matthew Moggridge, William Thomas and Trevor Adams Williams. From the evidence, the fishery on the river was being adversely affected by trapping, netting, liming, spearing, groping, sledge hammering, mine water, tin works, saw mills and all manner of other activities. Williams and Moggridge were rod and line anglers of the period and conversant with fly fishing; despite being 'brothers of the angle', even they were prepared to exploit the river and 'pink' fishing without any close season was an accepted practice. There being very little control of any description. Interestingly enough a rod licence for England and Wales was being discussed by the Commission and a price tag of ten shillings (50 pence) or one pound was mentioned - perhaps we should not complain to loudly about the cost of fishing today! Another titbit from the report is that the young seatrout were known as 'skirlings'; a name I would prefer to the current colloquial term of shoalie or schoolie used in the valley.

In 1927 the Trustees of the Will of H.N.Mears purchased from the Tenth Duke of Beaufort the freehold of the 'Fishery, soil and bed of the Rivers Tawe and Clydach' where they joined or passed through the lands belonging to the Ynispenllwch Estate. The Miers family were for some considerable time the owners of Ynispenllwch and events leading up to the sale would indicate that the title to the rivers had been the subject of a dispute between the two parties. It is of interest to note that although the Ynispenllwch Estate acquired the whole of the river bed and fishing rights, their land ownership only extended, except on part of the River Clydach, to one bank of these rivers.

In 1954 Pontardawe Angling Society obtained a lease to these Ynispenllwch fishings and for the next thirty years members fished both banks, erected styles and notices; all without hindrance from anyone. Over this period some of the rights were sold to INCO and in 1984 the Society purchased the freehold title to the remainder which included the Cemetery Pool at Trebanos, the Junction Pool at Clydach and virtually all of the Lower Clydach River from the Junction Pool upstream to the Lone Bridge. Even this purchase has not been without its problems; British Waterways making claim to the western bank of the Junction Pool at Clydach, but reference to the 1794 Act of Parliament which permitted the construction of the Swansea Valley Canal soon persuaded them of their folly. The Act contains a number of clauses for the protection of Duke of Beaufort's fishery in the River Tawe and no provision can be found

which would have allowed the promoters to obtain title. The land owners on the eastern bank of the Cemetery Pool also created some difficulty when the purchase was ongoing but must have been advised of the weakness of the claim as they have not pursued the matter and members continue to fish the area. Each year since its purchase, in the time honoured tradition, your Secretary has walked and fished unchallenged on the eastern bank of the Cemetery Pool to clearly mark the boundary of the Society's rights at this location.

TERRY'S BLACK GHOST



Sea Trout Fly

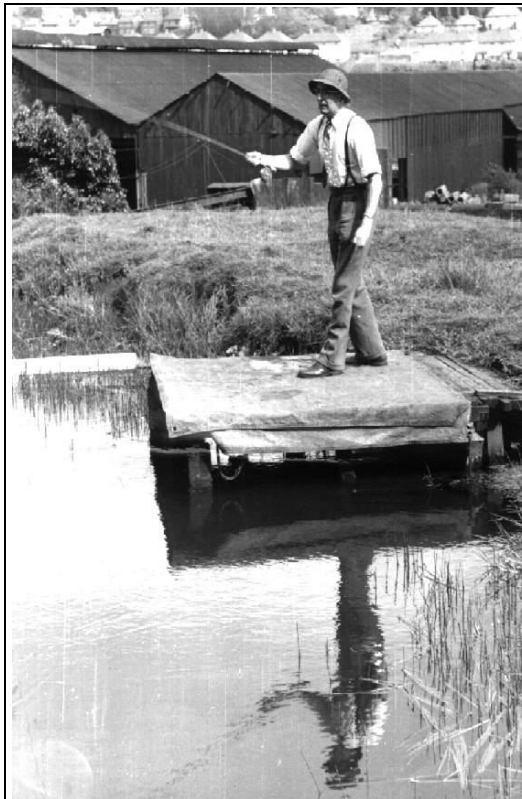
When used for sea trout, the dressing is as follows:

