

## Sandy Dickson - Backgrounder

Born and bred in Scotland, Sandy grew up in a family passionate about fishing. You could say that Sandy was literally born into fishing as the house that he was born in faced onto the river Clyde. So Sandy grew up spending all his time at or on the river. The youngest of three boys, Sandy soon became the fly tyer for his two brothers, though he was pleased to learn dry fly fishing from one brother and wet fly fishing from his other brother. Sadly Sandy's Father died when he was very young but Sandy says that his Mother ran an efficient and well ordered home!

Their home was always full of fishing equipment, flies or fantastic stories. Sandy fondly remembers 'Old Jock Miller' and the many hours he would, as a small boy, watch Old Jock tying flies. Sandy would, with his chin on the table, stand in awe watching a master at work. It was thanks to Old Jock Miller that Sandy was introduced to Mr Campbell.

It was this very special family friend, Mr Campbell, who really inspired Sandy with his fly tying. In Sandys' eyes Mr Campbell was the best Clydesdale tyer and fisherman around and is still, to today, an unsung hero. Though it's fair to say that growing up in such a prolific fly fishing part of the world, Sandy was surrounded by famous fly tyers and fishermen – Bert Sharp, Reid and Clegg.

Sandy started fishing seriously at the age of 13 and was never without a rod in his hand. Due to the position of his home, being on the top of the hill overlooking the Clyde, Sandy soon learnt how to read the river – that was on the occasions when he was not actually on the river! As his experiences grew, fly fishing started to take over his life. As a married man to Kath, their home was always full of people calling in for advice or having lessons. The house was never quiet.

### The Essential Trout & Salmon Fly Company



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When asked of his proudest fishing moment, Sandy could easily state the many special salmon he has caught whilst fishing all over Scotland or around the world. But no, to Sandy, his proudest moment was when he caught his first salmon on the Clyde as previously it had been devoid of salmon for so many years.

Of course, Sandy only uses his own flies when fishing and he is a very humble man. But when pressed, he discloses that his best salmon catch was a 26.5lb salmon caught on the Leven. This was the best salmon on that river for 10 years! Funnily enough, though not for poor Sandy, his record was beaten the following Monday! Of course, Sandy went on to have super catches such as sea trout on the Spey at over 9lb, grayling over 3.5lb and umpteen double figure rainbow trout – all caught on his own buzzers.

Sandy is particularly proud of his buzzers. These buzzers are so slim, he says that they make Amy Whinehouse look obese! He has a special technique on the silk, a secret within the thorax that makes it fire up quickly. Sandy's Buzzers were so successful that he was sued over them! Using a long leader of 20' a boat fisherman tied one of Sandy's buzzers on the point, dropped it into the water and then proceeded to tie in a dropper on the long leader, unfortunately the buzzer was hit almost immediately proceeding to tug the dropper buzzer directly into the fisherman's hand. Sandy won the case and more fame because of the success of his buzzers.

It was when Oliver Edwards admired Sandy's work and told him that he was good enough to turn professional that Sandy really had a career change. So over the years, Sandy's career took him from having his own shops through to working for Avro (who later became Firefly), to Crystal River and then Fulling Mill and most recently The Essential Fly.

There are so many highlights in Sandy's career so far but there are some that cannot be missed. These include the creation of Sandy's SPG and Fly Tying Kits, his involvement in the creation of The Anglers Alanac 'Which Fly Should I Use?', umpteen articles in the national

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press and culminating in the presentation of one of Sandy's flies to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at a Civic Reception.

Over the years Sandy has admired the work of many fly fishing professionals. Including those of Charles Jardine, whom Sandy considers an icon and of course Oliver Edwards, a Master in Sandy's eyes and the man who got him on the road to professional fly tying.

In fact, Charles has said that Sandy is "One of the greatest innovators I have ever come across", a comment that Sandy is extremely proud of. Charles went on to say that Sandy's patterns are "completely divine". What more can anyone say?

Today, Sandy loves nothing more than to be engrossed in tying flies coming up with innovative and exciting new patterns. His passion and knowledge is never ending, though he admits he is still learning every day. He will never forget Mr Campbell's advice to "go and look at the water" and it's from here that Sandy gets his inspiration.

His role today within The Essential Fly as Professional Fly Tyer and Consultant is keeping him very busy and totally occupied. He has been known to work all night without realising it! When asked for Sandy's Essential Flies he says for still waters it has to be his Anorexic Buzzer, he can't be without it. For salmon it's a Wobble Shrimp and for grayling his famous SPG.

So it's business as usual from here on for Sandy – lots of new patterns that are bound to be different. Here's looking forward to the next new exciting round of flies from Sandy!

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