

CRESSBROOK & LITTON FLYFISHERS

FISHING REPORT

31 MARCH 2015

Opening Day dawned frosty, the temperature having dropped to - 4 degrees C overnight. The forecast was good however, so I decided to make an early start in the hope of getting a few fish under my belt before engaging in the traditional festivities at Duffers.

I was driving down towards Litton Mill when I met Keeper Whittle on his early morning patrol. He told me only John Friend had beaten me to it and he was down below the Mill. President's was his recommendation, so after a brief chat I went back and parked up at the bottom of the pool. The river was gin clear and I could see numbers of fish in mid water. I flicked my Bentt's Bug into the edge and pulled off a few yards of line. As I lifted to re-cast I found myself attached to a feisty rainbow which was most reluctant to come in. The sun was on the pool now and a much bigger fish was evident, just ahead of a rock. The bug had hardly started on its journey when the fish pounced on it, another rainbow, this time about 2 lbs. I kept moving quickly up the pool, picking up rainbows along the way - there was no mistaking the takes, the line shooting away every time. I didn't fish the run-in, nor did I trouble the pool between President's and Harry's, conscious that others would be following me later. I did have a few more fish at the top of Harry's however, this time on a s.16 Orange Spot Shrimp, a fly that has often served me well early season. It was pleasing to see the luxurious weed growth in Harry's, which bodes well for the rest of the season.

By now it was 9.30, so I decided it was time to make my appearance at Duffers, where

no doubt a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich would be waiting for me, along with the usual crew of sociable fishermen, ne'er do wells and hangers-on.

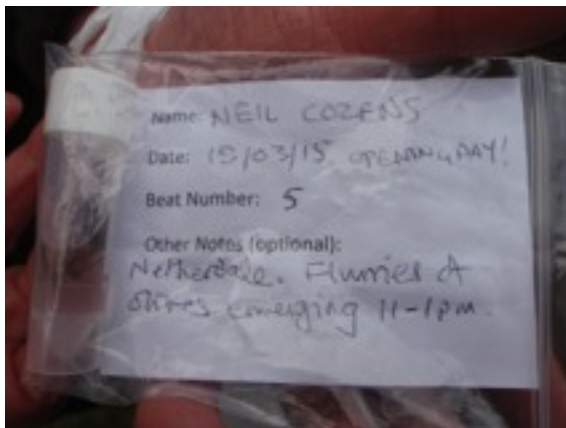
The car park was full - there must have been 30 or more members gathered there, with more coming and going as the morning progressed. The Erstwhile Head Keeper was in serene mood, dispensing bacon, tomatoes, mushrooms and insults to the happy throng. He had thoughtfully reserved a private parking space for the President, who, on arriving fashionably late, was welcomed with "Hail to the Chief" played on the Percival iPod. The same equipment was later used to accompany the singing of the Opening Day Hymn, although regrettably the libretto was not quite on all fours with the music, the words carrying on for a verse or two after the music ended. No matter, the members, now beyond embarrassment, carried on manfully until the hymn was over.



Finally, in an act of uncharacteristic kindness, the ETHK presented a proper Chef's hat to his long suffering Sous-Chef, Stuart Crofts, promoting him sideways to Petit Chef on the spot.

Members gradually dispersed up and down the river, leaving just a few die-hards in the Hut putting the world to rights. Before we knew it, lunch time was upon us and Duffers filled up once again with hungry anglers, ready to do justice to Chris Pryor's Chicken Broth and Neil Cozens Curry, accompanied by authentic Samosas and Dips supplied by Jim Daniels.

It was difficult to motivate ourselves to get back into the river, but those who did were rewarded with smattering of Large Dark Olives which brought the trout to the



surface. If you could tear yourself away from the fishing, this was an ideal opportunity to start collecting samples for Stuart Crofts' Upwing & Stonefly Project mentioned recently in the Newsletter. Test tubes and labels are now available in the Huts, along with instructions, so please do not hesitate to take part.



