

CRESSBROOK & LITTON FLYFISHERS

FISHING REPORT

30 APRIL 2015

I'd not been able to get on the river, apart from a short evening session at Locked Bridge, so I thought I'd give Tony Goodwin a call to see how he'd been faring since the start of the season.

He confirmed that like most of us, he'd witnessed a full on rise to Large Dark Olives on Opening Day but since then, although he'd seen hatching flies on most visits, they were sporadic trickle hatches and rising fish had been at a premium. He had therefore concentrated on fishing the nymph and had enjoyed considerable success as a result. He had experienced one remarkable Red Letter day when it was almost too easy. In fact he decided to stop fishing when his tally had reached 20, even though it meant going home early, knowing that to fish on would be unfair to members following behind him. He couldn't believe the quality of the fish he was catching and the confidence of the takes he was getting. Tony is an excellent



fly tier and the little Pheasant Tail variant he was using was featured in our Flies for the Wye booklet we published a couple of years ago.

A day or two later he'd spent some time pottering about adjacent to the Locked

Bridge and on this occasion it was a gusty day and he had to work for his fish. Again, there was little fly in evidence and those fish he saw rise tended to be "oncers", but he amassed a reasonable bag and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Being in the right place at the right time can be pure chance - later in the day he met new member Pete Eville who had fished up from New Bridge, finding plenty of rising fish in a sheltered reach.

Both Tony and Stuart Crofts mentioned that they had witnessed spawning grayling chasing about on the shallows below the Bobbin Mill Weir, with some very big fish in evidence. Where these fish go in the grayling season we would all very much like to know! Stuart had also seen trout shadowing the grayling, presumably waiting for stray eggs. This reminded me that we have given permission to a filmmaker to attempt to record rainbows spawning this Spring, something apparently that has not been done before. So if you see someone lurking about with an underwater camera please give him a wide berth.

More recently I had a Monday morning to myself so I popped down to New Bridge for a couple of hours. It was cold and misty at first, then gradually the sun burnt through, although there was still a chill in the air. I had fished up to the flats with a nymph before I saw my first rise. The river looked gorgeous, gin clear, with the gravels shining through the runs between the weed. Another rise, then an Olive fluttering past made up my mind - off came the nymph and an IOBO Humpty took its place. I sent it out over the area I'd seen the rise and second run down there was a fish onto the fly. I let him turn over then lifted the rod, feeling that steady thump of a good fish. As I was playing the fish I noted another rise close in to the bank. I quickly brought the fish to hand, took out the hook and

slipped him back. A quick rinse of the fly, a squeeze in amadou and a squirt of Dry Shake Spray and I was back in business. The banker took a little more time but eventually the drift was right and out he came. I could see that this was developing into a full on rise and, deadly as the Humpty is, I needed a more robust pattern to save faffing between fish. Recalling Carl Brumby's recent success with the Parachute Adams I put one on and immediately it was of interest, although I botched the next rise. By now I was spoilt for choice, with fish moving all over the river. In short order I took several more fish, all wild, mostly browns around the 12 inch mark. As quickly as it started, the rise was over, or should I say, I'd fished out the streamy section and run out of rising fish.

Last year at Mayfly time, Don Stazicker played host to Richard Baker, Deputy Editor of Trout & Salmon. I am reliably informed that an article about the day will be featured in the June edition. Inexplicably, this will be on sale from 7 May, which in my book makes it the May issue, but maybe that's just me being pedantic. Anyway, if you don't normally buy this comic, make this month the exception.

Duffers was the venue for our first Rivercraft Day of 2015, hosted by Don Stazicker, Stuart Crofts and Steve Yeomans. I came along to assist the EHK



with the catering, and learned a great deal more than was strictly necessary about the preparation and cooking of fried onions. The weather was a little mixed, but nothing we couldn't cope with. Everyone seemed very happy with the event and hopefully went away with heads full of new ideas.



I stole a couple of hours on the river after lunch, fishing up from the Church. Olives were hatching all the way back to Duffers in little spurts, and the fish were on the fin. I enjoyed non-stop action with a size 16 Parachute Adams. These were all wild fish, the majority rainbows, the best being about a pound or so. It was noticeable that the most of the rises were on the sunny side of the stream. Chatting to Stuart later, I asked him about the Olives - did he think they were Large Dark or Medium Olives? Stuart's theory is that these smaller flies are still LDOs, the nymphs of which are of a later generation than those which we saw hatching around Opening Day, and have consequently had less time to grow. He mentioned that in the kick samples he'd taken that morning there were many nymphs of the Olive upright, *Rithrogena semiclorata*, which will be the next major hatch over the coming weeks. Also on the menu will be Iron Blues, a fly to look out for on rough, stormy days. These are easily overlooked but not by the fish! They seem to be more prevalent on the lower beats below Monsal Dale. Now is also the time for

the Hawthorn Fly which starts to swarm as the blossom appears on the eponymous bushes. We need breezy conditions to get these bumbling flies on the water to bring up the big'uns!

Dr Cyril Bennett has long been a friend of C&L and indeed it was he who inspired the EHK to reintroduce the Mayfly to our waters. He has a superb collection of photographs of the major groups of insects of interest to fly fishers and he has now put them to use in a new Mobile App called Match a Hatch. This can be downloaded from the App Store for a very modest £1.49. You can bring up photos of what is hatching now, or you can scroll through the months of the year to find out what is likely to be hatching in future. A quick swipe across and you are able to find photos of recommended imitations. My only criticism is that some of the patterns are a bit too traditional for my liking, but I'm sure they must work, having stood the test of time. Thoroughly recommended.

I don't wish to perturb you unduly, but it seems that this season we are being targeted by a particularly abusive and threatening bunch of poachers of the itinerant persuasion. There are about eight of them and they are extremely intimidating, as both the locals and our keepers have discovered to their cost. Regrettably, the police response has been woefully inadequate and so far they have failed to catch them. I must remind you once again that if you come across these people, do not challenge them but beat a hasty retreat and phone the keepers.

Meanwhile, tight lines!

David