

December 2015



# Ceiriog Fly Fishers <sup>Limited</sup> Newsletter

## WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

With another season behind us we seem now to have had a number of successive years with extreme weather patterns as far as river levels and fishing conditions are concerned. Hopefully the 2016 season will revert to more normal river flows.

My own season suffered with a nasty fall down a Ceiriog riverbank in late April resulting in 12 weeks recovering from muscular strains. It made me think of ensuring that I should have a fully charged phone with me at all times when fishing and letting someone know which beat on the river I was planning to fish.

We learn more about the habits of Triploid stocked fish each year. Compared with wild fish they are less solitary and tend to shoal so making stocking much longer to do and they are more aggressive

Good fishing for 2016 and I look forward to meeting on the river bank and at the AGM

**David Palmer**



## EDITORS NOTES

Welcome to the latest edition of the CFFC Newsletter - but the first to be published on line.

We have made this change as our access to free web design and printing has had to end because of business pressures. Publishing the newsletter on line also gives us the chance of more frequent newsletters.

Since the 2015 AGM there have been some important developments in our financial position and on renegotiation of our water leases and details of these will be included in the subscription notice.

The club's river fishing has been stimulated by several new members whom we welcomed including Simon Hayes and Louis Noble. At the AGM Simon prompted the club to open an online Forum and then immediately set it up and it has been a great success. Simon has also written up his thoughts on his first season as a member and I have included some of his fine photos of the Ceiriog and his photo of the Baby Sun Fly.

Louis Noble is a well known and highly regarded game angling instructor and guide. Louis has been very active on the river and on the club's Forum where his postings on his fishing visits have been closely followed and admired by members. The exploits and catches of Louis' Baby Sun Fly became legendary so we asked Louis to write up this fly for the edition of the newsletter. Louis has also written up his thoughts on tactics best suited to the Ceiriog - these will be included in the next edition.

This newsletter is also a chance to thank Louis for generously giving one free lesson on techniques and river craft on the Ceiriog to those new members who join us with previous trout fishing experience.

Member contributions are always welcome for the newsletter and so I have had three poems written by Ginger Quill (aka Kenneth Jones). In this edition I have included his poem on grayling which has just been published in the Grayling Society Journal. His further two poems will be included in later newsletters

**Roger Greenway**



## DENBIGH & CLWYD ANGLING CLUB - RIVER WATERS

We have agreed that CFFC members will in 2016 continue to be able to fish the river waters of Denbigh & Clwyd AC including the Rivers Clwyd, Clywedog, Wheeler, Ystrad and Elwy. Denbigh & Clwyd AC are amalgamating with Bodewyddan Game Anglers which will create a new club - Vale of Clwyd Angling Club. Our water sharing agreement with the Clwyd club remains unchanged so we can continue to fish the same river waters on the Clwyd, Clywedog, Wheeler, Ystrad and Elwy as in the D&C AC arrangement.



## OUR FIRST SEASON ON THE CEIRIOG

Sonia and I have now been fly fishing for over 20 years together, mostly on two stretches of the Alyn and the Welsh Dee. When we fish a river we take time to learn how the river fishes, for the Alyn and the Dee this took us many years to get to a point where we felt comfortable and reasonably confident that we had a fair idea of what to do and what tactics suited us best. This knowledge served us well over the years providing many exciting days fishing and just being out on the river; taking in the atmosphere of the locations and meeting and talking to the many folk on the banks both fishers and others.

Having decided to move on from one of our Alyn clubs it was a case of where nearby would we **like** to fish? The Ceiriog had been considered in past seasons, when the joining fee was dropped I decided to join and start learning how to fish this new river.

The first trip of the season was made in the meadow above the Aqueduct - what a horrible day windy; cold and wet! A typical fishing day, with the river running fast but clear a weighted nymph fished upstream and the first fish of the season came to the net, Sonia managed to beat me that first trip with two fish!

