

# **RIVER FYNN FISHING CLUB**

ADVISORY VISIT REPORT  
Undertaken on behalf of the Wild Trout Trust

By

Ron Holloway MIFM 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002-



**Fig.1. River Fynn**

R H Associates  
Magdalenehall Farm  
St Boswells  
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## **RIVER FYNN ADVISORY VISIT**

**13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2002**

This Advisory visit was undertaken by Ron Holloway ( R H Associates) on behalf of the Wild Trout Trust (WTT) in the company of Hugh Philbrick (Chairman of Fishing Club) Ron Gibbons ( Hon. Sec.) and four Club Members.

### **The objectives of this Advisory Visit:**

Were to look at the River Fynn within the boundaries of the Club waters and to pinpoint and identify any problems there may be in the brown trout habitat which is controlling the natural trout breeding and holding potential of the river and then to recommend such measures that could be undertaken by the Club to mitigate or remedy any problems found during the visit.

### **SITE ONE – Martlesham Bridge upstream to A12 (T) Tunnel.**

From Martlesham Bridge upstream there is adequate to good holding cover for trout of all age groups – i.e., swim-up fry to three year old. Aquatic weed growth is good with good rununculus dominant. Substrates along this stretch show good gravel for trout though on closer inspection, the trapped silt and fines would constrain the

incubation of trout eggs. Channel width is fine, though there is one area of serious erosion which needs attention (Fig2).



**Fig.2 Erosion**

It is suggested the foot of the eroding bank is protected with a line of faggots (brushwood bundles) that are firmly fixed to the river bed, tight in under the erosion point. Alternatively, a line of substantial tree trunks be pegged in, in a similar fashion, both these methods would protect the vulnerable bank from further erosion. Other than this, trout holding habitat is reasonably good along this stretch. Serious consideration however, should be given to protecting the river from the surface run-off from the arable activity in the field adjacent to the river. The river is suffering from large inputs of sediment that originates from these adjacent land-use practices. It is suggested that the Club liaise with the farmer/landowner, to agree to fence off a strip of land along the field edge ( see Fig.3) to create a natural buffer zone of vegetation. The strip of land should be between eight and ten metres in width and once established this would filter out a substantial amount of surface run-off which is

transporting sediment into the river. If livestock is not an issue, then merely retreat cultivation back by the eight to ten metres and allow natural vegetation to regenerate. Consultation with DEFRA and FWAG for advice on buffer zones and for the



**Fig.3 Field Strip**

financial grants available to undertake such operations which are available to farmers and landowners is recommended.

Several of the hurdle flow deflectors along this stretch are disintegrating or being washed out by high flows. These need to be removed and replaced by more substantial structures of a triangular shape which should then be infilled with chalk, gravel or soil and then planted with natural vegetation. The triangular shape of these structures will help to reduce bank erosion downstream by directing the current towards the centre of the river. It is also suggested that several pairs of these groynes are installed opposite each other thus creating a channel restriction and speeding up the flow which will scour the river bed and create useful trout holding habitat downstream of the structure. (See Fig.4)



**Fig.4 - Groynes**

Whatever instream structures are decided upon, it is essential that the Club discuss the project with the Environment Agency Fisheries Officer who has to consider consents for the installation of any structure and he will give further advice on the siting and construction.

#### **SITE TWO Above A12 Tunnel.**

The silt beds that have appeared in the stream channel just upstream of the tunnel are now being colonised by natural vegetation and should be left untouched as they are naturally narrowing the channel and consequently speeding up the flow which keeps sediment in suspension and will, in turn, keep the river bed clean and attractive for trout.

The programme of thinning out the tree cover along this stretch should be continued. It is suggested that a 60/40 ratio between cover and light be aimed at, i.e. cut 60% and leave 40%. This will allow sunlight into the river and encourage instream weed growth in a stretch that has very little juvenile, or adult, trout holding capacity. There

are very few places where a young, or adult, trout can hide from predators such as herons (and anglers!).



**Fig.5 Instream Weirs and Buffer Zone**

It is strongly recommended that this stretch is NOT stocked until sufficient trout holding habitat has been installed, or has been naturally formed by annual strong weed growths. Furthermore, to improve holding capacity, a series of weirs constructed from logs or imported stone, be built which would create deeper holding areas above and useful, well aerated, scour pools below, which would be attractive to trout. Again, in this instance, plans and designs for such weirs and the materials recommended for use in construction can be obtained from your local EA Fisheries Officer with whom on site discussions are most essential.

As at Site One, the arable fields beside the river along this stretch (Fig.4) causes and creates sediment problems in the river (see silt accumulations just above A12 tunnel). Suggest similar discussions with farmer/landowner as described for Site One.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS:**

There is anecdotal evidence which suggests a dearth of insect life in the river. Therefore, it is recommended that the Club request the EA to undertake an indepth macro invertebrate study to identify and quantify the status of the insect life in the river which can then be compared with historical studies. The results will indicate the health and condition of the river and its ability to hold stocks of trout and may possibly reveal the limiting factors in establishing a stock of self sustaining trout. The river, as seen, in my opinion has the potential capacity to hold adult trout and juveniles. However, there are concerns as to the numbers of trout stocked at any one time. The holding cover is very limited in Spring, so if the full season stocking is undertaken too early, there would be a grave danger that many of these stocked trout will disappear either downstream to deeper water or down the throats of hungry herons or mink as they have nowhere to hide. Until holding cover is enhanced it is suggested that stocking be staggered throughout the whole season which should increase the successful angling opportunities for the members.

### **SITE THREE - The Grove, Little Bealings.**

The River (stream) through this property has great potential to hold trout and, with help, could also afford good spawning opportunities for adult trout. The whole stretch through the property has, at this time, only holding capacity for approximately 50 adult trout at most. Stocking with larger numbers would be wasteful as there is just not the volume of flow, or sufficient natural holding cover, which would allow fish to become permanent residents. However, if stocked little and often, quality fly fishing is a strong possibility here but only after some work is completed to protect and enhance trout holding habitat.

#### **Suggestions:**

The cattle crossing point requires protecting by fencing both sides to a reasonable width that will reduce bank trampling yet allow adequate access for animals to cross (See photo showing possible design of cattle crossing)



#### **Cattle Crossing.**

For the rest of the stream, it is recommended that the whole length be fenced off on both sides to a distance of six to eight “country paces”. Three strand, high tensile wire, fixed to 4” diameter posts or a more aesthetic post and rail fence could be used.

Once the stream margins have been protected from grazing stock, the ground will rapidly regenerate natural growth. It is recommended that a cut path be established and maintained between the fence and river margin on at least one side of the stream to allow fishing access. In the height of summer, some instream trimming of overhanging vegetation may well have to be undertaken if fly fishing access is to be maintained.

All in all, this site has wonderful potential to establish a self sustaining stock of brown trout, as once protected, there is ample spawning opportunity available for trout in the shallow, gravel areas. Once the stream has been protected and the vegetation matures, this will increase cover for juvenile trout and afford habitat for adult trout and, furthermore, the growth will also protect the fish from heron predation and encourage terrestrial insect life – good food for fish!



**Fencing Protection Required.**