Hook:	Wilson size 6
Rib:	5 turns flat silver No 6
Body:	Tapered black seal fur, well plucked out
Tail:	GP crest with GP tippets over
Hackle:	Black "henry" cock
Wing:	Dyed black squirrel tail
Over wing:	Small bunch of fine red buctail
Topping:	4 strands of peacock sword
Cheeks:	Jungle cock (optional)

This fly was invented by Terry Graham in the early '60s and proved to be devastating for sea trout. It is normally fished on the point of the leader with a floater or sink tip line. The tail of the fly is a GP crest with 4 or 5 strands of tippets, half the length of the crest. The tapered body of black seal's fur is spun on liberally and the 5 turns of No 6 flat silver ribbed very tightly indeed. The black cock hackle (softish) is wound on - 4 turns at the most. The dyed black squirrel tail for the wing should reach roughly the tip of the GP crest. The over wing of "fine" bright red buctail should be about one fifth of the thickness of the main squirrel wing. The topping of 4 strands of peacock sword feather should be placed above the wing carefully so that the strands hug the wing neatly. Jungle cock cheeks may be added but are not essential on this sea trout fly. The head must have several coats of black varnish then one or two coats of clear varnish.

When used for salmon by day, the fly is best tied on No 4 or 6 double low water hooks and the ribbing can be wide oval silver instead of flat. A tag and butt of silver and yellow floss may also be added. Jungle cock cheeks are now a must.

CLUB CASTING COMPETITIONS - SOME REMINDERS



Howard Hopkin casting from the platform at the Works Pond, The Avenue, Pontardawe, the venue of many successful casting competitions in the '50s

THE PONTARDAWE & DISTRICT ANGLING SOCIETY

SIXTH ANNUAL

Fly Casting Tournament

at

Works Pond, The Avenue, Pontardawe

Saturday, 7th June, 1958

at 1 p.m.

OFFICERS OF SOCIETY

Life-President : C. G. GILBERTSON, Esq., J.P.

Chairman : GILDAS LLEWELYN, Esq. Vice-Chairman : ALUN JENKINS, Esq. Treasurer : P. M. RICHARDS, Esq.

Secretary : GWYN BOWEN, 13 Pleasant Street, Morriston.

Entrance by Programme only One Shilling



A few of the characters at one of the casting competitions
left to right: Ogwyn Samuels, Dr Stan Hill, Dai James, Howard Hopkin, Lionel Sweet, Dr John Hill, Bill Thomas

**THE CASTING
COMPETITION
IS TO BE
REVIVED THIS
YEAR**

**9TH JUNE
at
WHITE
SPRINGS**

**LOOK OUT
FOR DETAILS**

STOCKING THE TAWE

by Phil Jones

For many years now the Tawe has been liberally stocked with trout and salmon - both by the clubs and by the National Rivers Authority (and their predecessors, the River Board and Water Authority) but the stocking of rivers is something which often generates controversy. Despite considerable study of the subject by fishery managers and scientists there is still disagreement about the potential benefits and even the potential harm of artificial restocking with trout, sea trout and salmon.

The scientists argue that it is short-sighted to resort to artificial restocking in response to low or declining catches without investigating the reason(s) and considering alternative solutions. For example:

- Are declining catches really the result of declining stocks or is it just that the same numbers of fish are being caught by greater numbers of anglers and are therefore being spread more thinly?
- If stocks really are low or declining, can the problem be related to something in particular - such as over-fishing, or poaching, or water quality problems (pollution), or water quantity problems (abstraction), or loss of habitat or spawning areas, or (in the case of migratory fish) obstructions. If so, perhaps the best solution would be to attend to the problem rather than treat the symptoms.

Where native stocks of fish exist, some argue that the introduction of stock from other systems can damage the genetics of the natives and therefore do more harm than good. The thinking is that the native fish have evolved over time to become best-suited to the habitat and that stock from different systems will have evolved differently, be less able to cope and, if they interbreed with the natives, will dilute the native genes. Against this, some argue (at least as far as trout are concerned) that few stock fish survive to spawn and that, in any case, the risk of interbreeding is overstated.

