

Dear *Datus* :

The Class Notes section in each issue of THE PHILLIPS EXETER BULLETIN becomes most interesting when it contains news from a large number of classmates. I'm sure you will enjoy reading about the activities of others, and they would like to hear about you too.

Please fill out and return the other half of this card; however, there is no rule which forbids you to write more, if you wish.

Thanks for whatever you do decide to send in. At least supply us your current address and telephone number, so that the Academy will have correct information for future mailings.

*You've really arrived as a
writer - a New York Times
Dorthe-Crosbie! well done!*

Thanks,

Keith Johnson '52
Class Correspondent

The Phillips Exeter Bulletin
Phillips Exeter Academy
Exeter, N.H. 03833

Mailed in accordance with
DMM 322.3.



Mr. Datus C. Proper 52
1085 Hamilton Road
Belgrade, MT 59714-8307

Mr. Jason Klein
Times Mirror Magazines
2 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016-5695

6/2/99

Dear Jason:

This replies to your letter of May 11, which requested comments on the first issue of Outdoor Explorer. My reaction is positive, but that does not help you much, so here are a few critical comments.

A one-word title -- Explorer -- would have more punch and eliminate what is almost a redundancy. (Most exploration happens outdoors.)

The gear tests on pp. 26/27 are useful. So are the shoe tests on p.94, but I wanted more space and detail. The CD-ROM maps on p.34 need a price and an author's name. (Every piece in the magazine should be good enough to sign.)

Gear tests command attention because they provide hard info on fast-changing technology. But tests take a lot of time and effort. Might as well give the writer enough space to point out the devil in the details.

As to Americas's Best Towns: Outdoor enthusiasts don't much care. We may have to live in town, but we escape to wild places when we can -- and dream of them we can't.

Enclosed is a map of good dreams. The Nature Conservancy has divided the country into 63 "ecoregions," most of which wind through more than one state and contain many towns. Names of the ecoregions are awkward. It would, for example, make sense to write about the Greater Yellowstone Area, not the "Utah-Wyoming Rocky Mountains" (Area 9); and about Northern New England, not the "Northern Appalachian/Boreal Forest (Area 63)."

But this is a quibble. The important point is that ecoregions make sense of nature. Bozeman and Missoula, for example, are in the same state but have very different wildlife and climates.

Yours,

Enclosed: Map

ERIC D. JOHNSTONE
614 NORTH GRAND AVE.
BOZEMAN, MT 59715

(Management Consultants)

answered 9/19

August 26, 1990

Datus C. Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd.
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus,

I just read "Where the Road Ends" in the September FIELD & STREAM. It was such a nice, subtle piece of writing that I thought I'd send you an "Atta Boy!" note.

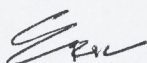
For a couple or years now, I think its been that long, I've been seeing your byline and when I'd look at the photo illustrations I'd say "Yeah, I bet I know where he was when he took that one." But until today I hadn't checked the phone book to see if indeed you were a Gallatin Valley resident.

It seems that it won't be too long until the entire Western Region issue of FIELD & STREAM will be authored by outdoor writers living in Bozeman! They might as well move an editorial office here, though maybe the Norm Strung residence serves that purpose.

For several years I've been trying to break into the Big Three with a feature hunting or fishing story, and FIELD & STREAM has been my preference -- to no avail. This is no great surprise what with the quantity of really good writing coming from the Bozeman area from yourself, McCafferty, Barseness and probably even a few others. About a year ago I read one of the F & S personal notes on an author that clued me into the competition around here. It said in effect, "Mr. Sportswriter (it could have been you, I forget) is one of the 6032 hunting and fishing writers living in the state of Montana." Knowing what I do about the number of writers here in the Bozeman area I took the 6032 figure literally.

At any rate, thanks for a really fine read. The pleasure of the tale almost made me forget how damn hard it can be to bag a silly grouse or two. Keep up the good work. I'll be watching for you and trooper up there on the ridges above Springhill.

Sincerely,



Eric Johnstone



coyote in spring

Dear: Datus Proper

I wanted to ~~wright~~^{writeing} you this letter to thank you
for leting me hunt on your land my deer taste's great.
we lost ^{1 1/2} a little hind Quarte but that was OK.

The deer was so fat we have not seen a deer
that fat for along time, You duck blind was so
heat the deer did not see me at all that was the
heatest thing about it.

Thanks agian hope next year can hunt
their agian.

