

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

Fishing Report 1 April 2015



After a week of mild and Spring-like weather, Opening Day dawned overcast and cold. In recent years I've taken to starting early, before calling in at Duffers for breakfast later on. I headed for Miller's Dale and was minded to try Presidents, only to find that Tony Goodwin had beaten me to it. We had a quick catch-up then I pressed on down to Freddie's, where I had the river to myself. As I started to tackle up I could hear what sounded like a peregrine calling and I wondered if there was a nest on the crags above me. I hope so.

There now followed a monstrous faffing session, for which I partly blame fellow member and good friend Mark Ritson. He told me that he had recently purchased a monocle to assist with tying on his flies and for some ridiculously misguided reason I thought this would be a good idea for me too. So I purchased one and discarded my usual readers. To start with, the damn thing kept falling out at the crucial moment, then I realised that I needed binocular vision to thread the line. All the while my fingers were becoming numb with cold and I was actually thinking about packing in before I'd even

started. I soldiered on and eventually got the fly on, only to lose it immediately when the rod tip and line became entangled in the branches above me. I think at this point I may have said a big bad word but there was no one around to hear it.

Summoning up massive will power, I started again, this time with no visual aids and remarkably, managed to thread the line and tie the knot after a mere ten minutes. What a palaver! I'm obviously going to need a ghillie to do all this stuff for me.

Getting in above the weir, I started to explore the deeper water. Although the nymph was weighted, it clearly wasn't getting down deep enough. More faffing ensued as I tried to add a shot to the line but eventually I was in business. It was bouncing nicely back along the bottom when a fish rose just above me. Should I put on a floater? I was clearly not thinking straight because I decided to switch to a dry. Just as I was in the middle of this, who should turn up but Keeper Whittle. It's always nice to have a chat with our keepers, but this really wasn't the time or place. After about 20 minutes trying to tie on a fly whilst exchanging pleasantries I may have given him the impression that I was not fully engaging with him. He took the hint and bugged off, whereupon I abandoned the dry and switched back to the nymph. Baetis by the way, my favourite Oliver Edwards pattern.

By now I'd reached the run in and at last I found myself attached to a significant fish, which whizzed past me and wallowed downstream before dropping off. Next cast, the indicator stopped again and another good fish was pulling me about. This one stayed on and turned out to be a brown of around 2lbs, a lovely butter yellow fish. Honour satisfied, after an hour and a half, of which perhaps only 30 minutes was actual fishing. I got back to the car, switched the engine on, turned the heating

to max and sat on my hands for a while with the heated seat on. I am clearly going to have to take myself in hand.



Up to Duffers, where the EHK and Stuart Crofts were setting up for breakfast with military precision.

Gradually the place filled up with eager and expectant fly fishers who were not disappointed when the bacon sandwiches started to appear. It was great to see old friends and a few new faces, to engage in the fly fishing banter and to find out how the early risers had got on.

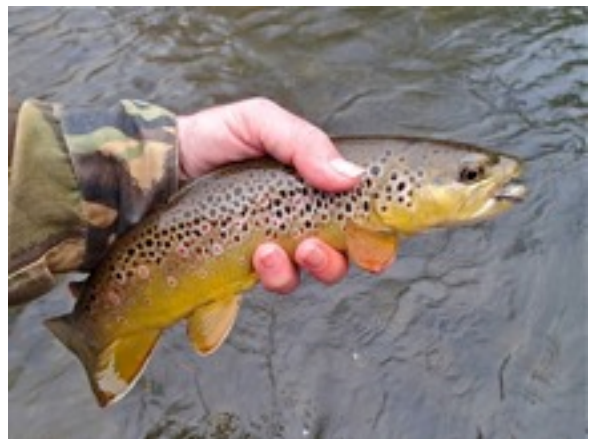
Tony Goodwin had done considerably better in Presidents than I had in Freddie's, winkling out 10, also on a nymph. He commented how fit the fish were. The morning passed very pleasantly, coffees



and teas progressing seamlessly to champagne and red wine, by which time the catering staff were back in action, preparing for a late lunch. Members started to disappear to take advantage of any

Large Dark Olive activity and it seems they were not disappointed. Several reports came back of flush hatches bringing fish to the surface, several being taken on dry flies.

Dave Southall and Steve Donohue, fishing as Hilary Langan's guests, had travelled over from East Yorkshire to join us. Dave told me later that it was the best opening day he had ever experienced - I think he was talking about the fishing.



Our new President, Chris Austin, also opened his account with a lovely brown from Duffers.



Opening Days are relaxed affairs with very little serious fishing being undertaken. So Colin Dimond and Alan Dean decided to put in some proper fishing effort the next day down at the Locked Bridge. Alan went upstream and Colin down to Twin Pools. The Large Darks started to trickle off at around 10.45 and fish immediately started to take interest. The rise came on in earnest about 30 minutes later, by which

time Colin had taken three fish, all good brownies. He called Alan to find out if he was experiencing the same thing - he wasn't, so he came down to join Colin. By the time he arrived the rise was over! Alan returned upstream to Quaker Pool where he found a full-on rise in progress. It was now Colin's turn to be summoned so he joined Alan, who had taken 3 on a dry Olive. Colin stuck with the quill bodied emerger he had used earlier and by the time the rise petered out around 13.45 he had taken 10 fish and Alan 6. The highlights were a 2 and a half pound brown for Alan and a similar sized rainbow for Colin, a birthday lunch for Alan at the Cock & Pullet, followed by the rugby and England winning the Grand Slam. A perfect day!

The Large Dark Olives should be with us for a week or two yet, followed by Medium Olives as we approach May. We are not blessed with a strong Grannom hatch but each year I see a few down on Beat 8 and I'd like to think they are increasing in numbers. Until the weather warms up and the leaves are on the trees it pays to ring the changes with nymph, emerger and dry, bearing in mind that clear water and lack of weed cover may lead one to believe that there are no fish in the river. They will be there alright, hiding under the stones, fallen trees and close in to the banks. It pays to keep low and fish stealthily in these conditions.

Finally, for the benefit of new members and as a reminder to existing members, when driving through Litton Mill please watch your speed. Every year we get complaints from residents about cars travelling too fast through the Mill Yard. By and large we get on very well with the locals, who are very helpful in our

campaign against poachers. So please do not put this at risk by antagonizing them.

Tight lines,
David Marriott