


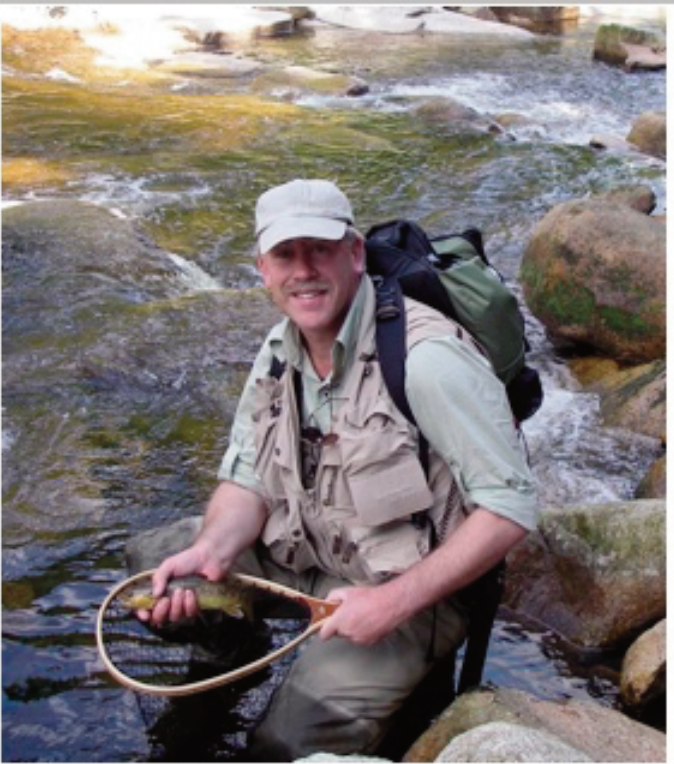




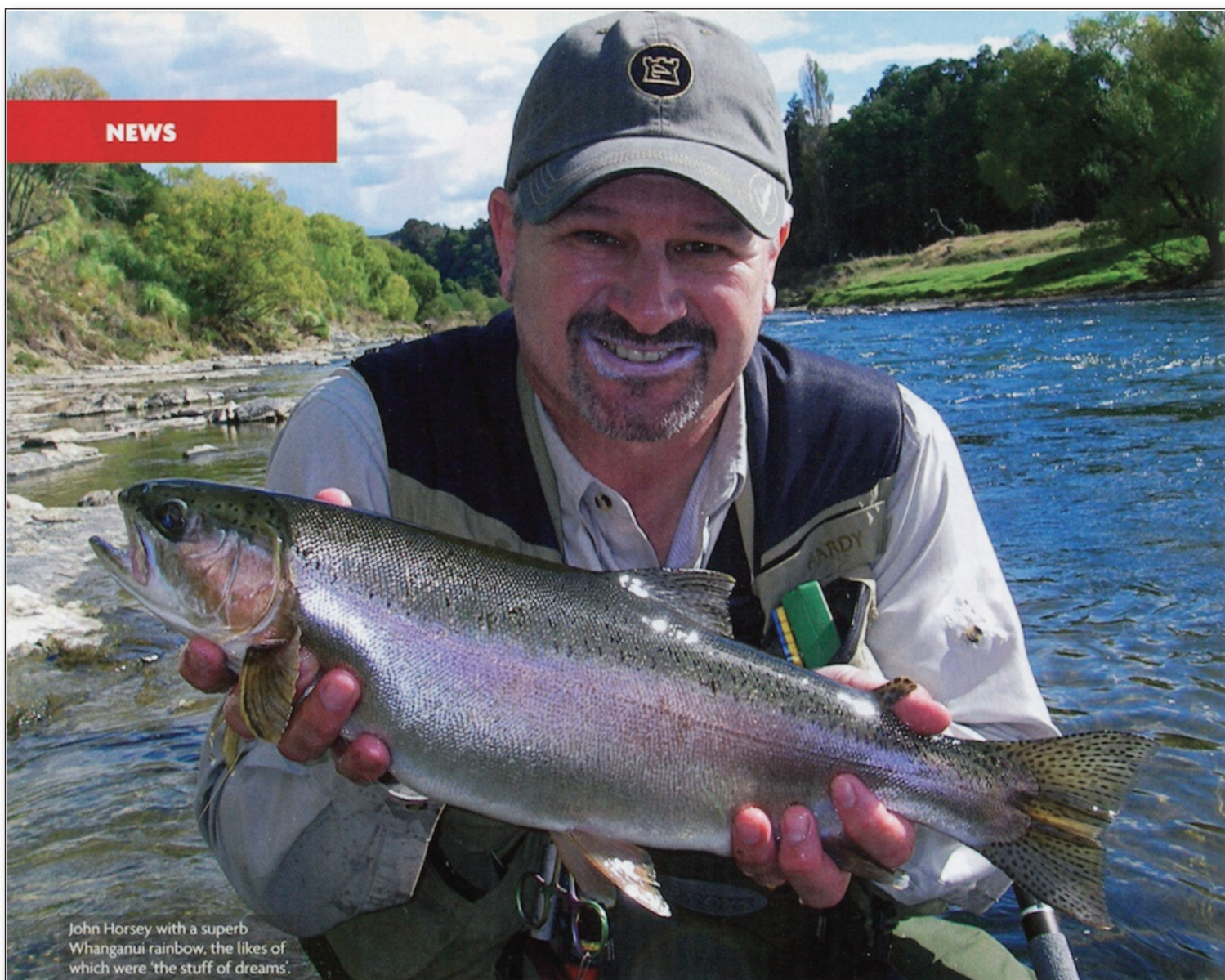
From Ian greenwood		
<div>Confederation of English Fly Fishers</div> <div>28th Fipse-Mouche World Fly Fishing Championships 22nd March 2008</div> <div>Rotorua New Zealand</div> <div>Team England.</div>		
	<div>Ian Greenwood: Team England Manager/Captain</div> <div>Competitor</div>	<div>Contact: j-greenwood3@sky.com</div> <div>Born in South West Ayrshire Scotland, in a little place called Knock–Na–Haw, Traboch, right on the banks of the River Coyle, a tributary to the River Ayr, both rivers were full of wild Brown Trout, Salmon, Sea Trout and Grayling. I had the best tutor in the world Jock Greenwood my Dad. I Started Competition Fly Fishing 1978 and qualified for my first England International in1979, for 30 years I have won medals at every level with Team England and still plenty in the tank to win more. A good up and coming young fly Fisher one to watch for the future</div>
	<div>Howard Croston: Competitor</div>	<div>Contact: hcroston@hardygreys.com</div> <div>Howard was born thirty-one years ago and is now living in Northumberland close to the Hardy and Greys Company headquarters where he is currently employed as Game Product Development Manager. Fly Fishing for over twenty years he has represented England in both World fly casting events and on six occasions in fly fishing events. In my job I have been fortunate enough to fish around the world for many different species but in particular I love Eastern Europe for grayling and Montana for Trout. When at home I spend as much time as possible in the Rivers of the Lake District chasing the elusive Brown Trout and grayling.</div>
	<div>John Horsey: Competitor</div>	<div>Contact: john@johnhorsey.co.uk</div> <div>John Is England's highest capped International, winning a Record 28 caps. He also captained England on 5 separate occasions and is the only angler to have been appointed Captain of England at all four disciplines – world Team, European Team, Loch Style and Rivers. John is also the UK's first and best known professional fly fishing guide, running his guiding business from chew Valley Lake near Bristol. During the last 16 years he has guided and taught fishermen extensively in the UK, Europe, Canada and Australia. He is also a tackle consultant for the world famous Hardy Greys of Alnwick Northumberland. John is also the Championship Manager and Organiser for the Lexus European Fly Fishing Championships, Europe's biggest fly fishing competition.</div>
	<div>Simon Kidd: Competitor</div>	<div>Contact: simon@snowbee.co.uk</div> <div><u>"Born to Fish"</u> Having been christened Simon from the book <u>(The Big Fisherman)</u> that his mother was reading whilst carrying him. 43years fly fishing, over 150 lakes and rivers in the UK and numerous places in Europe and around and USA. 1st trout on fly – River Barle – May 1967. Competition fishing since 1994. National Rivers Champion1998. 1st England Team – Ireland 1999. Aurifisk Individual Champion 2000. World Championships 2001 –2006. Best team finish 4th Sweden (8th Individual) 2001. Best Individual possession 4thSpain 2003 (Team 5th). European championships Team Silver - Norway 2007 Married with two children, Mathew 14 also a very keen, England junior and at 13 the youngest competitor in the 2006 World Junior championships.</div>
	<div>Simon Robinson: Competitor</div>	<div>Contact: simontrout@aol.com</div> <div>Simon was born 29 years ago in Newcastle upon Tyne and still lives in that beautiful city in North East of England, where he still enjoys the excellent fishing for Wild Brown Trout and Grayling. Simon began his England career with 4 caps and was individual winner of the International Youth Championships. Since entering and qualifying in 2000 to full senior international status, he has represented Team England no less than 19 times, a great achievement on its own. 6 World Championships, 2 European Championships, 7 loch Style and 4 Rivers Championships. In addition to the many medals ha has won for his country, Simon has been International Loch Style champion, International Rivers Champion, National Smallwater Champion, is there no heights this young man can achieve with his versatility in the aspects of fly fishing.</div>
	<div>Mike Tinnion: Competitor.</div>	<div>Contact: miketinnion@aol.com</div> <div>For 49 years Mike has lived and worked in Keswick Cumbria, where he runs his roofing business with his wife Cath, and two kids Gail and Ben. The only place Mike puts before his beloved Lake district is somewhere he hasn't fished before, he is always looking for a new challenge, and His favourite tipple is when someone else pays for it. During his International career Mike has achieved success at all levels including. English Loch Style National Winner 1966. 3 Home International England River Team Caps. 4 England European Team caps. 4 England World Team caps. 2 England European Team Bronze Medals. 1 England European Team Silver Medal. Individual (5th Place) good fishing. Ben his son is a keen Fly Fisherman winning a couple of Grayling Competitions, lets hope he follows in his fathers footsteps and takes up Competitive Fly Fishing.</div>