No genetic studies of trout have been undertaken on the Tawe so no-one knows whether pure-bred natives remain or whether inter-breeding with foreigners has occurred. It is possible that native fish remain in the headwa-

ters of the tributaries. It is even possible, because of the way that they spawn in very specific areas of spawning streams, that natives have avoided "contamination" and survive in the main river. In view of this, perhaps stocking with brown trout should be seen as a put-and-take measure only - a means of taking pressure off any remaining native stocks in the hope that they will remain pure until it is known for definite whether they need to be preserved. Some say, however, that none of this matters; that the river system has changed so dramatically in recent times that the natives' evolution over many generations can no longer count for much; that any introduced fish which survive to spawn have demonstrated their suitability for the catchment and that, if anything, they are probably boosting the genes of the natives!

Other factors which need to be considered are the likely effectiveness and the cost of any proposed artificial rearing / stocking. Different considerations apply to salmon, to sea trout and to brown trout:

As far as salmon are concerned, the scientists have produced figures recently which suggest that, for the benefit obtained, artificial rearing is hugely expensive - perhaps £1,000 or more (depending on the stage at which the juveniles are released) for each fish eventually caught on the rod. The NRA and their predecessors have introduced many thousands of salmon ova, fry and parr over the years but the extent to which they have contributed to the revival of runs is uncertain.

With sea trout the main problem, apparently, is that it is possible to end up with brown trout which stay in the river and don't go to sea! Brown trout and sea trout, of course, are the same species. Known brown trout parents might produce brown trout, or sea trout or a mixture and the same applies with known sea trout parents. The factor which mainly determines whether juveniles stay in the river or whether they go to sea is apparently growth rate up to the point at which smolting occurs. If river conditions are favourable and growth rate is sufficient for successful spawning to be likely, they will probably stay as brown trout. If not, they will become smolts and go to sea. Artificial rearing is therefore difficult - feed them too well and you get no sea trout; feed them starvation rations and you might eventually get smolts but it takes a



Stocking at Pontardawe some years ago
Stuart Thomas, Davy Hall and someone in a
balaclava!

long time and is difficult and very expensive.

With brown trout the main issues are cost and timing. Takeable fish are expensive to buy - about £1.80 each for 10-11 inch fish. The cost can be reduced by rearing your own fish, of course, but this is very labour-intensive and risky. Tawe & Tribes Association have been remarkably successful in this (good luck to them) but it is something which we in Pontardawe have not felt able to take on. Over the years we have varied the size of the fish introduced and the timing of the introductions:

- soon after the end of the season is no longer favoured because there was a feeling that newly-introduced fish were moving downstream in Autumn and Winter floods;
- small fish (4-5 inches), intended to improve the fishery over the longer term, are no longer favoured because it is felt that losses are probably greater and that returns are probably better with takeable fish;
- just before the start of the season (mid-Feb) has been the practice for a while now but in the last two seasons this has been questioned (it's been suggested that the cormorants are taking most of the fish before members start on 3rd March);
- stocking during the fishing season seems to have been popular on the occasions that it has been tried - perhaps we'll try it again in future.

It's difficult to know whether we are doing the right thing but a lot of thought goes into it each year before restocking decisions are taken. If you have a view, why not attend the general meetings (May and November) and have your say.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

By Chris Thomas

Nothing stays the same; everything changes. Trouble is, the rate of change appears to be accelerating. Whether this is a sign of one's approaching old age or a greater awareness of one's surroundings is open to debate. The past 50 years have been adequately recorded in other pages of this publication - but what of the future? The observations which follow may smack of SF but they have been based upon extensions of present trends and what is happening in other parts of the world; particularly the USA and Europe.

So consider the past 50 years and the changes which have already occurred on the river - our river; and start with the fish themselves. It wasn't all that long ago the size limit was 7 inches in the main stream up to Ystradgynlais and six and a half inches in all other waters in the catchment area. A sensible limit when a half pounder was considered a good fish and catching a pounder was something to be proud of. *Note* - metrication has no place in fish-talk. It just doesn't sound right, does it?

