

Fowey Rivers Association

Newsletter 2018

2017 has seen 2 major developments on our river. The first is the stocking out of 27000 0+ salmon in the St Neot, and the second is the completion of the purchase of the Treworrey fishing in the Draynes valley by the FRA with the help of our two larger clubs. I would like to specifically thank Richard Grieve and all his volunteers for all their dedication and hard work in making the hatchery the success it is. Broodstock collection has been under way for the last 2 months and is now complete. Thanks to all who contributed fish, especially John Hake.

Following his retirement as secretary of the South West Rivers Association, Roger Furniss kindly agreed to become a director of FRA Ltd and he has agreed to be the hatchery lead. We are extremely grateful to have his expertise and experience to call on. You can read his report in the following pages.

The Treworrey fishing rights now belong to the FRA securing a large section of the Draynes valley as sanctuary in perpetuity. Special thanks to Paul Jordan for all the time he has put into this. Working parties organised by Chris Janes have done a huge amount of restoration and habitat work this year in the Draynes valley. Many thanks to Chris and all the volunteers for their hard work.

Westcountry Rivers Trust have been busy on the river improving habitat on the St Neot and undertaking a fry survey. Preliminary results from the fry survey are not encouraging as there were no salmon fry found in the Cardinham. This is usually one of the best salmon spawning sites. WRT discovered a huge trash dam across the lower river and this was almost certainly obstructing salmon passage. The Forestry Commission have now removed the obstruction. The full fry survey report will be available in late December and will be put on the website.

Many of you will be aware of the passing of Bill Elliot. Bill cared deeply about our river and his legacy is the Draynes sanctuary. He was a stalwart of both the FRA and LDAC. We will all miss him.

Finally, huge thanks to Jon Evans our secretary, without whom little would happen. May I wish you all the compliments of the season and tight lines for 2018.

Bill Smith, Chairman

Back to my roots. By Steven Dean

Renewing my LDAC membership after a break of around 15 years has reminded me how enjoyable it is to spend time on the banks of the river Fowey. I have been a keen angler on the river from the age of 5 years old until I left the county for university and then overseas travel. My childhood memories of fishing the Fowey, learning the skills of perfectly placing a cast to a fish and watching in awe as the migratory salmon and seatrout leap Golitha Falls has prompted me to once again fish this beautiful river. As a regular sea fisherman, it has proved to be a rewarding return to my fishing roots.

I have been back on the banks for 2 years now and have enjoyed a fantastic season this year. On one particular day I snuck away from work (the perks of being self employed) and fished for what was only an hour or so but proved worthwhile. It was late in the summer, the river had risen a foot over night and was just beginning to edge back. It had that lovely dark ale colour to it and I was eager to start fishing as the anticipation of catching a fish was high.

I dropped in at the St Neot/Fowey junction and began working my lure in what was still a decent flowing river for summer. Within minutes I was in to my first fish. A seatrout of around 3lb. It was a great early reward to start with and was swiftly released back to the river. I continued to fish upstream towards Doublebois Bridge and was soon into my second fish. "Yes! A salmon" I cheered, in fact it turned out to be another seatrout, around 5lb and in full fighting spirit it careered downstream. This was a cracking fish and it was great to see it swim back off fit and healthy. With only a short time left to fish I tried a few other runs and had a few hits on my lure. Every cast felt like I was going to get lucky and it wasn't long before the rod was well bent and my adrenaline pumping. Another seatrout hit my rapala, this time a chunky 7 to 8 pounder was racing ahead of me upstream. I couldn't believe my luck. After a short tussle I was able to land my personal best seatrout and finished what was probably my best day ever on the river. With a solid kick of the tail I returned the fish back to the river and headed for the car, happy with my trio of seatrout.

It's not always about catching fish though, escaping to the river for a few hours offers a great deal more than fishing. The Fowey river bank has a diverse wildlife population and that means there's always something to see. From otters to kingfishers and the odd deer if you're quiet. The importance of the river and its health goes far beyond the fish that swim in it and as an angler I get to share some of the delights that come with being down in the woods and on the river bank.

As this year winds down I look forward to next season with the hope of having more time to fish and explore the river Fowey further. Tight lines. Steve



WATER FOR GROWTH



St Neot Works Overview.

