



## THE TESTERS



### MIKE WEAVER

Mike Weaver has been a fly-fisher for more than 50 years and has cast a fly on countless trout rivers throughout Great Britain and Ireland, as well as farther afield. His speciality is river trout and he frequently fishes the streams of the South-West, where he lives. He writes regularly for *Trout and Salmon* and is author of *The Pursuit of Wild Trout* and contributor to several other angling books. Now retired, he was the first chairman of the Wild Trout Trust.

### RICHARD SLOCOCK

Richard Slocock has fished for around 50 years from a very young age, and became qualified as a fly casting instructor nearly 30 years ago. He is the proprietor of Wessex Chalk Streams, which offers trout fishing on the Piddle and Frome in Dorset. He was the founder of REFFIS and is a past chairman of the Wild Trout Trust, of which he was a founder.

**T**HERE IS PROBABLY no such thing as an all-round fly-rod for trout fishing but the combination of a nine-footer and an AFTM 5 line certainly ticks many of the boxes, so this is an important part of any angler's armoury.

This is the ideal rod for any medium to large chalkstream, especially where wading is not permitted and a bit of length is needed to reach over bankside vegetation. For fishing rivers of any type or size, whether with a dry-fly, wet-fly or nymph, a longish rod gives extra control. And, although a little river with overhead branches is no place for a 9 ft rod, there are many tiny streams in open moorland where the longer rod keeps the line off the water and the angler in better touch with the fly.

Except on big heavy streams, a 9 ft rod and five-weight line can often be used for sea-trout, as it can in many stillwater situations – on small lakes where long casting is not required or perhaps for light-line boat fishing.

For the many anglers who travel to far-flung rivers in the Rockies, New Zealand and elsewhere, the nine-footer for a five-weight line has much to commend it. Portability becomes a factor and rods of four pieces or more offer advantages when packing for air travel – a four-piece rod will often fit into a large duffel bag, thus avoiding separation from the main baggage, which can be a recipe for delay or worse.

When the testers started fishing about half a century ago, a 9 ft rod in split cane weighed anything from 6 oz to as much as 8 oz. Today the marvels of carbon-fibre mean that you can expect a rod of the same length and power to weigh as little as 3 oz. Testing was done on a cold grey day with rain and a strong wind, which gave the rods a severe testing. Fortunately, there was a bankside hut, which provided shelter for examining the rods and making notes – and a chance for the testers to warm up. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

**RODS UNDER £150**

### Airflo Delta Classic AFTM 5/6 Price £59.99

*A three-piece rod with over-fit joints and alignment spots. Dark brown blank and whippings. Lined butt ring, 10 single-leg intermediate rings and loop tip ring. Keeper ring. Half wells cork handle. Up-locking double-nut screw reel fitting. Rod bag and tube with shoulder strap.*



#### MIKE WEAVER

This rod offers excellent smooth casting at all distances with a good reserve of power for longer casts. The casting performance combined with a high-quality finish and specification at a very low price make it ideal for the most budget-conscious angler.

#### RICHARD SLOCOCK

This rod handled very well. The rod is sensitive and is a pleasure to cast with. Superb value, with an excellent finish for the price.



#### RATINGS OUT OF 10

**Performance 8.5 Value for money 9 Overall 8.75**

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### Distinction Moy Fly AFTM 5/6 Price £59.99

*A three-piece rod with over-fit joints. Dark grey blank with dark blue whippings. Two lined butt rings, seven snake intermediate rings and loop tip ring. Keeper ring. Half wells cork handle. Up-locking single-nut screw reel fitting. Rod bag and tube with handle and shoulder strap.*



#### MIKE WEAVER

First impression was of a rather crude handle – a bit thick for the average-size hand. Although it cast fairly well, the lack of authority was noticeable when casting upwind, especially as other rods at the same price performed rather better.

#### RICHARD SLOCOCK

Crude roughish handle. Tip section makes rod feel its price. Too soft to give an overall feel of any substance but managed reasonably well.



#### RATINGS OUT OF 10

**Performance 6 Value for money 6 Overall 6**

#### RATINGS OUT OF 10

**Performance 5 Value for money 5 Overall 5**