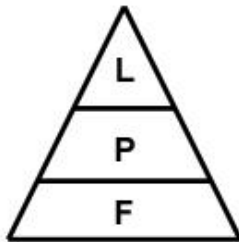


Invicta Winter Meeting: 15th November 2018 – Stuart Wardle

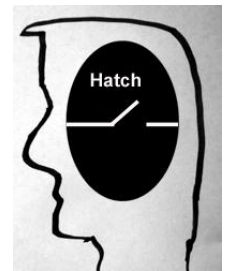
Stuart has been a fly fisher for more than 35 years based in County Durham and has access to some of the best fly fishing for trout and grayling in the North of England. He is an approved Guide for Tenkara Centre UK and is a Simms Pro-Guide. He is a fully qualified coach and internationally experienced fly fisher, England Rivers Team Manager and Member of the current 2018 England Commonwealth Fly Fishing Team.

I am glad somebody wrote that introduction as I arrived a bit late but I did catch a glance of a triangle on a flip chart which was subdivided into - location (L)- presentation (P) - fly (F), which together, according to Stuart, contribute to confidence. Stuart reckoned that the top anglers have the ability to effectively assimilate the available information to



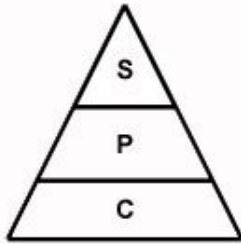
utilise on a session. Hence, they take to the water in a happy state. He described it as “getting into the zone”. Another drawing split the brain into two parts: the *conscious* dealing relatively slowly with every day activities: and the *subconscious* controlling bodily functions such as heartbeat, breathing and temperature. Also, in the *subconscious* are features which control the senses such as smell, sight and hearing. These may be critical in identifying changes in the fishing scene which could be vital in affecting the angler’s response.

Stuart imagined that a hatch existed between the two levels of consciousness which, should it open, facilitates the migration of subconscious knowledge. The angler has then “entered the zone” and should adapt his/her strategy according to the conditions. The general consensus amongst the audience of mere mortals, even fed with this info, why they do nothing about it was that we can’t be arsed! Even the mighty have their moments as Stuart related the time when he was dropping take after take only to eventually inspect the fly and find that the point had broken off! In contrast the likes of our Keith Gilchrist is reputed to change location and presentation very quickly in order to find the fish. I think he bagged up in the recent Hinkley Shield by 11am!



It may seem contradictory to these theories, that Stuart regularly uses a Wet Cell Hi-D line as a first choice anywhere in the World. He pointed out that it was so versatile such that it could be used for many styles of presentation from dabbling in the surface to scraping the bottom, on the drop or simply hanging. He recommended a pale-yellow winged booby as deadly at Grafham – better start tying!

He is definitely a fan of tiny flies on still waters as well as rivers, by what he meant down to 22’s. Break-offs are minimised by the use of a long leader (24ft) on still waters, progressively tapered to something like a metre of a 0.10-0.15mm point. Flies are attached using a free-swinging knot known as the Perfection loop (<https://www.animatedknots.com/perfection/index.php>). Stuart likes to cast so that the leader lies in snake-like folds rather than in a straight line, which avoids the drag induced by wave action. Stuart pointed out that the closer the fish is to the surface, the narrower the window of its vision becomes. Hence there may be enormous differences in the effectiveness of say a traditional CDC pattern with the hook in a vertical plane and say a Shipman’s which may be floating in the surface film. Stuart recommended a book by Vince Marinaro “In the Ring of the Rise” (available from Amazon) but also look at the U-Tube film on [Pinterest https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/video-trout-catch-fly-marinaros](https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/video-trout-catch-fly-marinaros) for a full explanation.