As the months came and went various parts of the of the river were explored with both my Tenkara rod and traditional set up, my Tenkara rod being my rod of choice most times depending on the weather conditions and the state of the river. The Ceiriog is perfect for using a Tenkara rod matched with traditional English flies, a deadly combination which is the way I fish this style. With my 13ft rod holding all the line off the river, watching as my nymph or dry fly sits in back eddy on far side of the river with the movement of the water between having no effect on my dead drift, many fish fall for this deadly method! Sonia and I love to fish together, but due to a car accident this year Sonia has not been able to join in as much as she hoped, the few trips we had were very enjoyable, we both fish in different ways, I tend to cover a lot of water while Sonia stays in one place, her thoughts are why move if the fish are there? Many times she out fishes me, maybe we should learn from her?

Anyway the season is now over for the Brown trout but the river is still a magical place with the Lady of the Stream tempting us out on those cold frosty days, daring us to try and tempt her to take that Grayling bug that you tied the night before, anticipation is high as you cast into the cold clear water of the Ceiriog, the same as the anticipation of waiting for the opening day of the 2016 season and the first brown of the season, Magical!!

**Simon Hayes & Sonia.**



## ***Baby Sunfly – the birth of a pattern for all seasons***

Depending on your age you'll possibly have a different perspective on the number of patterns you need to fish a variety of rivers. Around the 1960's the fairly limited number of books would carry a short list of reliable general patterns. As time moved on the ever increasing number of authors and publications triggered a rapid rise in the quantity of patterns we daresn't leave home without and today we have a staggering assortment from which to choose.

I teach a lot of beginners how to fish but always meet the same response when flies are discussed, just which ones should they go out and buy. I always suggest that maybe half a dozen patterns carefully chosen is all they need, certainly in their first season. This comes as a welcome surprise but when I outline the main groups of naturals to be encountered over the season it all starts to make sense



Much valuable information on suitable patterns is to be had in the books of the past masters but when we talk about the Ceiriog and similar streams of the Welsh Marches we must include 'the fishing vicar', the Rev. Edward Powell who is the subject of that excellent book ***Orange Otter*** by Christopher Knowles. Born in 1888 and eventually settling in Munslow, near Ludlow he came late to fly fishing and from the 1920' – 50's he spent as much time as possible fishing the rivers and streams of Shropshire and the Marches. He regularly contributed to the publications of the day and some of his patterns were published in the 1949 edition of *A Dictionary of Trout Flies* by A.Courtney Williams. Through this notable book and other articles I became a disciple (not in the ecclesiastical sense) of Powell and have used several of his patterns for many years.

He is credited with twenty six patterns but favoured a mere half a dozen and my interest (as did his) lies mainly with Baby Sunfly (BSF), Paragon and the Doctor, all excellent Ceiriog patterns but my favourite will always be BSF. What a wonderful utility pattern. Powell was strongly influenced by the great Teifi angler Dai Lewis of Tregaron, whom he met in 1931 and who taught him how to make flies. Lewis had a pattern called Sunfly, a really large thing and Powell simply made it smaller and dispensed with the cree hackle, hence 'Baby' Sunfly. The original had two hackles, coch-y-bonddu and cree. Detractors of Powell accused him of simply copying or modifying other Lewis patterns and giving them publicity which Lewis never sought.

BSF, Paragon and Doctor were in fact generic patterns, and shared the same body fur although yellow was added to the Doctor. Powell came to the conclusion that all trout were interested in was a brown and black fly hence the success of the coch-y-bonddu hackle and practically black body fur. He classed it as an imitation of a black gnat and highly successful in April/May but I fish it all season as there are always dark flies about, especially terrestrials.



### **BABY SUN FLY DRESSING:**

**Hook: 12-16**

**Silk: brown or black**

**Whisks: several fibres of black cock, slightly long**

**Rib: tying silk, 3 turns**

**Body: dubbed rabbit's face, from triangle of nose & eyes, very dark, tied full**

**Hackle: coch-y-bonddu cock, or furnace, slightly long – minimum 6 turns.**

Regarding size, Powell was extremely fond of using large bushy dry flies, often two at once. Size twelve was normal but we must remember that the original Sunfly was considerably bigger. As Powell said, 'the smaller the stream, the larger the fly'. As I've reported on the CFFC Forum, I regularly use a s12 or even 10 on the Ceiriog and find it highly effective in the fast runs. In the absence of a hatch we know that trout are opportunistic feeders and simply won't let a tasty morsel go by. There is no problem with visibility in rough water and rises are very positive.