England
Ian Greenwood (captain/reserve), Howard Croston, Andrew Dixon, John Horsey, Simon Robinson & Mike Tinnion.



John Horsey with a superb Whanganui rainbow, the likes of which were 'the stuff of dreams'.

SO NEAR YET SO FAR

England's **John Horsey** reports on a tactical journey in this year's World Championships

THE venues for the 28th FIPS Mouche World Flyfishing Championships in New Zealand were three rivers – the Whanganui, the Waihou and the Waimakariri, as well as Lakes Otamangakau; known as the Big "O" and Rotoaira.

The Hardy Greys England team comprised of myself, Howard Croston, Mick Tinnion, Simon Robinson and Andrew Dixon, with Ian Greenwood our manager

Some rivers were low due to the worst drought in 100 years, but with another six inches of water in them, we would have struggled to stand up; let alone fish! We were allowed practice on two small stretches of the Waihou and Whanganui rivers, but no practice at all on the Waimakariri or either lake. This was annoying, as Rotoaira is bigger than Rutland and the Big "O" is fished extensively and can handle the pressure. Still, we figured the host nation wanted a bit of home advantage. And who could blame them?

River practice

THE minimum fish size for all venues was 18cm so anything bigger was our target fish. For the first 10 days we practised on the Whanganui river and its sister the Whakapapa. Both produced masses of quality rainbows and browns – some so big you simply couldn't control them. The stuff of dreams!

Our first practice afternoon on the Waihou, saw Howard and I catch 126 fish, but half that failed to measure 18cm. Occasionally though, we'd hook something that disappeared down

river like an express train, smashing your tippet like cotton!

The Whanganui was an altogether different proposition. Very few fish failed to measure 18cm and many were well over 3lb. It was vital to fish strong tippet material here and even more important to use strong hooks. Many flies tied in advance were on lightweight barbless hooks and these were simply no match for any wild trout over 2lb.

Lake practice

AS practice was denied on the two match lakes, we drove around them. Access was impossible apart from where the boats would be launched. What's more, the locals were tight-lipped about tactics. Obviously, the New Zealanders were familiar with the lakes, but the Australians, French, Americans and some of the Canadian team had practised before the lakes were officially closed to competitors. We were at a disadvantage. Whoever drew the lakes on the first day would have to fish out of their skin, then feed back as much information as possible to the team.

Both match lakes were choked with Canadian pondweed with trout rumoured to live in the deeper channels within these weedbeds. The locals normally anchor and fish big dry fly 'bungs' with nymphs suspended beneath. In fact, this was the way many people fished the rivers as well – particularly the big rivers like the Tongararo. The indicator flies were huge, but they do have to hold up some seriously heavy nymphs in a strong, swirling current.

Our two practice sessions on Lake Kuratau produced dozens of trout – mainly rainbows with a few browns. We looked for areas with large weedbeds and avoided the obvious fish-holding places like sunken trees and structure, as neither of the match lakes had any.



