

# Review Time

This month's review is on the Chris Clemes Symphony 7ft 3wt Bamboo Rod

All reviews are impartial and honest reviews undertaken by the editor.

If you want an honest and frank review of your fly fishing tackle please email me at [editor.scottishflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:editor.scottishflyfisher@gmail.com) and I will be happy to review your products.



When I first started fly fishing about 50 years ago my first rod was made of bamboo as I managed to get it cheap along with all the fly fishing gear I needed from an old neighbour; and it was some rod to handle as a small thin spotted faced stick of a kid at 12 years old.

The last time I had used it was about 40 years ago (where does time go too so quickly) due to it getting a wee bit worse for wear and the tip of the rod breaking off.

When Chris Clemes asked me to take one of his bamboo rods out for a wee trial for the tackle review page; I still had the mentality of when I was a kid, fishing with a bamboo rod was a nightmare and a bit hard to get used too due to it's action.

***Boy how wrong I was!!***

When I first received the Symphony range 7ft 3wt rod it looked absolutely amazing. From the top traditional Red Agate and Black Nickel Snake Rings to the downlocking Premium Nickel Silver sliding band; you could see it was finished off to a very high standard; here was one of Chris Clemes beautiful rods of honey coloured cane with red and black whippings, the cane impregnated and everything about it looking so delicate. The Symphony rod comes with an extra tip section from the same culm of bamboo and with identical node spacing along the blank and made to a Black Beauty taper.

The rod and bag look simple and purposeful. Even the metal rod case looked special. Somehow the ceremony of unscrewing the silver coloured cap and lifting the heavy cap end off seems appropriate with a cane rod, I suspect I would find it all a little too much, too ostentatious, for a normal bloke like me. Maybe that's because I knew cane rods are hand-made, that someone spent years learning the craftsmanship required to make such a beautiful rod.

I couldn't wait to get out on the water and give the rod a good try out.



I suppose I should have gotten myself a silk line for the rod, but I tried the rod out with two floating lines to match the rod weight: a 3 weight forward floating and a tapered floating line.

I found that the tapered floating line was a lot better and smoother running through the snake rings for delicate presentation of the size 18/20 dry flies I was using on the Peebles beat of the River Tweed and the River Clyde at Abington.

You could feel the rod loading really smoothly and casting a line out on to the water to present the fly was a lot smoother than when using a normal modern carbon fly rod, I think this was due to the well balanced layout and make of the rod.

When fighting a fish the rod handled it extremely well and you could control the fish a lot better without using too much force like you would with a modern rod.

When using the rod I found that I had slowed down my casting quite a bit due to the slower action of the rod, but it didn't put me off. In fact it was such a pleasure for a change to relax and really enjoy my days fishing and the surroundings I was in. For an old man I've never felt so alive and relaxed after a good days fishing. What a brilliant rod to fish with.

For the bamboo rod aficionado; this would be a great rod to add to their collection and would have great pleasure for years to come when out on the water casting to some rising wild brownies.



Whether it's a custom finishing one of the Chris Clemes celebrated bamboo fly rods or commissioning a bespoke build from the start they promise to deliver expert guidance and an exceptional fly rod that will not only serve your own current fishing requirements but those of generations to come. Each fly rod is unique, and the result of cooperation between the customer and their workshop in order to meet your exact requirements. Chris can make their rods to resemble the actions of a carbon rod with more power in the butt section.

Starting at £1,500.00 the rods might be expensive for some people; however once held, a Chris Cleme fly rod will be the rod for the true fly fishing enthusiast, as they will immediately understand their pure quality; the balanced weight; the smooth casting action; even their smell. These qualities give these beautifully refined fly rods a substance and character that can only improve the overall fly fishing experience.

If you want to order one of these magnificent rods from Chris Clemes, mention the magazine and you can get a free silk line worth £135.00 specially made to suit your rod, see advert page for details.



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