Jason
Kawman

May 21, 1990

Dear Mr Proper,

I am writing you in hopes that you can give me some help in planning a trip to Ireland in July. I mentioned my difficulty in finding information about fishing in Ireland to Dave Hughes and he suggested that you might be able to help.

My wife and I are planning to go on a bicycling trip along the Ring of Kerry in early July and will also spend an additional week in Ireland, much of which I hope will be spent fishing. I'm a spring creek fanatic and am hoping to try some of the Irish limestone streams I've heard about from time to time. I've tied five or six dozen traditional Irish wet flies for seatrout and lake fishing, but have also read J.R. Harris and tied up a box full of modern American-style spring creek flies that I hope will work for the Blue Winged Olive, Lesser Spurrwing, Medium Olives and other mayflies as well as the Gray Flag and other caddis.

My problem is that I haven't been able to find any contacts in Ireland through whom I can find out which streams are likely to be good, which sections are available to a visiting traveller and how to go about arranging some fishing in advance, if that's necessary. The Irish Tourist Office in New York hasn't been much help, other than spelling out the license requirements, describing the species of fish and generally describing the fishing as wonderful. Other potential sources of information just haven't panned out either. I've heard or read about the Liffey, Suir, Maigue, Little Brosna, Fergus, and Kells Blackwater as well as some of the seatrout and salmon rivers, but know nothing about how to go about arranging some fishing on any of them. I'd enjoy fishing for the salmon and seatrout, as I've never fished for Atlantic salmon, but am particularly interested in finding some good fishing for the large rising browns I've heard about in the smooth limestone streams of Ireland. I don't mind fish that are difficult to catch because catching a lot of fish isn't important to me or my wife and we both enjoy the challenge of trying for the tough ones. Just having some rising fish in front of me is good enough, and my wife, Terrie, can usually hold her own on the spring creek waters that we usually fish. I'll greatly appreciate any suggestions you might have as to places to try and people to contact concerning the fishing. We'll have a car except while were cycling around the Ring of Kerry, so most any area in the southern half of Ireland or within about a three-hour drive of either Dublin or Shannon is fair game.

I read your book when it first came out and of course recently reread it for its references to fishing in Ireland. I think it's one of the best books of the past 10 or 15 years on flies for selective fish, with its focus on fly designs rather than specific patterns designed for particular insect species. It has a far more universal application than most of the entomology/artificial fly books, which are limited by the regional fishing experience of the author(s). Some of the authors try to fake it, but it's usually pretty easy for an angler to spot hearsay or superficial knowledge of a region the author infrequently fishes. Your book avoids that limitation while still providing some useful approaches to matching insects, particularly with dry flies, almost anywhere. For my own fishing, I use Craig Mathews' Sparkle Duns for almost all dun hatches, just changing sizes, shapes and colors to match the mayfly. I'm really eager to see whether they and some of my latest, best spring creek flies will work as well in Ireland as they do in the western U.S.

Your address in Belgrade is one that I envy, because I've enjoyed fishing the spring creeks in the Gallatin Valley for over 20 years on my annual trips to Montana and Idaho. Syl Nemes told me that you live on Thompson Spring Creek. I've fished that stream since about 1970, mainly on the Milesnick's MZ ranch, but also on the other side of the road, most often (but not recently) on that section that has had a subdivision sign on it for a number of years. Some of the other little streams have also been fun, including one that's just northeast of the airport, whose name I'm not sure of. On more than one occasion I've seen my wife board a plane back to California and been back in the water casting to rises before her flight left the ground. She now knows to look for the car as the plane takes off - maybe she'll even see me waving.

I'll greatly appreciate any help you can give me with information on fishing in Ireland. If you should ever come to California, I'll be happy to reciprocate because we have some terrific spring creek fishing here as well. Please send any reply to:

Nelson Ishiyama
555 Lowell Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Sincerely,

Nelson Ishiyama



A deerhair-legged caddis. That's only a fair floater, but a very effective fly on tough spring creek caddis eaters. Hope it arrives not too mangled.

7224 Swansong Way
Bethesda, MD 20817
February 3, 1986

Mr. Datus Proper
1914 N. Johnson Street
Arlington, VA 22207

Dear Datus:

The paper is well thought out and well written. I have made only one editorial suggestion -- see paragraph on page 5.