Gold: Martin Droz; Silver: Julianne Dagoullanes and Bronze: Tomas Starychojtu.

Venard agreed to sponsor the team with all our tying materials and these were delivered through the strict customs security and awaiting our arrival.

Having fished the southern hemisphere before, I expected trout to want a decent mouthful – and I wasn't wrong either. Even a small trout would greedily wolf-down a large Hare's Ear Nymph on the river in fast water. Many took size 8 Sparklers with no hesitation as they often fed hard on smelt – a small freshwater fish similar to a bleak.

Dry fly had its moments on the rivers, particularly when used in conjunction with nymphs. When we had the official practice on Lake Kuratau or Lake Aniwhenua, the Damsel was a killing pattern, along with the ever-faithful Black Lure. I'd used Black Boobies to devastating effect on the wild rainbows and browns of Canada, Australia and Tasmania – these had the same impact on New Zealand lake trout.

Size was important on the two smaller rivers, as was finer tippet material. Copper tungsten beadhead flies were the order of the day, with small Pheasant Tail variants and Stripped Quill nymphs proving irresistible. Bog standard Goldhead Hare's Ears also produced and we caught so many fish with these three patterns, we were almost certain they would work in the match on fresh fish.

THE MATCH Day 1 - Session 1 - The Whanganui River

WHEN I arrived, a huge crane was dragging massive rocks out of the river and using them to construct a jetty. Surely this would not affect my beat, which was about half a mile downstream?

My controller said the river was good here, but the river was filthy! This was the first time since I'd been in New Zealand that the water wasn't crystal clear. The crane was still working.

The controllers were doing their best to stop the dredging, which had coloured the water putting downstream beats at a huge disadvantage.

My beat had far too much water to cover effectively in three hours. So I started at a lovely fast run, close to the end of my section.

At the signal to start, I dropped my

"We also realised that in New Zealand, cloud and wind puts fish off the feed – quite the opposite to northern hemisphere fishing"

three-fly 'trio' cast into the tail of the run. I had a dry Sedge on the top dropper and four-feet below that a Copper Headed Mary and a slightly bigger Mary four-feet below that. Four casts later my dry fly dipped under and I struck into a cracking rainbow that jumped three times and then freed itself! During the next 40 minutes, I hooked and lost another three fish.

The crane had stopped dredging for the day and the river was just beginning to clear. So I started again at the bottom of my beat, gradually wading upstream. After 45 minutes I took my first fish to my controller. By 04am I'd measured three fish. With two hours left in my session, I set myself a target of 10 fish.

During the next two hours I fished the best session of my entire life. At one stage, I was measuring a trout every four minutes – all taken from the other side of the river and it took me a minute to wade across each time.

Having measured 10 fish, I set myself a goal of 15, and so on. By the time I got to 25 trout, my target had become 30 fish – and I couldn't have dreamt of that number a couple of hours ago! I finished the session with 28 trout and that was more than enough to win the section.

Day 2 - Session 3 - Lake Rotoaira

I CHOSE a D-3 line with 15 feet of 8lb Rio Fluoroflex leader and three flies. Top dropper was a Green-bodied Black Booby, with an unweighted Dirty Damsel in the middle and a Copper Head Green Damsel on the point.

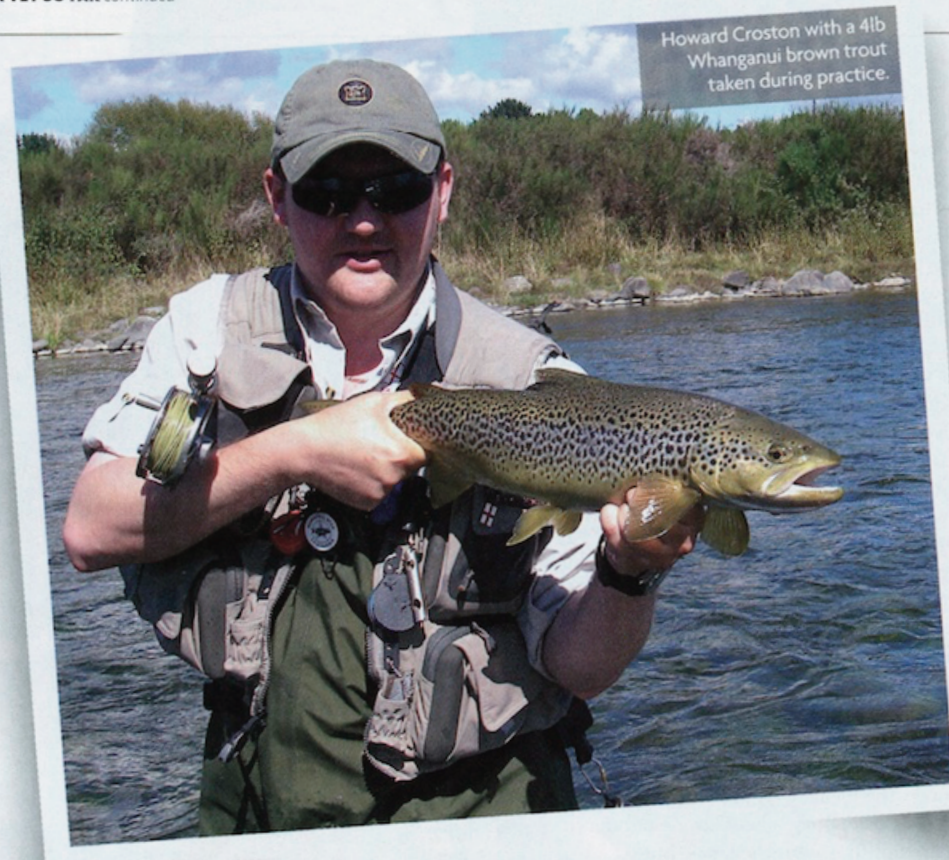
We'd been told to fish the holes in the weed, but why not fish the deeper water that surrounds the weedbeds? That's what I did. Within five casts I landed my first rainbow of about 4lb. Due to the weed, we knew we had to 'hook and hold', requiring confidence in rod, leader and hooks.

Tactics were to cast a decent line

Airflo 40+ Expert Di-3 then count down for 10 seconds. Two fish took on the drop. A figure-of-eight retrieve was employed, then the flies were hanged at the end of the retrieve for about five seconds for each fly. Four fish took on the hang. I lost only one fish and missed three other takes.

Four fish took the Booby, three took the middle dropper Damsel and three took the point fly Damsel. My tactics of avoiding the weedbeds and the other boats – had worked. I set my drift behind the other boats and could see everything that was happening, so I knew I was doing okay.