Left to themselves, most Tawe fish would weigh in at less than this; the naturally available food supply only being able to support a population averaging a bit over 9 inches. Then the boom in fishing ponds took off with their huge, flabby monsters held captive in small, shallow ponds scraped out of a field by a JCB. To many anglers sheer size and numbers became more important than quality. The Tawe is now stocked regularly with fish up to 2 pounds in weight without the food to support them. They will snatch at virtually anything in their starvation.

Call *this* angling? Is this what you *really* want? So what of the future? Will size become more of an obsession or will reason prevail? As more artificially constructed pools are torn into the already abused bed of our river, the day may not be too far off when they will be stocked with enormous genetically mutated trout fed from dispensers, a separate charge made for each pool (or each fish - or both) and the whole lower river opened up to franchising opera-

tions. That's if angling is permitted at all by then.

To do this, of course, the river will have to be dramatically altered. This process has already started. For most of my 40 years fishing the Tawe, only two stretches were constantly being dredged for flood prevention purposes - the half-mile above Cwmdy Brook and the double bend by Trebanos sewage works. It is at this latter location that wire baskets filled with stones were first utilised to combat bank erosion,

But this was just the beginning. Since the NRA was spawned, interference with the river has proceeded apace. Blockstone-lined banks, land drainage and work on the new by-pass have all had their damaging effects. Then weirs came into fashion! It is difficult to remember where the first one was constructed but it may have been just above Ynysmedw. Since then they have popped up all over the place.

They may look quite picturesque when new but just have a look at what happens when a few winter floods have exerted their power. The rubbish-laden blockstones are moved, smaller pebbles fill up the pools created by the weirs and the end result is a series of wide, shallow stretches - stagnant and unfishable during summer levels and providing perfect growing conditions for masses of foul algae. The only place possible to catch a fish is just under the displaced weir itself - if you can find one which doesn't have people climbing all over it, that is.

These weirs will often have to be repaired, the pools deepened, and this can only be done during low summer levels, *ie.* during the fishing season. Large diggers enter the water to do the job. For miles downstream the water is thick with mud settling on the stones suffocating insect life, lodging in the gills of fish already suffering from lack of oxygen caused by low water and algae. And this will have to be done time and again to keep the river looking manicured, artificial and safe for the pleasure of the general public. The more weirs, the more

disruption. Where will clear-water fishing be then?

In 50 years time will all this maintenance be viewed as a waste of cash and the river straightened to run down one side of the valley; concrete-lined with straight concrete weirs to control water flow? Not so far fetched as you may think. Los Angeles and several other US cities have already done it. Closer to home, just have a look at the Taff in Merthyr Tydfil where great strides have already been made in this direction.

Many of us can remember when the river was a place of retreat; a sanctuary to get away from other people (except brother anglers) and maybe even catch a fish or two. In recent years this sanctum has also been threatened. Gravel paths, tarmac cycle tracks and picnic areas are rapidly being developed for the great over-washed public to utilise during their increasing and often enforced leisure time.

Our valley is no exception. Already there is a picnic area above the Cinders Pool on the left bank with another being cleared on the right. A cycle path is planned to run the whole length of the valley (much is already in place) and an open-air leisure complex will shortly be made at Tarenni with parking for 100 cars, buildings for concessions and riverbank walks. And it won't stop there! The area of the Cinders is already plagued with stone-throwers, school trips, motorcycling, bathing, teaching dogs to swim and other activities. It is almost impossible to do any undisturbed fishing there now. Before long, most of our river may be like this.

All of which may simply be dismissed as the raving of a disillusioned old cynic who wants everything to return to "the good old days". Not so! There are very many other issues which threaten our sport but space will not permit a fuller list - and there are plenty of entries on that list. One thing is for sure; if we want to continue our enjoyment at the riverside we must become ever more vigilant as the

years roll by. When opposing interests clash over utilising the water the majority will always win - and anglers are not in the majority. The rest of the world wants a piece too and they'll get it eventually. There is no need for us to make it easy for them.