This has been my first Ceiriog season but I've had considerable success for many years on other streams and especially in s16, I even dress it down to s20 to imitate smuts. It's my first choice when casting onto slow moving pools in low water.

You can't buy these but it's an easy pattern to dress, don't make it too neat – the hackle should be over-length and as many turns as you can get, even using 2 hackles on the larger sizes. The body should be quite rough and I prefer a good bunch of slightly over-length tail whisks which aids floatation when greased.

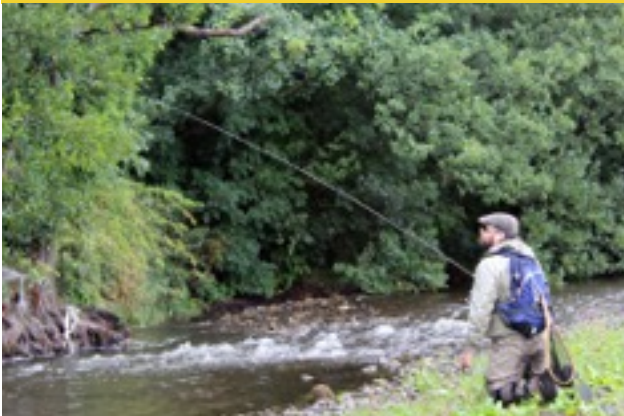
The body fur should be a black/dark brown mix – Powell took it from the triangle between a rabbit's nose and eyes. Trim off the grey surface fur and cut well down for the dark fur.

This is the original dressing but I'm sure that a convenient substitute will work. Good coch-y-bonddu/ furnace hackles can be hard to come by but a good substitute would be red game with black wound through it.

In conclusion, I would say that the BSF is my number one choice when fishing the Ceiriog or similar streams ( with a Grey Duster as number two) so I strongly recommend that if you haven't tried it already, as I know some of you have, then you consider it for 2016.

Tight lines !

**Louis Noble (orange otter)**



## The Lady of the Ceiriog Stream .....by Ginger Quill

The fresh river torrent hold any fly fisher's finest dream.  
A fish that is silvery bright, with a long dorsal gleam,  
Lady lies in the deeper passage rushes of an angler's stream.  
She positions lower in the faster water, closer to the bottom,  
And feisty puts up a corkscrew fight never to be forgotten.  
On brighter summer and autumn days she is highly established,  
Coming up to take top flies on the surface her rise is found

Lady's wish of repast is similar to her trout family cousin  
But there is a special collection of selectable flies to begin.  
Guidance does at times suggest a little bright colour to test,  
That brings attention to forefront, creating life's zest.  
But an exact natural imitation is perhaps the optimal prime,  
Select colour, shape and size of a pattern previously profound.  
At the best of the day it is whatever is seen to flitter around.

When the natural river flies are disappointing, not seen in flight,  
Then the grayling's own fancy style may result in a fight.  
There are dedicated known pattern names all tried and tested,  
Lady may not be left long down near the bottom well rested.  
The bright colour maybe said red but others say the purple,  
An Orange Otter may be right, for reasons far from simple.  
Any experimental may hook her and make your rod pound.

## TENKARA DAY ON THE CEIRIOG

In September CFFC was delighted to host a Tenkara Day led by member Louis Noble and including several club members and 7 paying guests all of whom shared a passion for this Japanese technique and all of whom were keen to use their skills on the Ceiriog.

The event was preceded by a prolonged dry spell which left the Ceiriog on the eve of the event at a very low level. When the intrepid Tenkara followers gathered at the Caffe Wylfa for breakfast and briefings the drought had broken overnight and heavy rain persisted or as Simon Hayes put it - "After many weeks of praying for rain, our wishes came true, on the wrong day."

Despatched along the length of CFFC waters and now in sunshine the day's Tenkara Day began and for much of the morning the river behaved itself reasonably with 50 or so fish caught and returned with catches on both dry fly and nymph.

Then the plans were dashed - the river rose rapidly from a low 0.19 on the Environment gauge to 0.40 in no time and the clear water turned dark grey and murky making fishing near impossible and no more fish were caught.

Everyone departed to the pub to round off the day with Louis remarking "How unlucky could we have got - but everyone really enjoyed the day. Our sincere thanks again for allowing the access, perhaps we can try again next Spring".