

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

Fishing Report

31 May 2016

Running a fishing club might seem to be a fairly uneventful business but in fact there is never a time when you can just go fishing and have nothing to worry about. In addition to the Cressbrook Mill hydro scheme proposal we now have local residents at Litton Mill expressing concern about flood risks to property and flooding on our path at the side of the lake in Water-cum-Jolly-Dale. Various crackpot ideas have been put forward with no suggestion as to how they might be funded. I expect these issues to feature high on the agenda for our next committee meeting so I decided to combine my next fishing trip with a fact finding visit to beat 4.

It was a fairly blustery evening and large black clouds to the east threatened rain. It was mild enough though, as I tackled up below Cressbrook Mill. As I walked up to the lake I was shocked to see the extent of silting-up that had occurred since my last visit, which must have been three or four years ago. The bottom end of the lake outside the main channel is just inches deep and on the far side the mud bank has now been consolidated by self-setting willows. Further up, below the spit of land it does widen out but again, apart from the main channel, it is very shallow. The path is very muddy in a few places but quite passable in the correct footwear. I understand that the path does get inundated from time to time during the winter but only to a depth of about 6 inches.

My fishing commenced off the point of the spit. I could see several fish cruising in the shallow water, tipping up every so often to

take something off the surface. The wind made the placing of my fly a little tricky but eventually it dropped right, about 6 feet upwind of a cruiser. Would it see the fly before the bow in the line made it drag? It came up again about a foot away then seemed to veer off. Damn the drag - but no, back he came and engulfed the little Klink. I lifted the rod and off he went like a Derbyshire bonefish leaving a wake of



suspended silt behind him. I beached the fish among the water mint in the shallows, a pretty brown of about a pound. I sent the fly back out and scanned the water for another cruiser. Seeing a movement to my right I stripped in some line to re-cast only to meet a solid resistance as a different fish came from nowhere to take the skating fly. As soon as I'd dealt with this one, I spotted another fish approaching rapidly. I dropped the fly in its path, saw him accelerate towards it, and with a huge swirl he was on.

By now it was getting quite uncomfortable in the wind so I abandoned the Point and walked up to the Metal Bridge shallows. There was nothing showing as I carefully edged my way in. I kept on the same little light tan Klink as a search pattern. Many years of experience in this pool meant that I knew where virtually every fish would be lying. These shallows seem to favour rainbows and within a couple of casts I had a beautiful jewel of a fish pulling away with a strength that belied its weight. I didn't waste time flogging this pool,

quickly working through all the main lies and picking up several more fish. I missed the biggest, what looked to be a very good brown, in the deep hole below Freddie's. I'd made the mistake of moving my stance as the fly was still fishing and that moment's inattention cost me the fish.

The light was fading as I got into Freddie's proper, just as I like it. Still there was little surface activity so I stuck with the Klink. I kept close to the wall, leaning against it to give me sufficient elbow room to deliver a side cast up the bushed-in pool. The fly dropped mid channel only a rod's length away, giving me a perfect view as a big brownie head and tailed over it. He was

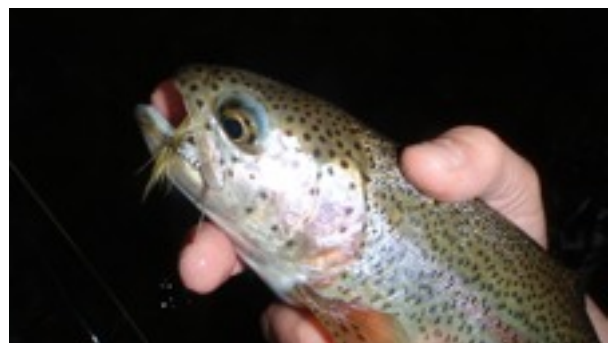


well on the way back to his lie as I set the hook and a dogged fight ensued. This one needed the net. I'd say he was about a pound and three quarters - a very satisfying wild fish. I then had a series of rainbows, beautiful plump fish, finished off with another big brownie which had been showing just off the food lane on the far side.

I'd had enough and started back down the track to the lake. By the time I got to Jacob's wall the wind had dropped and fish were rising all over the shallows. Unable to resist, I dropped the Klink in the general area of activity and waited. A fish rose about a foot from the fly. Had he seen it? He had, and I was treated to another heart-stopping run as he made off into the deeper water of the channel. I pumped him back in

but he didn't like the shallow water and kept heading out again. Eventually I beached him, flicked out the hook and he was away. Note to self - must fish Beat 4 more often.

I needed to know if the Mayfly were on, so on the 28th I slipped out for a couple of hours on President's and Harry's. I was on the water for 6.00 pm and the rays of the setting sun were picking out thousands of Olive upright spinners. There were a few Mayfly spinners too, but they were very much in the minority. I started off with a Semi-Circle spinner. This brought up a couple of fish in the flat water, but they turned away after close inspection. In the faster water of the run-in, with less time to spend in observation, I had two good fish. The same pattern continued to work in the next pool, as I inched my way up into the faster water, on my knees on the fine sandy bottom. A change of fly to a Light Tan Klink to deal with the rapids brought me a few more fish and I was on 8 by the time I got to Harry's. Now there were noticeably more Mayfly spinners dipping on the surface and in the quiet water a few were trembling out their last moments in the traditional cruciform shape. Taking off the Klink and the tippet I replaced the latter with a metre of 5lb b/s to deal with the bigger fly. This was basically a larger version of the semi-circle spinner I'd been using earlier, with a white packaging wrap body, ribbed with black thread. First cast



and a huge boil appeared where the fly was

but I struck too soon. Steeling myself to slow down the next strike I ran the fly down the same line. This time the rise was a quiet affair and I lifted to find the fish on. There was a family of ducks feeding greedily on spent spinners in the fast water so I concentrated my efforts here, despite being troubled by pesky ducklings every so often. Four more really good fish followed before I had to call it a day. All the fish on this visit and the previous were wild fish. In fact I think I've only had three or four marked fish so far this season.

The next couple of weeks should see the best of the mayfly before the fish turn their attention to the Blue Winged Olive, for me the cream of the season. Don't forget that even at the height of the Mayfly the fish can be perverse, seemingly preferring smaller flies such as the Iron Blue and the Yellow Sally. Caddis patterns also come into their own during June and if you're on the water very early or very late, don't forget the Angler's Curse, the Caenis.

Tight lines!
David Marriott