

# DIDN'T THEY DO WELL

Trout match held in Spain

**TO FISH for your country or win a national championship is a proud moment and the pinnacle of achievement for many trout anglers — myself included.**

Many competitions comply with international rules which briefly mean you must use a full fly-line, floating or sinking, in front of a broadside drifting boat.

Two international matches are held each year with England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland sharing the venues. This year it was the turn of Lough Conn to stage the Spring international — and England were clear winners.

Coinciding with the Conn match were the World Fly Fishing Championships, held on the River Tormes in central Spain. The England five-man team, chosen from the Confederation's Brenig team, were Dennis Buck, Mike Smith, Mike Childs and myself, plus Tony Pawson and David Swatland from the Salmon and Trout Association.

The river's wild brown trout had been augmented by some freshly stocked browns and we realised that these stockies were only in certain sections of the river.

Our team suffered a serious setback when Mike Childs broke his arm and ankle at a bullfight. Bulls were running the ring and members of the crowd volunteered to be charged at.

Some young men, who had visions of being matadors one day, were in the ring, so too were members of the Luxembourg and French world fly-fishing teams. One lone British

by **BOB CHURCH**

spirit, Mike Childs, said: "There's no Englishman in the ring — I'm going to have a go". Jumping from the high wall into the ring he landed badly on his ankle and fell back, hitting his arm on the wall. David Swatland had to stand in and fish as Mike was in hospital for the rest of the week.

The draw favoured the Italians. Tony Pawson and Dennis Buck had favoured spots in the first four-hour sessions and made it pay, by taking 12 and 13 fish respectively.

David Swatland had five from a reasonable peg, but Mike Smith and I drew badly, Mike not catching, while I took one good wild fish which put me first in the poor "A" section.

We were lying second after this round. In the next session Tony and I had five each from moderate pegs, while David took one good wild fish from a poor peg. Dennis and again poor Mike had no-hoper swims.

At the start of the final round we were clinging to second place. I was happy with my draw near a bridge where I had practised and caught a few. Tony was now very confident, even though his last spot had produced two



● **THE smiling England team show off their spoils. Left to right: Mike Smith, Nottingham; Dennis Buck, Southport; Tony Pawson, Winchester; Bob Church, Northampton and Mike Childs, Kenilworth.**

blanks to previous competitors.

He had checked the scores and found the Italians had taken 16 from the peg downstream in the first round. Tony did very well, getting another seven fish, while I caught ten but unfortunately had to return four as they were just undersize.

Dennis was a hero, taking four wild fish from a "no-hope" area and with two more blanks this gave us a team place of runners-up with the Italians clear winners. France were third, Poland

fourth, and Spain fifth, followed by Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland.

At 62 years old, Tony Pawson was the oldest of all the competitors, but a very popular winner of the individual event. Certainly this is the best performance yet by an English team. Next year's championships will be fished in Poland hopefully in 1986 in England.

● **NEXT week Bob visits a brand-new trout fishery in South Wales.**

England  
Dennis Buck, Bob Church, Mike Childs, Tony Pawson, Mike Smith & David Swatland (captain/reserve).

1. Italy
2. England
3. France
4. Poland
5. Spain
6. Belgium
7. Luxembourg
8. Holland

Individual World Champion: Tony Pawson (England)



**THIS is the team that almost gave us a taste of world glory three years ago, when we finished runners up to Italy on the River Tormes in Spain. That's our best performance to date — but we aim to go one**

**better this time. The 1984 team is, from left ... Mike Smith, Nottingham; Dennis Buck, Southport; Tony Pawson, Winchester; Bob Church, Northants; Mike Childs, Kenilworth.**

## Winning A World Championship: Spain 1984

By Tony Pawson

You need a lot of luck to win a World Championship and I had more than my reasonable share in Spain in 1984. The Tormes River near Salamanca is noted as a dry fly trout river in which success usually depends on using very small flies and identifying exactly those on which the fish are feeding. But that May summer came late to Spain with the area covered in snow a few days before we arrived and the Tormes running high, coloured and cold. So in practice we found that sinking lines and size 10 flies, such as Black Pennells and Bibios, were more effective than dry flies or nymphs — with the trout lying deep and no natural rise. This type of wet fly fishing for trout on a stream with a good current was the method on which I had been weaned in boyhood, fishing in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and practised for over fifty years. So I was fortunate to find conditions that suited me.