Solutions are not easy to find, so insidiously are policies enacted. Numbers of anglers are important, of course. It may be necessary to rethink permit prices to encourage more juniors and female anglers into the ranks. The fewer the members the weaker the Society. All alterations to the river should be savagely resisted as a matter of course no matter how superficially attractive they may seem at first. Those alterations will only be undertaken to promote other interests, not those of the angler. Angling convenience will always take a back seat when set against the need for safe, cheap land on the valley floor for industrial and housing development.

Any loss of amenity, no matter how slight, should be immediately pursued by a claim for compensation in order that anglers will henceforth be viewed as a force to be reckoned with - and consulted in the future. We will have to learn to be as selfish as those who damage our sport and strive to protect our waters from the depredations of others.

Please heed these warnings if the next 50 years is to be enjoyed to the same extent as the last, when hopefully a thriving Pontardawe and Swansea Angling Society will still be around to witness how wrong and misguided were the doom-laden predictions above. I hope so.

Good luck to the next generation. They'll need it!

Answers to the QUIZ:

NO	ANSWER
1	GEM Skues
2	Murragh
3	salmon 57; sewin 538
4	Eel
5	Salmo Trutta
6	£1,000
7	James Wright
8	Isaac Walton, 1653
9	47
10	Greenwell; Cochabonddu; Grizzle
11	Ynystanglws; 10 cumeecs
12	15th April and 7th October
13	£1891
14	Olive
15	Orkney
16	Kemp & Heddle
17	The Bolls
18	105 sq m / 272 sq km
19	Crayling
20	Salmo Gairdneri
21	Loch Awe; 19lb 10oz; none
22	Tyn-y-Cornel
23	33 ft
24	Chris Thomas, March 1961
25	salmon, rods, 7436; salmon, nets, 4385; sewin, rods, 20700; sewin, nets, 6192
26	Peter Ross
27	salmon, 9-13, usually 11; sewin, 13-16, usually 14
28	egg sac "tails"
29	Orl Fly; Greentail
30	00
31	Alexandra
32	RS Austin; a ram
33	Frank Swayer
34	Molly Sweet
35	Mayfly
36	Orri Vigfusson
37	Anglers' Conservation Association
38	Engineer
39	Tom Saville
40	Fly boxes
41	Bloodworm
42	Dr Bell
43	Kinross
44	TK Graham, R Christopher; K Linnard
45	1904
46	Tay
47	Scientific Anglers
48	Roger Daltrey
49	Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis; a salmon disease
50	0800 - 807060

TROUBLE AT THE TALBOT !

There was a "bit of bother" after one of the Half Moon competitions at the Teifi Pools in the late 70s. One of those involved (who wishes to remain nameless) takes up the tale:

The Talbot Hotel in Tregaron was full with some very thirsty fishermen that Sunday evening - Tregaron being usually very quiet on Sundays in those days. The refreshments had been organised by the Tregaron Angling Association and amongst the crowd was Moc Morgan and the local doctor - himself a keen angler. However, about 9.00 pm the merry gathering was rudely interrupted when about 20 policemen and women from all parts of Cardigan suddenly burst in and immediately began taking names.

There was panic everywhere - men half-choked on their chicken and chips and pints were surreptitiously hidden behind every flower pot, under tables, behind the piano.

Luckily, most of the Pontardawe club members knew the Talbot Hotel better than the bobbies and hastily made their escape via some of the lesser known bolt holes. Unfortunately, it is rumoured that one or two who refused to disown their beer were put into a little black book and became the subject of police prosecution.

Why all the fuss? you may ask. Well in those days Cardigan was a dry county and apparently the Talbot Hotel had not applied for the appropriate licence to cover the evening's arrangements. It then needed only a brief telephone call from one of the local inhabitants to put into practice the large scale police raid - second only in magnitude to "Operation Julie", the massive undercover drugs operation in the Tregaron area.

It is believed that all the fines were paid by the Talbot Hotel.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this magazine. We have enjoyed producing it and hope that you have made allowances for the fact that it's our first attempt.

If you would like us to repeat the exercise, whether on an occasional or on a regular basis, please let us know. We would welcome contributions of all kinds - recollections, information, photographs, etc.

Please send any contributions to the Secretary, Raymond Lockyer, 8 Bwlfa Rd, Ynystawe, Swansea SA6 5AL.