Timing of releases from Colliford Dam influence the St Neot River annually. A reduction of flows and flood peaks during winter months and adversely an increase of periodically enhanced spring, summer and autumn discharges impact on juvenile fish growth and increase the possibility of recently emerged fish being displaced (APEM 2016 report). Work on the St Neot has been funded by SWW and is planned alongside multiple small-scale habitat restoration works for the Water For Growth (W4G) project. One aim is to increase light levels over shaded riffles and increase potential habitat and food sources for salmonid fry. Reductions in tunnelling effects, through the removal of selected bankside vegetation can increase the levels of incident light reaching the river, O'Grady 1993 recommends that selective clearance of excessive 'shrubbery' be regarded as a priority for management of salmonid rivers. The addition of in-river habitat will add shelter for fish and other organisms likely to be displaced during times of increased turbulence and flow rates when water is released from the dam.

Coarse Woody Material (CWM) Additions.

The CWM additions have been designed in a manner where they are secure but allowed to move dynamically with changes in flow level. This will provide habitat for juvenile salmonids during a range of flow events; they have been placed in areas of slack water so they will also gather material and improve bank stability.



Colliford Hatchery Success

We have now completed the first full year of operation of Colliford Hatchery with great success. You may remember that the hatchery refurbishment and operating costs are funded by South West Water to assist with the St Neot salmon population. The St Neot now produces virtually no naturally spawned salmon believed to be because of the artificial flow regime – low in Autumn/Winter when water is being stored, high in summer when water is released for abstraction at Restormel.

In September we stocked 27,000 0+ salmon at 19 locations in the St Neot taking the opportunity of a 'low flow window' - given the river flow levels, SWW were able to support Restormel WTW with water from Siblyback rather than Colliford. 8,000 were adipose fin-clipped and anglers will be asked to look out for fin-clipped fish from 2019 onwards - some of the fish may smolt in 2018 and return as grilse in 2019 but it is expected that the majority will smolt in 2019. The Environment Agency is hoping to install a smolt trap in the lower St Neot and West-country Rivers Trust will be surveying juvenile numbers every year.

This year's broodstock collection by anglers has gone well with 10 hen fish, mostly over 8 lbs, safely on site.

The success is down to a number of complementary factors:

- A first class facility thanks to the work of SWW and their contractors;
- Adequate operating budget provided by SWW;
- Support from the EA, especially on the various essential permits;
- The professional approach of Richard Grieve, our Hatchery Manager;
- The support of Justin Ruscombe-King, our aquaculture adviser;
- A brilliant team of volunteers helping to run the hatchery, catch broodstock and stock their 'babies'.

The current SWW funding ends in 2020 but they have already indicated their intention to extend this for at least five more years. They are also investigating ways in which the flow regime can be altered to support more natural spawning.

Our thanks go to all who have contributed to the success.

Roger Furniss – FRA Ltd Hatchery Lead

Colliford hatchery cont.



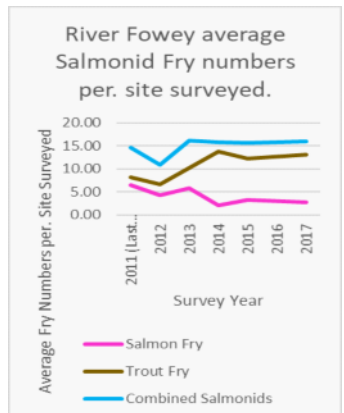
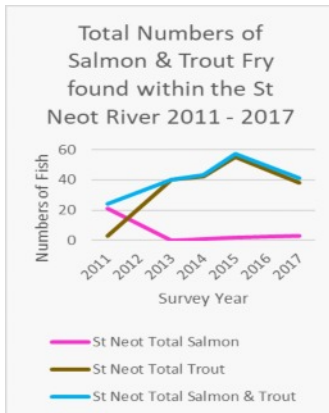
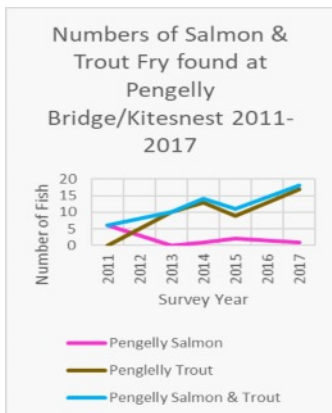
Stripping a fish and stocking out the resulting fry



Water for Growth cont.

