

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

Fishing Report

30 April 2016

Since my last report we've had a long spell of settled weather with high pressure dominating, sunny days and a cool northerly airstream. This, added to low water conditions, has made for challenging conditions. Well it has for me anyway - I see from the returns book that quite a few members have enjoyed significant catches.



After a pleasant lunch with the EHK at the Cock & Pullet, I intended to spend the afternoon on Beat 7. Here I found Peter Hayes, just about to head back South, and Paul Raper having his sandwiches. A good natter ensued and before we knew it, it was 2.30. Time to tackle up. Paul wanted to try upstream so I walked down, on the true right bank to a little pool that always seems to produce the goods for me, even though it doesn't favour me as a left hander. I had on a Baetis Nymph, size 14, with a split shot on a dropper about 3 feet above it. Once I'd fished myself into the pool, I concentrated on the seam of the current, which is quite pacey here. It wasn't long before the first take, a lovely brown, about 15 inches. Two more followed in short order, slightly smaller, then I'd run out of water. I crossed over and went downstream with the intention of fishing the pools I'd passed over when I'd been down here a week or so

earlier. I switched to the little Black Nymph without the split shot, the water hereabouts being shallower and less turbulent. I fished the main run on the far side first and soon I was playing a very strong rainbow, which turned out to be my first marked stock fish. Another followed a couple of casts later but it shed the hook after a few spectacular leaps. I switched my attention to the deep hole on the far side of the island, keeping the line off the water and allowing the nymph to get right down. There was no indication that I'd had a take but as I lifted the rod to re-cast another rainbow was attached. This one did come to the net. In the absence of any rises to cast to, I carried on in like manner back to the Hut, picking up a few more fish on the way. Here I found Mike Hallam and we passed a pleasant half hour over tea and biscuits. Mike had been up in beats 1 & 2 earlier on and had found the fish very accommodating so I made a promise to myself to get up there before too long.

The following Thursday I had arranged to meet Dr Smith at Duffers with the intention of exploring Cheedale together. When I looked out first thing, Mam Tor to Win Hill was white o'er and the snow was falling in thick flakes. Hardly a lambing shower! Had I not promised to lend John my boat seat for his forthcoming trip to the Eyebrook, I would have called the day off. As it happened, the weather started to improve and we tackled up in bright sunshine. I wasn't taking any chances though, and toggged myself up with thermal vest, thermal long johns, shirt, fleece top, fleece jacket, buff, hat (not thermal), thermal socks, thermal gloves, waders, boots and a wading jacket. A walking advert for Orvis & Simms, I was ready to spontaneously combust and could barely move.

I'd elected to fish with my new Tenkara rod, whilst John stayed loyal to the fly rod. As

soon as we set out, the rain and sleet began and never let up the whole afternoon. As usual, it proved difficult to pass by our favourite pools and we both had fish on before too long. I had on the little Black Nymph which has been very successful thus far on both the Wye and the Derwent. However, John had brought fish up to his dry Baetis Cripple so I decided to switch, putting on a small dirty olive Klinkhamer with an orange post. Prospecting pocket water in the Highland Stream, this fly was immediately attractive. John caught up with me so I climbed out and we walked up the path together until we reached the eroded hillside below the viaduct. I flicked the fly into the raging torrent, John commenting "Wouldn't it be funny if you hooked one behind that stone". Hardly had the words left his mouth when a good sized brownie whizzed out and took the fly. If the fish had decided to go down with the flow I doubt I could have held it. As it happened, it shot straight into a hole in the wall and I had quite a job persuading it to come out. When it did, I was able to keep it in the quiet water behind the stone and in time I was able to hand line it out.

As we progressed into Slitherford, I left John contemplating the scene of Dr Smith's Folly, a small backwater into which he feels obliged to cast a fly. This is because, many years ago when he was Conservancy Officer, he had instructed David Percival and his friend Ron to remove from there a truly massive rock which was, for some reason, offensive to his eye. This task turned out to be, in the technical language favoured by River Keepers, "A ball-ache of Titanic Proportions". On the completion of this project no discernible improvement could be ascertained and to this day nothing has ever been caught there.

My eye was taken by a rise in one of the Slitherford Pools, in a most attractive run. I could see a few olives in flight, despite the

rain hammering down. A change to a Parachute Adams and a bright little brownie was taken in. A few metres further upstream, under the overhanging vegetation, a much bigger fish showed itself in the quiet water on the far side of the current. A tricky cast but I somehow put the fly in the right spot and the long rod helped to keep the line and most of the leader out of the fast water. The fish had to take it now or I would run out of arm. Up it came in a flash and was back to his lie before I had time to react. Fortunately he'd hooked himself and I brought him in without further incident. A brown of around 14 inches. With no sign of John catching me up I left him a couple of pools and got in at the Steps Pool. It was alive with fish and as soon as the fly was on the water it was taken. Many more followed, not all successfully hooked I'm sorry to say, including a very good fish from the neck of the pool but no matter.

John finally turned up as I was contemplating the Wormhill Springs pool, so, having had the best of the Steps, I felt it was only right that he should go ahead. It wasn't long before he was into a fish so I



left him to it. I trudged slowly up Chee Tor, my knee just about holding out while I descended into the quagmire that is Cheedale. Now it was snowing really hard but the fish continued to rise, if anything more persistently than before. You'll know the pool that I have christened Fish Soup as it is teeming with fish, all of them on the



Lookout for a Parachute Adams. Every cast brought a lightning reaction from a fish, some coming quickly to hand, others fleetingly on and off. Wonderful stuff!

By the way, the dressing for the Little Black Nymph, an example of which I gave to Mike Hallam, which he promptly lost in a fish, is as follows:

Hook: Competition Heavyweight 14 - 16

Thread: Uni Thread 8/0 Black

Weight: Black or Silver tungsten bead

Tails: Black goose biots

Body and thorax: Black Wapsi superfine

Wing covers: Green holographic tinsel

I think the appalling weather has favoured those who have been prepared to venture out, because hatches have been good and the fish have been looking up. However, I would be lying if I said I wasn't looking forward to something a bit warmer next time I go out.

Tight lines!

David Marriott