On arriving back at the jetty, my 10 fish had won that session.



Howard Croston with a 4lb Whanganui brown trout taken during practice.

Day 2 - Session 4 - Lake Otamangakau

MICK had taken four fish on the Big "O" from a specific weed channel. He'd also lost some big fish in the weed. Slime line was best for him, but we agreed that I should start with what had worked for me on Rotoaira.

But, trying to locate any clear water on the Big "O" was a nightmare – the conditions were cloudy, we could not see through the water. We also realised that in New Zealand, cloud and wind puts fish off the feed – quite the opposite to northern hemisphere fishing.

For 30 minutes I hooked nothing but

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

INDIVIDUALS	COUNTRY	PLACE POINTS
1 Martin Droz	Czech Republic	20
2 Julien Dagoullanes	France	20
3 Tomas Starychojtu	Czech Republic	22
4 John Horsey	England	22
5 Lucjan Burda	Poland	22
6 Des Armstrong	New Zealand	24
7 Simon Robinson	England	24
8 Janne Pirkkalainen	Finland	24
9 Tomas Adam	Czech Republic	25
10 Piotr Konieczny	Poland	27



The England team L-R: Ian Greenwood, Simon Robinson, Mick Tinnion, Howard Croston, Andrew Dixon and John Horsey.

"Unwittingly, I was in first place overall and fishing to be World Champion in my last session"

weed. But I watched a Swede catch two fish close to the shore, pulling a slime line, so I sped over to cover his drift. I had to fish much faster and started to get pulls from small trout, but I couldn't get them to stick. So I switched to a slime line and put a Black Straggle Fritz Taddy on the point, kept the Damsel on the dropper and, due to the weed, discarded the top dropper completely. At the end of one retrieve I had a cracking take on the hang and landed a near 5lb rainbow into the net!

I repeated the drift several times and 'bumped' a few fish. Then the sun came out and, feeling that the fish were higher in the water, I discarded the Damsel pattern and changed to a lighter Black Diawl Bach Nymph. First cast, I hit another good rainbow on the Diawl Bach. I'd cracked it – so I thought, I never had another take.

With one hour left, I gambled for the team's sake. Switching to a floater and three nymphs, I fished for 15 minutes without a take, but in this time a couple of fish had risen. Mick had told me they rose in the morning when it was sunny, so I gambled again, with dries. Drifting, I fished these for 15 minutes. Nothing.

With 30 minutes to go, we moved to the other side of the lake where there was a deep channel. I changed to the Airflo 40+ Expert Slime line again with my Diawl Bach and Black Lure combination. First drift across I hit a fish and what a fish – 68.9cm.

Soon afterwards I caught a 22cm trout and lost two more at the net. I finished with four fish and that big one had helped me beat two anglers who had five trout. I now had two firsts and a fourth placing me in first place overall with two more sessions left.

More importantly, England were in third place, just two place points ahead of the French, so our brief for the final day was beat the French and we would get a bronze medal at least.

Day 3 - Session 5 - Waimakariri River

THE last two sessions are always the hardest. There have been three of the world's top anglers fishing hard for nine hours before you and, believe me, they often fish every single inch of water

Controllers cannot enter the water once the session starts, so I had to decide on which bank I wanted him to stand.

I directed him to the opposite bank. Starting at the tail of my beat, I had a 24cm fish on the 'trio' first cast. I walked up the river fishing 'trio' with the same team of flies I used on the Whanganui, but the flies were smaller to suit this particular river.

I measured another fish, but then caught nine under-sized trout. An hour later I reached some deeper, faster water and switched my point fly for a heavier Copper Headed Mary and carefully worked upstream standing against the strong current. I landed two more 'measures' and almost fell in twice trying to wade across to my controller, who I now wished was on the other bank!

Still wading cautiously upstream, I pitched my dry and nymph combo up above me in the fastest water – a snout broke the surface engulfing my Retrer dry fly. I struck and all hell broke loose. The rainbow stripped 10 yards off my reel in an instant and then turned downstream into the fast current.

I played it with kid gloves, as I was using only 4lb tippet and knew it could break me easily. Little by little I got below it and finally landed the leviathan.

With all the commotion, I fished back down the entire beat using Spiders which had caught well during practice. I tried to 'dead drift' them with the rod held high, watching the big loop of line for takes.

I had many takes but most fish were under-sized. Occasionally, I'd get a decent fish and the method helped me to 10 fish for the session.

But was it enough to beat my French opponent, Bertrand Jacqueman, who was World Champion two years ago in Sweden? I was distraught. Bertrand and the other three competitors on my mini bus had all beaten me.

What I did not know was that the fishing had got much harder throughout and my 10 fish had earned me sixth place in the session. Unwittingly, I was in first place overall and fishing to be World Champion in my last session. Looking back, I wish I'd been aware of this. I'd have altered my final session approach.

LAKE PATTERNS



Rotoaira Lake top dropper: The Green-bodied Black Booby

Rotoaira middle dropper: Unweighted Dirty Damsel

Rotoaira point fly: Copper Head Green Damsel

Lake Otamangakau middle dropper: A light Black Diawl Bach

Lake Otamangakau point fly: A Black Straggle Fritz Taddy

RIVER PATTERNS



Waimakariri river top dropper: A Retirer dry fly



Spiders were fished 'dead drift' with rod held high

Whanganui river middle dropper: A Copper Headed Mary nymph



Whanganui river top dropper: A dry Sedge



Heavy nymphs for deep pots of water



John's 68.9cm rainbow was the longest of the entire championships.

Day 3 - Session 6 - Waihou River

I NOW knew that I had to beat Bertrand in my final session to give the team a chance of 'pipping' France for a bronze medal. He had a good beat and so did I. Both had produced well in the morning, but that also meant they would be hard in that final session. I set myself a target of at least 12 fish to beat Bertrand. As it happened, we were on the same mini bus and we were also on adjoining beats. We shook hands and wished each other "bon chance" before heading for the final session.

My beat was enormous – separated by a hill in the middle, which took four minutes to run over! I decided to start half way up the second piece of river, which was gun-clear and flowing faster and wider than the River Test at top water level.

Once again, I started with my trusted 'trio' method and caught three trout in my first 15 minutes – my target total already looked realistic. Another came to the dry fly before a barrage of takes from under-sized trout.

I fished up my beat then changed to 'double nymphs' to cover the deeper 'pots' of water. I caught two more decent rainbows, but began to feel that my beat had been fished really hard. I cast my nymphs into all the places that might not have seen a fly, but as ex-World Champion Tomas Starychfojt of the Czech Republic had previously fished my beat, it was a tough call.