?
I have no quarrel with the points made or the definition of "selectivity" which you offer -- save one minor one. I would replace the word "readily" in the definition with the word "reasonably." Thus, a selective fish might choose to feed solely on mayfly nymphs, although numbers of midges are hatching at the same time, because the greater numbers of mayfly nymphs permits the trout to more confidently compare real nymphs with the occasional fake ones that come his way. This "selectivity," in my jargon, is different from "opportunism" in which a trout keeps an eye out for an especially juicy but relatively rare morsel, or the "opportunism" of the unnamed fishing writer you quote (the latter "opportunism" being simply that one food type exists to the almost total exclusion of others).

Do they?
Behavior is bad facts in selectivity.
This point, and substitution of adverb, is minor. A more major issue, however, is whether flyfishermen should choose a lexicon in which "selectivity" refers to food types and/or fly types but not to food behavior and/or fly behavior. Thus, we could choose to define a "selective" trout as one that prefers one artificial/real fly type (size, shape, attitude, color) over others, but is, or is not, easily frightened or dissuaded by drag or by sighting of fishermen or sighting of tippets. As you correctly point out, the proper definition of selectivity must be in relation to what is rejected, not what is accepted. I am simply suggesting that we need to distinguish between forms of rejection -- rejection due to fly type or rejection due to fly behavior, or rejection due to nonfly sightings. One way would be to define a selective trout as one which rejects an offering for any reason. Then there would be type selectivity, presentation selectivity, and surrounding selectivity. ok

Or we can only use the word "selective" to mean "type selective" while coining new words for the other classes of rejection. I am pretty much indifferent on this subject. However, in my own discussions I generally use the word "selective" to mean fly-selective and the word "shy" to cover drag-shy, tippet-shy and people-shy. Thus, I have made the following observation in my years (Wory)

Shouldn't lump drag-shy + people-shy.

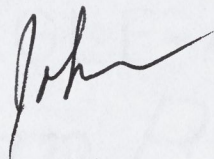
because of shiver water? (casting across foot)
Not as "educated" (expressed to artificial fly).

of fishing Armstrong's: the brownies along the edges are much more drag-shy and people (line, leader) shy, but they are much less choosy about flies or fly-types than the rainbows that hold in mid-stream. In my lexicon the browns are "harder to catch" but "less selective" than the mid-stream fish. During parts of the day, I find some individual mid-stream fish to be extremely selective to fly-type, but I can catch them with slight amounts of improper presentation. The fish at the margins will tolerate fewer presentational errors (although even in this regard they are much more tolerant than, say, Thompson fish).

I think in your next article you should venture further into this dictionary business. As long as we all use the same precisely defined words we can advance the discipline.

Thanks for the opportunity to review the draft -- it was my pleasure.

Sincerely,



The trout question:

- 1) do this fly want to eat?*
- 2) are the surroundings safe?*

February 4, 1994

Mr. Keith Johnson
329 W. 19th St.
Apt. 1
New York, NY 10011-3901

Dear Keith,

Good to hear from you.

My teacher of English II -- Robert H. Bates -- recently sent me three themes that I wrote for him in 1950. All were graded B, plus or minus, which today strikes me as generous. Those themes were hard work at the time, though. It helped that Bob Bates also taught me about mountains, black ducks, and nature in general.

I'm living in Montana, now, on the banks of a spring-fed stream with the pen-name of Humility Creek -- not so much a philosophical statement as a reference to my attitude after trying to catch the resident trout.

Every day I write as long as I can, put the results into envelopes addressed to New York, and walk out the door into Montana. It's a good routine.

Yours,

Datus C. Proper
Casa Calmaria
Rua do Uruguai
Cascais
Portugal

June 10, 1979

Editor
Irish Times
Dublin
Ireland

Dear Sir:

I said my farewell to the Meath Blackwater this past May. By next year, the entire river is scheduled to be drained. Dredges have already begun work in the lower part of the river. The upper part above Kells -- which is the most valuable part for fishing and the most attractive -- has a few more months to live.

In May of 1978 the fishing was as good as ever. I could not stand many days of it; there was too much emotional tension in the knowledge that each familiar pool would soon be a sterile ditch. But the trout had no premonition of their fate. Each day there was at least one small one -- and a one-pound fish is small in the Blackwater -- to grill over blackthorn coals. Sometimes there were big ones to refuse my fly or straighten its hook. In addition to being large and tasty, Blackwater trout are extraordinarily strong and suspicious.