2017 St Neot Electrofishing (EF) Results.

The 3 charts below show the WRT EF results* from 2011 – 2017. The left-hand chart specifically compares results from the Pengelly Bridge/Kitesnest site (where Habitat work was carried out in March 2017) with the results from the St Neot & Fowey Catchment as whole from 2011 – 2017. Since work was carried out to increase light levels and add CWM Salmonid numbers have increased significantly at the Pengelly Bridge site which is encouraging.



*A full WRT Electrofishing Report will be distributed in due course.

Bill Eliot – a tower of strength



We were saddened to hear of the passing of Bill Eliot, from West Looe, at the end of October 2017. As many will know, Bill was Honorary Secretary of LDAC for over ten years and was the prime mover in setting up the Draynes Sanctuary. He helped to establish and protect the spawning areas the sea trout currently enjoy. Bill recognised the value of sea trout to the Fowey and ensuring the strength of the stocks. He was a strong advocate of us having good relations with the farmers in the Draynes valley and encour-

aged us to buy up some of the spawning and sanctuary water when it became available. He was made an Honorary Life Member of LDAC on his retirement from the Committee.

Bill was always a strong supporter of the FRA and its aims and he never missed an AGM. His legacy lives on today both in the Draynes and in the LDAC and we should all pause to remember and thank him for his great foresight and unstinting efforts over the years.

Fowey Rivers Association officers

Chairman: Dr Bill Smith

Treasurer: Paul Jordan

Secretary: Jon Evans

Polgeel, Polbrock, Washaway, Bodmin PL30 3AN
01208 812447 / 07732 921015 jonrevans@aol.com

FRA Website <http://www.riverfowey.org/>

There is all sorts of information there - Counter figures, Fry survey results, River development plans, Newsletters, AGM and committee minutes, as well as news pieces with all the latest information.

The 2018 AGM will be held on 11th April 2018 at 7.30 p.m. at Boconnoc
by courtesy of Mrs. Fortescue.

Beer and pasties will be available and everyone is welcome.

Treasurer's Report: (1 January 2017 – 1 December 2017)

FRA Ltd

- The Colliford Hatchery has completed its first year of operations and has performed on budget. There were occasions when cash flow management was required as expenditures rose beyond grant income and FRA was required to make several interest free loans to sustain operations. These have since been repaid.
- Annual accounts (for year ending 30th June 2016) were submitted to the HMRC and Companies House ahead of the March 2017 deadline.
- The annual expenditure summaries for year ending 30th June 2017 have been compiled and sent to the Company accountants. At the time of writing we await the final accounts for our internal approval and subsequent submittal to HMRC and Companies House.
- FRA Ltd income for the period reported as £22,500.00 and expenditure for the same period was £21,559.91p: showing a small surplus of £940.09p.
- FRA Ltd cash balance currently stands at £4,493.99p. (This sum includes the SWW grants for hatchery operations through January 1st 2018 and will likely be spent by year-end).
- FRA Ltd will continue to manage all hatchery operations within the £30,000 pa SWW grant.

FRA

- FRA commissioned the 2017 fry survey with WRT (£5,200.00) and completed the purchase of the Treworrey sanctuary (£15,618.00) during the year.
- FRA reported income for the period was £19,527.00p and expenditure for the same period was £18,388.00p: showing a surplus of £1,139.00p
- FRA has significant commitments during the next 3 months:
 - Payment II for the 2017 WRT fry survey (£2,600).
 - 5 years rental for Draynes sanctuary areas (£4,678.50p) due February 2018 (for period 2018-2023).
- FRA cash balance currently stands at £24,177.90p.
- The FRA remains financially sound and can meet all forthcoming commitments in 2018.

4. FFRG Reserves (1st December 2017)

As at 1st December 2017 the FFRG Grant Reserve balance stood at £3076.00p.

P Jordan
FRA Treasurer

BANKER'S ORDER FORM

To the Manager

.....Bank

.....

.....

.....

Account Name.....

Account No.....

Sort Code.....

Please pay on the(day)
of.....(month).....(year)

and each month/year, thereafter, the sum of £....., until further notice.

To: Fowey Rivers Association

At: Barclays Bank plc
Saltash Branch

Account No: 40784370

Sort Code: 20-50-40

This cancels any previous standing order paid under the same reference.

SIGNED.....

DATE.....

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

Paul Jordan, Treasurer, Fowey Rivers Association Limited

Lower Hollycombe, Drift Lane, Twowatersfoot, Liskeard, PL14 6HH