

## Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

### Fishing Report

14 July 2017

I'm afraid my June fishing has been almost non-existent due to domestic commitments but this was more than made up for by the arrival of a 6 pounder on the 22nd - my new granddaughter India!

On the 29th we were privileged to have Stuart Crofts with us once again for our annual Bugs & Burgers Evening. As usual, the weather was against us but at least the river wasn't totally blown out like it was last year. In fact, the dull, damp conditions were ideal for insect collecting. In very short order during the afternoon, Stuart was able to collect examples of all the major upwings, caddis and stoneflies he would expect to find at this time of the year. As the light began to fade Stuart examined the contents of his In Stream Insect Trap or "ISIT". To my mind it was disappointingly



empty, apart from a few Blue Winged Olive nymphal shucks. However, as Stuart pointed out, this was what we should expect to see in the damp conditions. Had it been a fine evening there would have been evidence of Blue Winged Olive Spinners but because of the rain they had retreated to the bushes to await better egg laying conditions. This would almost certainly be

the following morning because they had a very short life span and needed to get on with it!

Before the science bit, we were treated to



cheese burgers courtesy of the EHK. He used to worry that he might not have enough to go round but now he takes the view that when they're

gone they're gone and if you're still hungry, get yourself down to MacDonalDs!

Stuart's comment about the early morning spinner fall lodged in my mind so I decided to get up early the next day to put this knowledge to the test. I was on the river for about 7:00 am and was slightly irritated to find that it had risen slightly and was still quite badly coloured. I started on beat 5 but there was nothing doing and nagging doubts began to creep

in. After an hour or so I decided to drive up to Cressbrook Mill and walk by the lake up to Freddie's. As I did so the sun came out and fish started to show in the flats above the water wheel. By the time I'd reached the Iron Bridge I could see several spinners on the wing and my confidence was renewed. As a bonus, there was a Peregrine Falcon calling insistently above me. I caught a glimpse of it with something in its talons, maybe trying to lure its young out from one of the ledges far above.

I put on a Cranked Spinner and started on the shallows. Immediately I had an offer, which I missed, followed by several lovely wild browns which came to hand. This pattern was repeated all the way up the pool,



browns being replaced by wild rainbows as I reached the faster runs. I was probably missing half the rises, so fast were the offers,

but it was great fun. What I found was that most takes came when I was holding pretty much all of the line off the water, quasi Tenkara - style, and also when I'd dried and dusted the fly so that it was sitting on, rather than in, the surface. By 10:00 am it was all over. Thanks Stuart!

The Cranked Spinner is a great pattern which Stuart has popularised via his fly tying demos. I'm sure I've written about it before but it is worth a reprise. The hook shank is bent about 20 degrees in the

horizontal plane before tying, to represent the contorted body of a spent spinner. The tails and the wing consist of strands of organza and the body is a light dubbing of rust Wapsi Superfine. The wing is tied in to lie flat on the surface either side of which a red game hackle is wound and clipped flat below. That is the correct dressing. Because my eyesight is no longer what it was I now dispense with the organza wing and replace it with a parachute hackle around a post of orange Aero Wing, making it much easier to track, especially in low light conditions. I hope Stuart doesn't mind my variations! By the way, our Blue Winged Olives are tiny and even a size 18 might be considered too big. If you are getting plenty of offers but not hooking up, try dropping a size (as I should have done but I didn't have any small ones in my box). And check out the naturals.



A week or so later the river was back to normal but the weather was swelteringly hot and humid. It was no use fishing during the day but I was minded to try the last hour or so at New Bridge, where I have done well with spinners in the past. My plan was to observe the water from the seat at Lupton's and not to fish until the fish started to move in earnest. At first there was very little showing, just the odd desultory rise in Lupton's. I soon got bored with this and thought I might try one of the fish that was rising under the overhanging

tree. I should add that I'd seen plenty of Soldier Beetles on the Cow Parsley on my way up from the car park so I'd put on one of the orange foam beetles devised by Keith Burtonwood and Don Stazicker to represent this beastie. Balancing precariously on the weir I shot it under the tree, whereupon it was seized as soon as it hit the water. The fish felt like a good one but it came adrift before I could net it. As I repositioned myself on the weir, I became aware that I was surrounded by a huge swarm of BWO spinners, dancing over the fast water. This was what I'd been waiting for. I spent 10 minutes catching a few for Stuart's survey. It's amazing how they seemed to know my intentions because once I'd caught a few, the whole swarm moved downstream out of reach!

My plan now was to get into the next pool and very quietly start to move upstream through the shallows, picking off the odd fish until I reached the faster water of the run-in adjacent to the cow drink, where I anticipated spinner activity at the witching hour. This plan had worked on previous occasions but apart from a brief on-off this time I failed miserably. By the time I reached the run-in it was 9:15pm. There must have been a dozen fish showing either side of the main current and in between the weed beds above. I felt quietly confident. I knew that the BWOs were active; I had on the Cranked Spinner and I was spoilt for choice. What could possibly go wrong? The first couple of fish, on my side of the tongue of current, completely ignored the fly. I suspected drag. I repositioned myself and tried on the other side, covering several rises. Again, nothing. I dried the fly and gave it good dusting of Dry Shake, which brought a take but I struck too soon, just turning the fish over. I was reluctant to change flies in the failing light but I was thinking that the dun, rather than the spinner, might be on the menu. With some difficulty I put on a s18 Para Adams and

this time I hooked a fish and actually brought it to hand, a lovely wild brownie. I managed two more of a similar stamp before the light went, leaving me somewhat underwhelmed. I'm not convinced that I'd found the answer - rather I just got lucky with the drag.

Finally, I thought I should mention that we have been experiencing unprecedented numbers of poaching incidents this year. So far there have been 27 incidents compared with just 16 for the same period last year. Generally the police response has been excellent and our keepers have been magnificent. I'm sure that members will want to join me in praising their bravery & dedication in dealing with these criminals. As always, may I remind you that if you are unfortunate enough to witness poaching in progress, DO NOT intervene yourself. Try not to alert them and if possible take a note of their vehicle registration number. Call the keepers (their numbers are on the reverse of your membership card) or dial 999 and report a "crime in progress".

Tight lines!  
David Marriott