Dropping my nymphs into a deep pool I had five takes in five drops, hooking and losing one decent fish. These were nervous trout. They'd probably been fished for and even hooked before. I went to the bottom of my beat and changed back to 'trio'. This produced my seventh fish.

I knew this wasn't enough, so with 30 minutes to go, I made what turned

“I made what turned out to be the most important fishing decision of my life”

out to be the most important fishing decision of my life. Should I switch to dries and target three fish I spotted rising earlier, or go back to nymphs and fish my beat from top to bottom?

I needed another five fish and dries would probably not produce that. So it was back to triple nymph fished in every nook and cranny I could find, searching for a few fish that hadn't yet seen a fly. I failed to increase my total.

So that was it – seven fish. Bertrand managed nine. I finished 10th that afternoon, beaten by a Croatian who had one less fish than me and a New Zealander who also had seven fish.

Results

OVERNIGHT, England had dropped from third to sixth place overall, but it had been very tight. For myself, just one more fish in that final session would have secured the World Champion's Gold Medal.

Equal third is still a decent result, even if I don't have a medal to show for it. But I did win a prize for catching the longest fish of the Championships!

Next year the World Championships are in Scotland, four stillwaters and one river. This will be the first time in 15 years that the lake sessions outweigh the rivers. It should be very interesting.

1. Czech Republic	125 placing pts
2. New Zealand	148 placing pts
3. France	164 placing pts
4. Poland	186 placing pts
5. Italy	196 placing pts
6. England	197 placing pts
7. Slovakia	202 placing pts
8. USA	203 placing pts
9. Canada	227 placing pts
10. Finland	229 placing pts
11. Ireland	249 placing pts
12. Australia	269 placing pts
13. Portugal	293 placing pts
14. Japan	307 placing pts
15. South Africa	315 placing pts
16. Holland	321 placing pts
17. Wales	328 placing pts
18. Croatia	333 placing pts

Individuals:

1. Martin Droz (Czech Republic)	78 fish	20 placing pts
2. Julien Daguilanes (France)	73 fish	20 placing pts
3. Tomas Starychfojt (Czech Republic)	98 fish	22 placing pts
4. John Horsey (England)	59 fish	22 placing pts
5. Lucjan Burda (Poland)	56 fish	22 placing pts
6. Des Armstrong (New Zealand)	87 fish	24 placing pts
7. Simon Robinson (England)	90 fish	24 placing pts
8. Janne Pirkkalainen (Finland)	40 fish	24 placing pts
9. Tomas Adam (Czech Republic)	87 fish	25 placing pts
10. Piotr Konieczny (Poland)	80 fish	27 placing pts

- 43. Howard Croston (England)
- 46. Andrew Dixon (England)
- 47. Mike Tinnion (England)

New Zealand World Championships

Report by John Horsey on behalf of the Hardy Greys England Flyfishing Team - April 2008.

Venues

Back in 1990 I was one of the lucky few to be selected to fish in my second World Championships, which were held in the North Island of New Zealand. Little did I realise then, that 17 years later I would return to the very same location and the same hotel in Rotorua to re-commence battle with the hardest fighting trout in the World!

I remember being slightly disappointed on my first visit, as we fished the Whao Canal, Flaxy Lake and Lake Aniwhenua, which were all man made and part of the extensive hydro electric system. The Rangitaiki River was the only true wild venue and as we were allowed to practice along its entire length, the fishing died very quickly.

The venues for this, the 28th FIPS Mouche World Flyfishing Championships had been chosen with great care and attention; mostly by New Zealand International angler Peter Scott, who personally walked each and every river beat on countless occasions. We were to fish three rivers – the Whanganui, the Waihou and the Waimakariri, as well as Lakes Otamangakau; known as the Big "O" and Rotoaira.

Some of the rivers were low due to the worst drought in 100 years, but we all agreed that with another 6 inches of water in them, we would have struggled to stand up; let alone fish! We were allowed to practice on two small stretches of the Waihou and Whanganui rivers, but no practice at all on the Waimakariri or either lake. This was the most annoying aspect, as Rotoaira is bigger than Rutland and the Big "O" is fished extensively and can handle the pressure. Still, we figured the host nation wanted a bit of serious home advantage. And who could blame them?

Practice

The Hardy Greys Team England consisted of, Howard Croston, Mick Tinnion, Simon Robinson, Andrew Dixon and myself, with Ian Greenwood our manager. Howard and I arrived on the 5th March, with the rest of the team arriving five days later.

Ian had been in New Zealand since mid February, so we were determined to grow fully accustomed with the practice waters and determine our tactics well in advance of the match itself.

Rivers practice

The minimum size of fish for all the venues was 18 cms and on the Waihou and Waimakariri rivers, there were plenty around this size – but also many that were much bigger. The lakes and the Whanganui river boasted fish far in excess of the minimum size, but we soon came to realise that anything over 18cms was our target fish.

We were based at Te Rangiita on the banks of the famous Lake Taupo for the first 10 days and we used this time to practice as much as possible on the Whanganui river and it's sister river the Whakapapa. Both were incredible rivers that produced masses of quality rainbows and browns – some so big you simply could not control them. The stuff of dreams!

Travelling to the other two rivers meant driving for over 4 hours, so we concentrated on the Waihou River once we moved to Rotorua. We also found several rivers nearby that were of similar size and terrain to this lovely crystal clear, spring fed river. We could only look at the Waimakariri River, which was originally going to be used exclusively for practice. However, due to the drought, the Ohinemuri River had to be dropped and the Waimakariri became a Championship venue.

The fish in both these Spring Creeks were abundant and normally less than half a pound in weight. On our first practice afternoon on the Waihou, Howard and I caught 126 between us, but half that total failed to measure the statutory 18 cms. We knew we would be fishing for big totals of trout, but that many would be rejected as being too small. Every now and then however, you would hook something that disappeared down river like an express train; smashing your tippet material like cotton!

The Whanganui was an altogether different proposition. Very few fish failed to measure 18cms and many were well over the 3lb mark. It was imperative to fish strong tippet material on this river and even more importantly, to use strong hooks. Many of the flies we had tied in advance were on lightweight barbless hooks and it soon became evident that these were simply no match for any wild trout over the 2lb mark!

