

Fly by Night

If you have been to the annual Shipton Ball, you will know that Gordon Halliday, as auctioneer of the donated goodies, expertly plays on our emotions. It is all too easy to find oneself bidding, in my case for that most girly of pursuits, a day's fly-fishing. WHAT!?



ghillie, staggering under a wicker basket from which he disgorged much Gin and Tonic and for some unfathomable reason, packets of Bath Olivers. Whilst Colin and I thrashed hopelessly from the bank, the ghillie quietly siphoned my husband off

downstream, where with his chest waders and wonderful casting strokes he was quite at home.

Tying One On

Now my fishing experience is limited and undistinguished. The first venture, in my early twenties was accompanying two expert fly-fishermen, to a reservoir near East Grinstead. In the pub, the conversation was all about tying flies and what fly would prove totally irresistible to brown trout. Was it the Flash Damsel Fly (no better than she ought to be) the Red-Beaded Nymph (overdressed) or the Black Bushy Buzzer Fly?

The next trip with my husband was a little boat fishing for rainbow trout in Ireland. On our return to the hotel that night there were surprisingly no *little fishies on a little dishy* in the hall, until my arrival with three beautiful rainbow trout. Over dinner that night, the owner, much impressed, came to inquire as to what fly I had used to catch these spectacular fish. I was about to reply "Oh I was just trolling a line" when a sharp kick under the table silenced me and a far more impressive but less truthful answer was given.

In Scotland, on the River Don, we had moved up in the world, drinks came not in cans but accompanied by a very superior

Upstream or Down?

Down through the woods stomped an elderly gentleman kitted out in proper tweeds. Gazing at Colin in horrified disbelief he bellowed "I say, are you going upstream or down?" A look of total incomprehension on Colin's face gave way to the faintest glimmer of understanding, "Oh, I'm going downstream," he answered whilst starting to move decisively upstream. "I've never seen anything like it in my life," puffed Colonel Blimp as he disappeared rapidly from our tainted presence.

Then there was the time at a grand fishing lodge in New Zealand, on the green waters of the Waikato River. I found myself taking a lesson in casting, successfully catching one angry duck, a few feathers and a large amount of an inconveniently placed tree.

The next and possibly final instalment of my fishing career will be a fishing day in the Cotswolds, where of course I will catch a beautiful brown trout and he will be THAT big!

Liz Clarke-Watson