

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

Fishing Report

14 June 2017



Persistent low water has been the feature since the start of the season. Even when we did have rain there was barely enough to register on the gauge. I'm not sure if this is the reason why the fish have been so skittish but my hook-up rate has been appalling just lately - and on the Derwent too. I just can't seem to connect at the moment and on one occasion I missed seven on the trot before eventually hooking a good fish, only to lose it after a searing run. It may of course be just down to age & incompetence or perhaps my habit of switching between different rods. Whatever the reason, I'm going to have to give myself a serious talking to.

Fortunately, there is more to fishing etc. so The Doctor and I arranged to meet the EHK one evening at Duffers for a pre-fishing curry from Buxton Tandoori, just like old times. It was a beautiful evening and we had the place to ourselves. The conversation ranged widely and politically incorrectly so it was difficult to tear ourselves away to do some actual fishing.

The Doctor elected to inspect his Back Passage, while I continued down to Freddie's and got in adjacent to the metal bridge in the pool below. Painfully low, barely ankle deep and gin clear. A few fish rising in the ripples, quite vigorously. This should have set me thinking but I was on auto pilot and made the assumption that they would be taking spinners, of which there were many dancing over the faster sections. I put on a Cranked Shank Spinner and proceeded to put down

most of the rising fish. I did fool a couple of small rainbows but even these managed to shake the hook after a brief acquaintance. I saw a good fish move in a deep hole, close to the far bank, switched to a Klinkhamer and had him on the first run down. A wild fish of about 14 inches. At last! But the penny still hadn't dropped and I proceeded to fish the fizzy water below the weir with the same fly. Another good fish briefly on and off, then I moved into Freddie's proper. The bottom end had a few fish showing but it was too low and clear to get in and approach them as I would have liked. I was however able to get into a good position among the butterburr to cover the lowest fish but it showed no interest. I changed back to the spinner, this time one with an orange post, as the light was starting to go. Getting into the deep water just below the head of the pool I paused to consider my options. A fish had started to rise opposite me on the far side. It could have been covered with a roll cast but I risked getting tangled up in the branches around me. I hadn't got time to deal with the consequences of a tangle. I decided to sacrifice this fish to concentrate on others that were rising ahead of me. The overhanging branches dictated a horizontal cast but even so my first attempt ended up in them. Minutes of faffing ensued as a new fly was tied on. Next time it landed right and was swallowed by a good brownie rising mid river. The next two came adrift, but then I hooked a very good fish close in to the bank. I was still not happy that my fly was right but I was running out of time and they would just have to do with the spinner, which, by and large they did.

Later, when I'd found the Doctor, he had experienced similar frustration but had the consolation of a 2 pounder from Presidents. Over a pint in the Angler's, with the pressure off, we mused that these fish might have been taking *Agepetus caddis*. This could have accounted for the splashy, urgent rises, rather than the languid rise forms of spinner feeders. If only I'd had the forethought to pump out one of the fish I'd landed I might have found the answer in time for an outstanding evening. Must try harder in future and take time to think!

News of the start of the Mayfly hatch started to reach me around the end of May but before I could get out again the rains came - big time! On the 6th June, just at the time when the

hatch should have been at its peak, the river went up from 0.16 to 0.60 metres in a matter of hours and the river was completely blown out. Now this is not necessarily a bad thing during the Mayfly and God knows, we needed the water. Despite the flood, Malcolm Goude posted on Facebook that he'd had 18 fish, including two 3 pounders, the following day at Locked Bridge. Five years ago we had a very wet June and I remember Chris Pryor telling me he'd witnessed a hatch of Biblical proportions in Duffers when the river was steaming through as brown as chocolate.

I had a couple of guests on the river on the 9th, by which time it was back to 0.32 but still a little coloured. Bill Ryan was in the Hut making a cup of tea, and he showed me a photo



of a superb brownie he'd taken a day or two earlier at the height of the floods, confirming what I always say - the Wye is rarely unfishable!

We spent the day up in the Dale and although the Mayfly were in evidence they were not in the numbers sufficient to get the fish rising with wild abandon. However, a speculative cast with a Gray Wulff or similar produced fish with pleasing regularity. There were plenty of Yellow Sally stoneflies egg laying at the heads of the pools and some pretty big spinners (not Mayflies) which could have been Turkey Browns. I say this because I captured a largish dun in a back eddy which was confirmed later to be a Turkey Brown by Stuart Crofts himself. Whatever, it was one of those days when fish were caught but there was no clear answer to what the fish might be feeding on.

So, all in all, a funny old Mayfly this year and I can report it has been the same on the

Derwent too. I suppose that we should come to accept this with the Mayfly as in my experience it never seems to live up to expectations. At least we can look forward to a return to proper fly fishing over the next few weeks as the Blue Winged Olive starts to put in an appearance. Start looking out for Soldier Beetles on the Cow Parsley, always a good terrestrial pattern to try on hot summer days, particularly when it's breezy.

Tight lines!
David Marriott