Lake practice

As we could not practice on the two match lakes, we tried to drive around them, but access was impossible apart from where the boats would be launched. So much different than back home! We asked the locals many questions, but most were pretty tight-lipped. We knew that the New Zealand team were well acquainted with the lakes, but then found out that the Australians, French, Americans and some of the Canadian team had been across to practice before the lakes were officially closed to competitors. So we really were at a disadvantage. It would be crucial that whoever drew the lakes on the first day would have to not only fish out of his skin, but also have to feed back as much information as possible to the rest of the team.

We had two official practice sessions on Lake Kuratau and unofficial practice was on any other lake we could find. The problem was finding a lake with similar characteristics to the Big "O" and Rotoaira – and there were not many – I personally would say none!

Both match lakes were choked with Canadian pondweed and the trout were rumoured to live in the deeper channels within these weedbeds. The locals normally anchor and fish big dry fly "bungs" with nymphs suspended beneath. In fact, this was the way many people fished the rivers as well – particularly the big rivers like the Tongariro. The Indicator flies need to be seen to be believed, but they do have to hold up some seriously heavy nymphs in a strong, swirling current.

Our 2 practice sessions on Lake Kuratau produced dozens of trout – mainly rainbows with a few browns. We looked for areas of the lake with large weedbeds and avoided the obvious fish holding areas like sunken trees and structure, as neither of the match lakes had any of these features.

We caught plenty of fish on floating lines and slimes, with Damsel patters and Nymphs, but it wasn't until we switched to DI 3 lines that we started hammering the fish. Although nymphs produced a few fish, they preferred larger patterns such as Damsels, Black Taddies and Black Boobies. Yes, the infamous Booby was certainly going to be our main top dropper fly when it came to the match lakes. Leader material had to be strong and a minimum of 8lb Fluorocarbon was obligatory to "hit and hold" these powerful trout before they weeded themselves and came unstuck.

Flies

Fly tying is an integral part of competition fishing and in Simon Robinson and Howard Croston; we had two of the fastest tiers in the business. I am not the slowest of tiers, but both Simon and Howard can tie 3 flies to my 1 most of the time!

The last time I was in New Zealand, we had awful problems sourcing good tying materials. Bringing any fur and feather into the country is fraught with problems as the customs will almost certainly confiscate the lot. Thankfully Peter Veniard had kindly agreed to sponsor the team with all our tying materials and these were delivered through the strict customs security and awaiting our arrival. What a great bit of forward planning that proved to be.

Having fished the Southern Hemisphere several times before, I was expecting the fish to want a decent mouthful of fly – and I wasn't wrong either. Even a small trout would greedily wolf-down a large Hares Ear nymph on the river in fast water. Many took size 8 Sparklers with no hesitation as they often fed hard on Smelt – a small freshwater fish not dissimilar to a bleak.

Dry fly had it's moments on the rivers, particularly when used in conjunction with nymphs. When we had the official practice on Lake Kuratau or Lake Aniwhenua, the Damsel was a killing pattern, as was the ever faithful Black Lure. I had used Black Boobies to devastating effect on the wild rainbows and browns of Canada, Australia and Tasmania – these also had the same impact on the New Zealand lake trout.

Size was important on the two smaller rivers, as was finer tippet material. Copper tungsten bead head flies were the order of the day, with small Pheasant Tail variants and Stripped Quill nymphs proving irresistible. Bog standard Gold Head Hares Ears also worked extremely well and we caught so many fish with these three patterns, we were almost certain they would work in the match on fresh fish.

So by the time of the match, we had hundreds of flies tied and were quietly confident they would work. There are always "extra's" to be tied during the Championships when someone finds a new killing pattern, but what we did not know with any confidence is what would work on the two match lakes.

The Match

During the 2 Official Practice Days, all competitors are expected to use the transportation provided and timings for departure for all the venues is strictly adhered to. Breakfast is from 5:00am and the first mini buses were scheduled to leave the Hotel at 5:45am for the longest journeys.

We treated Official Practice as if it was the Championship – believe me, having Ian Greenwood knocking on your door at 4:30am can be a daunting prospect, especially as I am not good in the mornings! Breakfast is essential, but we all feel pretty nervous prior to the match and it is not easy digesting your food. At times we should have been sponsored by Imodium!

Howard Croston drew the short straw and was scheduled to fish both lakes on the first day. I had the big river Whanganui in the morning and a rest session in the afternoon, while Simon Robinson had a rest session first and the Whanganui in the afternoon. Mick Tinnion and Andrew Dixon were drawn to fish the smaller rivers Waihou and Waimakariri.

No matter what time we were due to leave, it is an England tradition that we ALL gather to wish our team mates good luck and tight lines in the mornings. After a long day of competition, it is crucial to return to the hotel in the evening and share all information with the rest of the team. In between time, we had to eat and that was not going to leave much time as most of the buses did not come back to the hotel until 9:00pm.

What follows is my personal account of the Championships; session by session.

Day 1 - Session 1 – The Whanganui River – Beat 17

I arrived at the river to be greeted by a worrying sight – a huge crane was dragging massive rocks out of the river and using them to construct a jetty. Surely this would not affect my Beat, which was about ½ a mile downstream?

My Controller shook my hand and told me he owned all the land we were walking along. He said that the river was good here, but I could not understand why I could not see the bottom in shallow water. The river was filthy! This was the first time since I had been in New Zealand when the water was not crystal clear. The crane was still working.

I told my controller and he immediately contacted the Head Controller who informed us he was doing his best to stop the dredging. That meant all Beats below the dredger had coloured water and those above, had the huge advantage of clear water. In the words of Victor Meldrew – "I could not believe it!"

I walked my beat and concluded that there was far too much water to cover effectively in 3 hours. So I decided to start at a lovely fast run, close to the end of my beat.

At the signal to start, I dropped my 3 fly Trio cast into the tail of the run. I had a Dry Fly Sedge on the top dropper and 4 feet below that a Copper Headed Mary and a slightly bigger Mary, 4 feet below that. Four casts later my dry fly dipped under and I struck into a cracking rainbow which jumped three times and then jumped off! During the next 40 minutes, I hooked and lost another 3 fish.

These are the times in your life when you either crumble under the pressure, or come out fighting – thankfully I managed to keep it together and reassessed the situation. The river was just starting to clear and I had been told the crane had stopped dredging for the day. So I decided to start again at the bottom of my beat as if it was the start of the Session and gradually waded upstream. After 45 minutes I took my first fish to my controller – talk about being relieved! By 10am I had measured 3 fish. I had 2 hours left in my session and I set myself a target of 10 fish.

During the next 2 hours I personally think I fished the best session in my entire life. At one stage, I was measuring a trout every 4 minutes – all taken from the other side of the river and it took me a minute to wade across each time!

