
GAIA at GRAFHAM.

By Andrew Moss



I found myself visited by the muse on the drive home.

The A14 has that effect on me—anything to provide distraction from its tedium. It seemed a good idea at the time.

“The gods had granted us a gift: a day afloat on Grafham; good cloud cover, generous hosts, gregarious GWFFA guys partnering up with garrulous GAIA geezers, the promise of a good-humoured day.

Giddy with anticipation we gathered by the gritty shoreline, we cast aside geriatric niggles. Our generous hosts graciously gave of their time and guile, offering guidance and germane advice in a genial, gentlemanly manner. A great day out beckoned.

The gamesome gang got aboard, gliding over the griseous waters, gadding about searching for fish, G-Buoy glistening in the distance.

Graceful arcs were drawn, flies were guzzled, gut-wrenching moments followed as glittering fish threw gleaming droplets of spray, graphic moments etched on memory.

The morning guttered to a close: stomachs growled, pairs of anglers gyred toward the Lodge, grateful for a for a gustatory interlude.

Gourmands groaned as Greene King, Old Golden Hen, and Maldon Gold beers were glugged, washing down giant pork pie with gooseberry

chutney garnish.

And then we go again, back out on the water until the gloaming and marina light beckons us in at the end of a gratifying, often gruelling, but grand day out.”

It’s ultimately satisfying how the germ of an idea can develop and bear fruit. Christopher Faulkner (with both his GAIA and GWFFA Captain’s hats on) and I had pushed this idea around back in January at the Eastern Region pike fishing social (it’s still ‘fishing’ from my point of view, three iterations and only two tentative pulls to show for my efforts to date).

Grafham Water Fly Fishers’ Association hosts ‘social’ sessions for anglers who want to get to grips with the somewhat daunting expanse of these 1500 acres. Putting GAIA and GWFFA members in one boat was an opportunity too good to miss. After comparing various diaries and lists of commitments we settled on 21 September, a usually productive time as you enter that shrimp and fry-bashing time of the season.

We had coffee and bacon rolls to lay a foundation for the day. Then an excellent informative briefing from Christopher and Chris Bobby (manager and team coach of the England Ladies Fly Fishing team) covering likely tactics, flies and tackle set up. We had a wealth of knowledge to draw on and prepare us for the day ahead. Our party



presented an interestingly mixed bag of novice and more the experienced: Christopher and I had put some thought into the pairings before the event so that there was a good match of needs and resources. Everyone caught fish: the

biggest two fell to Steve Cracknell (4lb 9oz), my GWFFA partner for the day and to GAIA member Paul Hughes (5lb 5oz), both cracking grown-on fully-finned specimens.

The day unfolded along the (admittedly, dreadfully prolix) lines above: the weather cooperated by sending a thunderstorm round us to the south and providing a good breeze. This was a thoroughly enjoyable, informative and productive day that was appreciated by all. Everyday can be an opportunity to learn, whether through novelty or a more focussed examination of technique, and today ticked a number of boxes on the CPD list.

My thanks to the Christophers F and B and all of the GWFFA team who helped on the day and made it the success it was.

We'll be discussing it again at or before the next January outing (maybe I'll catch a pike this time?) and certainly we will aim do it again next year.