Ainslie Kelly took himself up to Chee Dale to get away from the crowds and was rewarded with 14 browns and 2 rainbows, all wild fish, on an Elk Hair Caddis! One of the best fish I heard of was a superb rainbow of around 3.5 lbs landed by Chris Pryor, although Andy Middleton probably should take first prize, landing a fish of similar size on a 7' 6" 3-wt made for him by a friend. This fish came out of Harry's. Hilary Langan, in her inimitable style, landed a cracking two and a half pounder from under the bushes in Duffers, while Brian Garner found himself in the middle of a full-on Large Dark Olive hatch in the flats above Locked Bridge. He had three on



the dry while chatting with Chris, but the curse of the keeper meant that only one came to hand.

The weather stayed fine into the weekend and Sunday looked like it was going to be the better day. Once the chores were out of the way, I popped over to the Derwent and was on the water for 11.30. I was hoping to coincide with a hatch of Large Darks but there was nothing showing as I got in at Beat 8. I put on a Pheasant Tail Nymph, with a rusty olive Klinkhamer on the dropper and started to prospect in the quieter water at the edge of the main run. Soon the Klink hesitated and I lifted into a nice rainbow on the PTN. A few casts later and the Klink itself had some attention. As usual, I fluffed my first on the dry but a cast or two later and I was into a little

brownie. Two on the surface - I didn't need any further bidding, so I took off both flies and resumed business with a Baetis Cripple. As I did so, I saw my first Olive riding the waves. It was 12.45, right on cue. I didn't see any rises but the Olives were increasing in number as I moved up into the next pool. Here the water is quite deep at the tail of the run but it shallows out opposite the big rock that creates the riffle. I was still in the deep section when I saw a head break the surface no more than a rod's length in front of me. My fly was not quite on track but as I lifted the rod to recast I saw the fish move across to intercept it. A very nice brown of about 2lbs. An out of season grayling was my next victim, this time in the faster water. Then, as I started to cover the shallows I saw a cracking rainbow come over to the fly, hesitate, then nail it. The fish wallowed around as though it couldn't make out what had happened, then it shot away across and downstream. I let it have its head in the deep water, then gradually pumped it back upstream - I certainly wasn't going to chase after it. It was a beautiful fish of around 2 and a half pounds with a very vivid pink stripe - almost certainly the same fish I'd had from the same spot when grayling fishing in the snow the day after Boxing Day.

Although it was quite pleasant in the sun, the deep wading had chilled me to the bone. I got out and walked up to the next beat but it seemed that the Olives had called it a day, and so did I, well pleased with my first fish of the season on the dry.

Prospects for the next few weeks remain good, provided the levels stay at a reasonable height. Low, clear water is not what we want in early Spring. For those intending to spend a full day on the water, the nymph will be the best bet for starters, always being on the alert for a change to the emerger or dry if there is any Olive

activity. This can usually be relied on to take place from late morning to early afternoon at this time of the year, so give lunch a miss! The fish will often target the emerging fly in preference to the dun, so if you find your dry being ignored amidst a rise, switch to Crofty's Olive Emerger or a Baetis Cripple. Large Dark Olive spinners tend to return to the river in penny numbers. They are one of those species that crawl down rocks into the water to lay their eggs, so they are not good value from a fishing point of view. However, the spent females will find their way into the water column and may account for the success of traditional North Country patterns such as the Greenwell's Glory and Partridge & Orange. Who knows!

Tight lines,
David

P.S.

Thieves tried to break into the Hut at Duffers on the night of the 22nd but fortunately the bolt held and they didn't gain access.



They also tried to remove the barbecue without success and there was evidence of a hand line being used. However, there seemed to be no shortage of fish in Duffers

on the following day so it looks like they were a pretty hopeless bunch. However, this sort of thing has happened before, so we must be on our guard for a return visit. The barbecue has been taken to a place of safety so if you want to use it, let Chris know and he will get it for you.