Once I measured 10 fish, I set myself a goal of 15 and so on. By the time I got to 25 trout, my target had become 30 fish – and I could not have dreamt of that number a couple of hours ago! So the secret is – NEVER give up. No matter how hopeless the situation might seem.

To cut a long story short, I finished the session with 28 trout and that was more than enough to finish in 1st place on my Section. I met Simon Robinson who was fishing the afternoon on the Whanganui and relayed my experiences and tactics – I wished him well and returned to the hotel for a rest session.

Day 2 - Session 3- Lake Rotoaira

Howard Croston had fished Rotoaira the previous day and taken 2 fish. He thought most boats had gone to the top of the lake, but being much bigger than Rutland, it was very difficult to ascertain where the boats were fishing. He used a DI 3 as we had in practice and a slime line to take his fish, so I opted for my best method during my time in New Zealand – a DI3 with 15 foot of 8lb Rio Fluoroflex leader and 3 flies. Top dropper was a Green bodied Black Booby, with an unweighted Dirty Damsel in the middle and a Copper Head Green Damsel on the point.

I had spoken to one of my Canadian friends, Donald Thom who had won the previous session with 5 Fish and although I did not ask him how or where he did it, he did say that it took him 25 minutes to get to where he fished.

I asked my boatman David Packman, an ex-Pat living in New Zealand, how long it would take us to get fishing at the other end of the lake and he assured me he could get us there and fishing in just 10 minutes. I trusted him completely and thanks to his Royal navy days – and a 25HP Outboard Engine – he got myself and my Japanese lady boat partner to our fishing grounds right on time.

In practice, we had been told to fish the holes in the weed, but something made me think "why not fish the deeper water that surrounds the weedbeds"? So that's what I did - and within 5 casts I hooked and landed my first rainbow of about 4lbs in weight. Due to the weed, we knew we had to "hook and hold", so you had to have complete confidence in rod, leader and hooks.

Tactics were cast a decent line – Airflo 40+ Expert D13 – then count down for 10 seconds. Two fish took on the drop. Figure of eight was the order of the day, then HANG the flies for about 5 seconds each fly. Four took on the hang. I only lost 1 fish and missed 3 other takes.

Four fish took the Booby, three took the middle dropper Damsel and three took the point fly Damsel. My tactics of avoiding the weedbeds – and the other boats – had worked. I set my drift behind the other boats and could see everything that was happening, so I knew I was doing okay.

Back at the jetty, it became clear that my 10 fish had won that Session, so I met up with Mick Tinnion to share my tactics and flies and also to get information on how he had fared on the Big O that morning.

Day 2 - Session 4 - Lake Otamangakau

Mick had taken 4 fish on the Big O from a specific weed channel. He had also lost some big fish in the weed. Slime line was best for him, but we both agreed that I ought to start with what had worked so well for me on Rotoaira. So that's what I did.

However, trying to locate any clear water on the Big O was a nightmare – the conditions were cloudy and as such, we could not see through the water. We also realised that cloud and wind in New Zealand puts the fish OFF the feed – quite the opposite to Northern Hemisphere fishing.

I spent the first 30 minutes getting hooked up in the weed and not having a touch. I did however watch a Swede catch 2 fish close to the shore, pulling a Slime line, so I sped over to cover his drift. I had to fish much faster and started to get pulls from small trout, but I could not get them to stick. So I switched to a Slime Line and put a Black Stragggle Fritz Taddy on the point, kept the Damsel on the dropper and due to the weed, discarded the top dropper completely. At the end of one retrieve I had a cracking take on the hang and bullied a near 5lb rainbow into the net – talk about relief!

I repeated the drift several times and bumped a few fish. Then the sun came out and I felt the fish were much higher in the water, so I discarded the Damsel pattern and changed to a Black Diawl Bach Nymph. First cast I hit another good rainbow on the Daiwl Bach. I'd cracked it ... or so I thought! I never had another take.

There was now just over an hour of the match remaining and I decided to gamble for the good of the team. I switched to a floater and 3 Nymphs. I fished this for 15 minutes without a take, but in this time a couple of fish had risen. Mick had told me they rose in the morning when it was sunny, so gamble number two happened in the shape of dries. I fished these on the drift for another 15 minutes, hoping to see a fish rise and also fishing the water as I would at home. Nothing!

With 30 minutes to go, I asked my Controller to take us to the other side of the lake where there was a deep channel. Word was that there were no fish here as the flow had been stopped. I changed to the Airflo 40+ Expert Slime line again with my DB and Black Lure combination. First drift across I hit a fish – and what a fish – 68.9cms to be exact.

Soon afterwards I caught a 22cm trout and lost 2 more at the net. I had finished with 4 fish and that big one had helped me beat 2 anglers who had 5 trout. With a 4th place in my Session, I now had two 1sts and a 4th – that put me in top place overall with 2 more sessions to fish.

More importantly, England were in 3rd place overall, just 2 place points ahead of the French, so our brief for the final day was "beat the Frenchman on all our Sectors and we would get a Bronze Medal – at the very least!"

Day 3 - Session 5 – Waimakariri River – Beat 8

The last 2 sessions in any World Championships are always the hardest. There have been 3 of the World's top anglers fishing hard for 9 hours before you and believe me, they often fish every single inch of water! My hardest decision was deciding what bank I wanted my Controller to stand – as they cannot enter the water once the session commences.

I walked the Beat twice and decided I wanted him on the opposite bank. I started at the tail of my Beat and had a 24cm fish on the Trio first cast. What a way to settle the nerves. I had decided to walk up my Beat fishing Trio with the same team of flies I had used on the Whanganui to such good effect, but the flies were smaller to suit this river.

I soon measured another fish, but then caught 9 on the trot that were too small. Almost an hour had passed when I reached to top of my Beat and some deeper, faster water. I switched my point fly for a heavier Copper Headed Mary and carefully worked upstream standing against the very strong current. I landed 2 more "measurers" and almost fell in twice trying to wade across to my Controller. I now wished I had asked him to stay on the other side!

Still wading cautiously upstream, I pitched my dry and nymph combo up above me in the fastest bit of water and a snout broke the surface and engulfed my Retirer Dry Fly. I struck and all hell let loose. The rainbow stripped 10 yards off my reel in an instant and then turned downstream into the fast current. My Controller offered me words of encouragement like "Don't you loose that one; it's the biggest fish in the Beat. I've been watching it every session until now. Take your time"! They were wise words.

I played it with kid gloves, as I was only using 4lb tippet and knew it could break me easily. Little by little I got below it and managed to keep it above me again - finally I got it into my landing net. My Controller cheered – and so did I! It measured 40.1cms, which was a big fish for this smaller river.