My work takes me to many countries, including Ireland. The lucky part of this is that (unlike many Irish fishermen) I do not depend on the Blackwater for high-quality fishing. The unlucky part is that I have an accurate and painful idea of what the world will be missing when the Blackwater is gone. Only a few rivers as good ever existed in Europe or the Americas. I know where to find these rivers, but none of them has a rath by its banks. None of them has the woodpigeons, swans, rooks, and rabbits. None of them is in Ireland.

To my knowledge, the Blackwater is the last of the great Irish limestone streams in its natural state. There were more when I lived in Ireland. The Maigue (now drained) was the prettiest of all. The Suir (both drained and repeatedly poisoned) was perhaps the best for fishing. The little Rye Water (now poisoned) was neither the best nor the prettiest, but it was good enough and close to home. The Nore (good but not in the top rank) is scheduled for drainage.

After I left Ireland in 1975, the Meath Blackwater was also poisoned once. That kept me away for two years. The trout are back now. Rivers clear themselves of pollution far faster than lakes. None of the lakes I know are still good: Ennell seems gone and Sheelin now fishes

to chironomids -- which stand pollution -- rather than to mayflies.

The Meath Blackwater will eventually contain some trout again; probably not as many or as large, but some. It will never again be a natural stream. The rath will stand above a moonscape of steep, artificial banks. The stream at the bottom will run fast and shallow and straight. That is the purpose of drainage.

It may be unnecessary to add that this letter is not directed at all examples of drainage. But has anyone carefully analyzed the costs and benefits of this particular river's dredging? Has there been anything comparable to what we Americans call an "Environmental Impact Statement"? Obviously I have not done an accurate poll, but over the years I have talked to many farmers along the Blackwater and found all opposed to drainage. Have the economic values of tourism and fishing been taken into account?

The main value of the Meath Blackwater is not strictly economic. This is not just one more river; it is the last and best of its kind. When it is destroyed, nothing like it can ever be recreated.

In other developed countries -- and even many of the poor countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America -- it is customary to set aside large natural areas to preserve the best examples of what nature provided. No country can afford to preserve everything, but can any country afford to destroy ~~anything~~ everything? By world standards, Ireland is already a moderately prosperous nation, but it is also a small one. There is not much time left. For the last great midland river, there are only months.

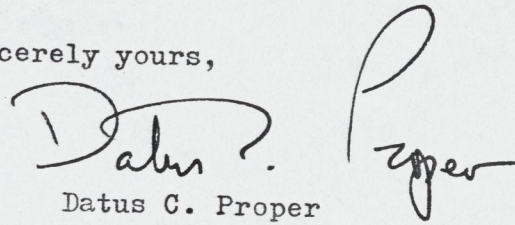
In Ireland commendable efforts go into the preservation of houses which have stood for two or three centuries. How much more valuable than a house is the last river of its kind, a river which God took aeons to create?

It may also be unnecessary to say that this letter does not predict the end of all Irish rivers and trout. There will (perhaps) always be many of the fast, peaty streams with little dark trout. They often do not drain valuable land. As a type, the natural midland limestone streams will have disappeared.

If Irish tourists wish to see or fish in well-preserved limestone streams, they will find a few elsewhere in Europe. In England the chalkstreams are maintained with fanatical care, both for their economic value and their beauty. In Winchester, where by coincidence this letter is being written, the River Itchen is as it was a thousand years ago. Trout rise in town and the water is pure below it.

To destroy any river is a serious thing. To destroy the last and best of its kind is a terrible cultural responsibility. Look at the Meath Blackwater soon. You will want to tell your children and grandchildren what it was like.

Sincerely yours,

The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first part of the signature, 'Datus', is written in a large, elegant script. The second part, 'C. Proper', is written in a smaller, more compact script. The overall impression is one of a personal and professional signature.

Datus C. Proper

June 9, 1979

American Embassy
Apartado 2103
1103 Lisbon Codex
Portugal

Dear Eamon,

Hope this reaches you while you are still in England. I wrote the enclosed letter while ~~xx~~ I was in Winchester but could not get ~~xxxx~~ a typewriter to put it in legible form. As some wit said, "let me know if you don't get this letter."

~~xx~~ I'd be grateful if you would pass the enclosed to the Irish Times--assuming you don't disagree violently with my statements. It's a cry of conscience.

I don't want the newspaper to identify me by profession or use my Embassy address. (This would require me to get my letter officially "cleared" by the American Ambassador in Dublin.) I have therefore used my local Portuguese house address in my letter to the editor.

Thanks for your help. I'd always enjoy seeing you in Portugal and could put you in touch with your local counterpart here. Might be worth doing.