### Helping the Washerwomen

Not so fortunate was one of our team of five. On the second practice day we had only a brief fishing period in the morning, taking it in so relaxed a fashion, as we had found out all we needed to know, that I spent some time helping the Spanish washerwomen who were working hard at the side of our pool. After lunch we were taken to see the running of the small bulls in a local corrida — as part of the generous hospitality we enjoyed in Spain, with friendship so much the main element of these championships. There, one of our team took an unfortunate fancy to become a matador and leapt lightly into the ring to join the locals, under the impression he could not come to much harm against small bulls with shaved horns. He was carried out with a broken ankle and a broken wrist. No credit to the bull — just a failure to notice it was ten feet down from the top of the wall to the corrida floor! Captain David Swatland then had to stop telling us how to fish and do it himself — with no little success as it turned out!

### A Trout taken on an anxious cast

It is always an anxious moment getting first sight of the water on which you are drawn to fish. In the first four hour period I was on one of the higher sectors well above the beats we had fished in practice. Happily the three hundred yards of river at my disposal embraced a delightful pool with a series of small streams angled across the head to join the main current by the far bank. There was equal success bobbing the dropper across the side currents or fishing slow and deep in the quieter water. With a trout taken with the third cast I was able to relax and enjoy myself from the start. Only one incident marred the pleasure. Having gone as deep as I could with chest waders on, to try and cover the far current, I netted a trout which was borderline in size. As it was too difficult to measure it accurately in midstream I headed back rather too fast for the bank. My toe struck a rock and I went headfirst into the icy water. The trout



Tony Pawson, in euphoric mood, after winning the world championship in Spain in 1984. With him is Segismondo Fernandez, previous holder of the title.

meanwhile had come out of the net and was still hooked on the tail fly while the dropper was caught in the mesh of the net. Not so easy to get it in again! Still, it gave the spectators a good laugh and it did finally prove to be 'valido' and worth the effort.

With eleven trout in that session it was a good start. My next draw, however, was not so promising. It was a long, featureless rush of water, which I had fished in practice without moving anything, while catching well above and below. However, another team member, Dennis Buck, had told me over lunch that he had done well with a fast sinking line. Right at the bottom of my beat there was one large, deep eddy and while the rest was still barren I coaxed five out of there (and lost a really large one I never saw) using a Hi-D line. My final draw for the four hours the following morning was in a sector where very few had been caught. Though I was then third, that left me with no expectation other than enjoying myself. It was my good fortune again that team mate Dennis' tip about the fast sinking line enabled me to catch seven more, some on fast sink, some on slow sink lines, which I used alternately.

### An immense Trophy

Having no expectation of doing so well it was all the more pleasurable and surprising to find I had won. With Dennis coming 7th and Bob Church 13th we were also 2nd as a team. By a strange coincidence, my son John had qualified for the England team for the home international which was being fished on the same day on Lough Conn in Ireland. He phoned me that night to say he had come third out of 56 and England had won for the first time in Ireland. So my third piece of good fortune, as I had never done as well as that in home internationals myself, was to be able to maintain parental status by telling him he was talking to the world champion! Knowing my fishing too well he couldn't believe it — but I had difficulty in believing it too. I would still, were it not for a trophy so immense that it was only allowed on the plane because we strapped it into the seat reserved for our injured angler in a wheelchair at the back.

What is he practising for? The future world champion joins in a dance display in trouser waders during a break in practice day in 1982, when the event was a salmon and trout contest on Spain's Narcea river.