With all the commotion, I decided to fish back down the entire Beat using Spiders – something we had caught well on during practice. I tried to "dead drift" them with rod held high, watching the big loop of line for takes as my "Spider Guru" Mick Tinnion had told me.

I got take after take, but most were too small to measure. Every now and again though, I would get a decent fish and the method helped me to 10 fish for the Session and at least double that returned for being too small.

Would this be enough to beat my French opponent, Bertrand Jacqueman who was World Champion 2 years ago in Sweden? The answer was no! I was distraught. Bertrand and the other 3 competitors on my mini bus had all beaten me, so I feared the worst and felt I had let the team down.

At lunch, I met Ian Greenwood and told him my score and that I feared I would be well down in that session. He gave me loads of encouragement, but still I felt sick! Howard had fished the Waihou that morning and he too had drawn a bad Beat and only had 2 fish – we both began to feel we had blown it.

What I did not find out until 8:00pm that evening, is that the fishing had got much harder throughout and my 10 fish had earned me 6th place in the Session. Unwittingly, I was in 1st Place overall and fishing for World Champion in my last session.

Day 3 - Session 6 – Waihou River – Beat 4

I now knew that I had to beat Bertrand in my final session to give the team a chance of pipping France for a Bronze Medal. He had a good Beat and so did I. Both had produced top teens in the morning, but that also meant they would be hard in that final session. I set myself a target of at least 12 fish to beat Bertrand. As it happened, we were on the same mini bus and we were also on adjoining Beats. We shook hands and wished each other "Bon Chance" before heading for the final session of the World Championships.

My Beat was enormous – separated by a hill in the middle which took 4 minutes to run over – yes, RUN! I walked it fast up and down prior to the start and this time, decided to start half way up the second piece of river, which was gin clear and flowing faster and wider than the River Test at top water.

Once again, I started with my trusted Trio method and caught 3 trout in my first 15 minutes – my target total already looked capable of reaching. I had another on the dry fly, and then started to catch small fish – lots of them.

I fished up my Beat, and then changed to Double Nymph. Simon Robinson had done well on Stripped Quill Nymphs on the Waihou, so on they went and I started to cover the deeper pots with this technique. It worked and I caught 2 more decent rainbows, but began to feel that my Beat had been fished really hard. I cast my nymphs into all the places I felt might not have had a fly through them, but as ex World Champion Tomas Starychfojtu of the Czech Republic had previously fished my Beat; I think my entire Beat had been covered.

An hour to go and I decided to run down to the other bit of my Beat. I dropped my nymphs into a deep pool and had 5 takes in 5 drops, hooking and losing 1 decent fish in the process. These were nervous fish. They'd probably been fished for and possibly even hooked before. I went to the bottom of my Beat and changed back to trio. This produced my 7th fish.

I knew that this wasn't enough, so with 30 minutes to go, I had to make what turned out to be the most important fishing decision of my life. Should I switch to dries and target 3 fish that had risen earlier in the session on the top bit of river, or go back to nymphs and fish my beat from top to bottom.

I decided that I still needed another 5 fish and that dries would probably not get me that amount. So I switched to triple nymph and fished every nook and cranny that I could find, searching for a few fish that hadn't yet seen a fly. I caught 3 small fish and lost 1 decent rainbow, but I failed to increase my total. So that was it – 7 fish in my last session – Bertrand managed 9! I finished 10th that afternoon, being beaten by a Croatian who had 1 less fish than me and a New Zealander who also had 7 fish.

The Results

England had dropped from 3rd place overnight to finish in 6th place overall, but it had been very tight. Simon Robinson recovered from a mediocre result on Rotoaira in the morning to bag an amazing 17 fish from the Big O in his final session to take 1st spot. Howard had beaten his French opponent on the Waimakariri to lessen his disappointment of the morning session. Mick and Andrew both had tricky Beats on the Wanganui River and did well to muster 11th and 12th place respectively.

For myself, just 1 more fish in that Final Session would have secured the World Champion's Gold Medal – simple as that. The final session was really tough and I had miss-read the situation.

I was not fishing for myself, but for the Team and although I am sad at missing out on a medal, I am glad that my first thoughts were for the England Team. World Championships are all about the Team – any individual achievements are just the icing on the cake.

Had I known that England's chance of a medal had disappeared prior to that last Session and that I was fishing for a medal, I would have fished it differently. My final 30 minutes would have been all about getting anything I could – one by one. I felt I needed more fish to beat the Frenchman and that was my goal.

Ah well, equal 3rd is still something to be proud of, even if I don't have a medal to show for it. I did however win a prize for catching the longest fish of the entire World Championships!

As far as England is concerned, we proved yet again that we are not very far away from success. We practiced well, exchanged information throughout, showed boundless enthusiasm and certainly have the respect of the other Countries following our results in the last 3 World Championships. We equipped ourselves very well on all the river sessions and if anything, could have done a bit better overall on the lakes – but with no practice, that is asking a lot!

Next year the World Championships are in Scotland, utilizing 4 Stillwater venues and 1 River venue. This will be the first time in 15 years that the lake sessions will outweigh the river sessions. It should be very interesting.

Final Placings

	Teams	Place	Points
1 st	Czech Republic	125	
2 nd	New Zealand	148	
3 rd	France	164	
4 th	Poland	186	
5 th	Italy	196	
6 th	England	197	
7 th	Slovakia	202	
8 th	USA	203	
9 th	Canada	227	
10 th	Finland	229	

	Individuals	Country	Place	Points
1 st	Martin Droz	Czech Republic	20	
2 nd	Julien Daguilanes	France	20	
3 rd	Tomas Starychfojtu	Czech Republic	22	
4 th	John Horsey	England	22	
5 th	Lucjan Burda	Poland	22	
6 th	Des Armstrong	New Zealand	24	
7 th	Simon Robinson	England	24	
8 th	Janne Pirkkalainen	Finland	24	
9 th	Tomas Adam	Czech Republic	25	
10 th	Piotr Konieczny	Poland	27	

England Team	Whanganui	Rotoaira	Otamangakau	Waimakariri	Waihou	Points	Posn.
John Horsey	1 st	1 st	4 th	6 th	10 th	22	4 th
Simon Robinson	3 rd	10 th	1 st	8 th	2 nd	24	7 th
Howard Croston	9 th	8 th	7 th	9 th	16 th	49	43 rd
Andrew Dixon	12 th	9 th	9 th	17 th	6 th	53	46 th
Mick Tinnion	11 th	14 th	5 th	17 th	6 th	53	47 th