Sincerely yours,

Datus

Datus Proper

Would be grateful to get confirmation
and/or an eventual clipping if the letter
gets published.

Talked on phone
1/12/97



ARTEMIS
COMMON GROUND
HOME GROUND RADIO

called + left
message

Sunday 1/11/96

January 10, 1997

(2) So State License for Native Conservancy

Datus Proper
Belgrade, MT

(called to Review List)

Dear Datus Proper,

I should not be writing you at this time, as my desk is piled with backlogged work. However, I just finished Pheasants of the Mind. As a pheasant hunter, I found it fun, informative, appropriately opinionated, thought-provoking and damn well written. Further, it is the best book for the non-hunter concerning hunting that I've read. I am buying a copy for two friends who, though they enjoy eating pheasants at our home, regard hunting with a mixture of moral aversion and condescension.

Speaking of eating pheasants, I greatly enjoyed your chapter on that subject. I feel chastened at my failure to consistently age my birds, though I'm religious about aging red meat. I am skeptical about your general condemnation of braising, since my wife, who has a fine palate, very much likes pheasant braised in a porcini mushroom and marsala sauce. But your writing is so convincing that I am going to diligently follow your steps, culminating in the roasted bird. My only regret is that, since none of the pheasants in my freezer are appropriately aged--and I've discarded the feet and necks--I must wait until next fall!

502
source

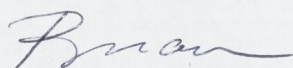
My mentor in hunting, conservation and some aspects of political thinking is Angus Cameron, long-retired editor in chief at Knopf, and author of the L.L. Bean Game and Fish Cookbook. (He knew Leon Bean, and was Jack O'Connor's editor.) Angus is truly a Renaissance man, and deeply loves to cook and eat. He's 88 and told me the other day he's begun volume two of the cookbook. He is looking for recipes--for which, of course, he gives due credit--and I'd like to send him a copy of your recipe/preparation discussion. I know he'll find it fascinating. Is this acceptable?

I was quite taken with your description/discussion of your Woodward and shotgun issues. I, too, was influenced by O'Connor, having read him from my youth in the 50s, corresponded with and met him in 60s, and got to know him pretty well. I've read a fair amount about rifles since, but not shotguns. Your discussion of barrel length and weight was highly interesting. The shotgun I have shot best over the years is a 1930s M21 12 ga with 28" barrels, loose IC and M chokes. I've always wished it had 26" barrels and was 1/2-3/4 lb lighter, but having read your discussion I'm wondering if I'd shoot as well with it with those modifications. After my guns

were burglarized in the early 70s, Jack O'Connor let me have, for the price it cost him, an AYA 53E, Holland & Holland-type sidelock 20, made to his measurements. (My cost was \$372...) He and I were built similarly, but I never shot the gun as well as I did the 21. It has 26" barrels and in my hands seems too light up front--too quick. It is now my wife's bird gun. After 40 years of trying, I was this year able to buy my maternal grandfather's Simson 16, with 28" barrels which pattern tight skeet and modified with the 1 1/8 oz, Rem Premium Shur Shot 6s I shoot. Whether it's the longer barrels, heavier overall weight or open choke, I don't know, but I shot very well with it this fall.

Anyway, many thanks for writing that book. I hope our paths cross.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Kahn

STREET ADDRESS
101 E. MAIN, SECOND FLOOR
BOZEMAN, MT 59715

BIG SKY JOURNAL

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 1069
BOZEMAN, MT 59771-1069

TEL (406) 586-2712 FAX (406) 586-2986

March 21, 1997

Datus Proper
1085 Hamilton Rd
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Datus,

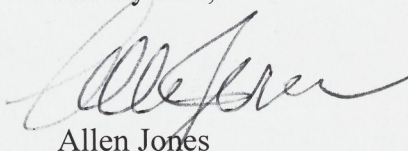
Not having had much contact in the last few issues, I thought a quick note might be in order.

I am currently putting together a fall issue, and have a few spots still open. I'm an admirer of your work (increasingly so), and if you're interested at all, I would be very open to a submission. If you're short on ideas or articles, I would be more than happy to start thinking on this end and run a few possibilities by you.

I realize we can't compete with *Field & Stream* as far as fee possibilities go, but I would do everything I can to make it worth your while.

I will give you a call here in a few days, Datus. I hope we can figure something out.

All my best,



Allen Jones
Editor