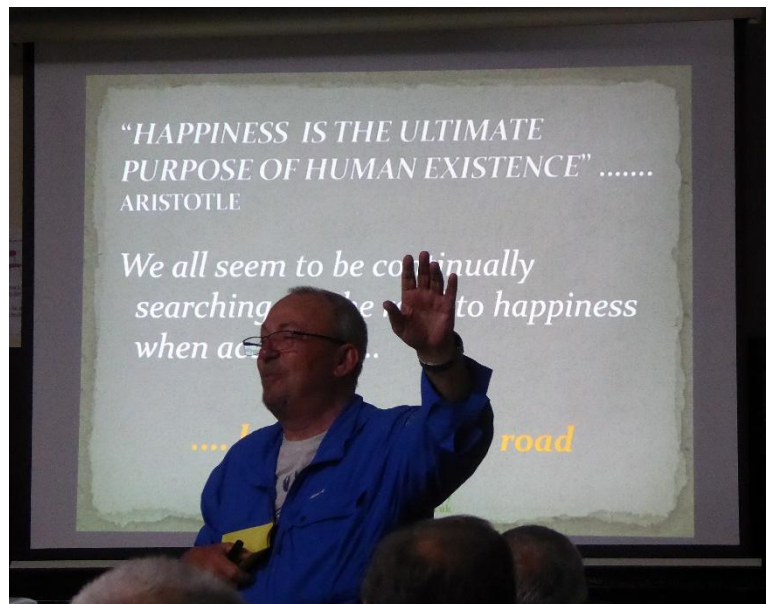


When it came to selecting flies, he seemed initially to have a view that any pattern will do - well not quite - as it was all defined in another triangle highlighting size(S), profile(P) and colour(C). This ranks size as the critical factor, colour the least. Profile includes presentation as it can easily influence sinking rate – think PTN with a Hares Ear. The sink rate can be increased by using several flies close together on the leader. Finer leaders sink faster than those with a heavier gauge. Although colour was rated least important, he does

carry a range of nymphs for river fishing with a variety of tungsten beads coloured gold, silver, copper and black. I think he was telling us that he has a preference for generic patterns rather than exact imitation.

A slide show initially highlighted the developments which have occurred over the years. Isaac Walton would use a long rod, no reel and a horsehair line. Gradually various timbers took over including greenheart and bamboo. More recently high-tech composites have reigned supreme for rods. I was shocked to hear that the Tenkara style has almost died out in the UK especially as one of our members used it to catch a 4lb trout from the centre of

Cambridge. Lines have developed from horsehair through silk and now an incredible range of PVC lines with different profiles and sinking rates. We are spoilt for choice with monofilament and I noted that Stroft came at the end of his development list. Is this the state of the art? I wonder how many in the audience use this? Books have multiplied. The quality of the photography and the excellence of the reproduction today is amazing. One of the books, “Modern Nymphing” was almost certainly a DVD but who cares?



We now delved into philosophy. Why is there all this development and why are we fishing? Are we only seeking success? What is success? Most thought it is different for each angler. Some like winning, whereas others like the tranquillity of the environment. I don't think I have been to a fishing meeting or any other for that matter where Aristotle raised his head. Apparently (<https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/aristotle/>) he reckoned that *happiness is the ultimate purpose of human existence*. From this Stuart deduced that happiness must be a component of angling success. The celebrated American poet Maya Angelou, stated that (<https://www.goalcast.com/2017/04/03/maya-angelou-quotes-to-inspire-your-life/>) “*Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and, liking how you do it*”. And if that was not enough, Stuart shot us the quote from Robert R. Updegraff, “*Happiness is to be found along the way, not at the end of the road for then the journey is over and it is too late*”. Should I share a boat with this guy?

If you want funding from the Lottery or Sport England then you have to show a capability to successfully represent England. Stuart has listened to Dave Brailsford who, as

Performance Director, masterminded the success of the UK track cycling team in winning 8 golds at the London Olympics. He is most well known for his strategy of “marginal gains” which has been applied to many other sports and companies: angling was no exception. The starting point is core competencies. Discussions coordinated by the Angling Trust with top anglers and coaches concluded that there were 4 subjects worthy of investigation but subdivided these into many sections.

Mental: e.g. Ability to work and contribute in a team environment

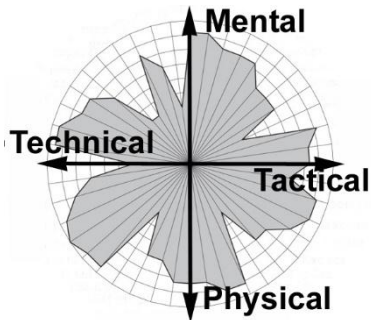
Tactical: e.g. Decision making and adaptability.

Watercraft.

Physical: e.g. Overall fitness and well-being.

Technical: e.g. Casting and presentation methods.

Knowledge of the rules!



These could be presented graphically in order to simplify self-analysis and identify strengths and weaknesses. The example shown is one I made up but with guidance provided from the DFF web site. Stuart definitely said that the angler should concentrate on reinforcing strengths and not weaknesses. I

cannot imagine that working for cyclists? Nevertheless, this is a very interesting subject outside the scope of this note.

You might wonder what this guy has been up to in order to generate such a unique talk? He spent 27 years in public service working in the legal and risk management field followed by another 2½ years in a private outfit. 7½ years ago he started up The Durham Fly Fishing Co., initially with the intention of giving it a year but it is still running. He claimed that the company was not especially profitable but enjoyable and provided sufficient funds for an annual trip to Colorado. Nice mission statement “*My aim is to exceed your expectations*”. He has access to over 50 rivers within a 90-minute drive of home which is nearer Hartlepool than Durham! Please look at his website www.durhamflyfishing.co.uk. Study in particular “Useful Info’ Technical” where there is one of the most in-depth articles I have ever read on Tenkara fishing.

After our exceptional competitive season, I do not think we are necessarily looking to change the selection process based on these principles other than they provide food for thought. For the time being, participation does not require a self-assessment form!!

DG Jones 18th Nov 2018
