

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers

Fishing Report

15 June 2016

My attention has been concentrated on the Derwent this last couple of weeks so I haven't any personal experiences to recount from the Wye. This is not because I've had no wish to be on the Wye, far from it. It's just that my domestic circumstances have been limiting my fishing opportunities.

Chris tells me that the Mayfly have been in evidence on most beats, with strong hatches and several perfect evenings when spinners came back to lay in considerable numbers. Fishing hasn't been easy, ironically because of fishing pressure but this should ease once the Mayfly Madness has passed.

John Frazer took a guest up to Cheedale at the beginning of the month. John is one of the few members brave enough to get right into the gorge at Wormhill and has had considerable success in past years as a result. Somehow he managed to persuade



his guest to go in there and he was rewarded by this magnificent 20 inch brown, taken on a size 12 Sparkle Caddis.

Carl Brumby also enjoyed a great day with a French guest, when the Iron Blues put in an appearance.



We continue to be troubled by poachers, although so far it hasn't been as bad as last year. I thought you might like to read the following report from our Assistant River Keeper regarding a recent poaching incident. This sort of stuff is going on all the time and I'd like to express our thanks to our keepers (and those from our neighbouring fisheries, Jan Hobot & Stewart Booter) for putting themselves at risk in bringing these criminals to justice.

"I am an Assistant River Keeper employed by Cressbrook and Litton Flyfishers' Club Ltd. The Club is the sole lease holder of private fishing rights on an eleven mile stretch of the River Wye (Derbyshire). This stretch is maintained by the Club to provide trout fly fishing for members. The Club is responsible for the condition of the river and its upkeep. This includes the fish in the river, brown and rainbow trout, some of which are stocked into the river at the Club's expense. The Club's existence relies on membership fees paid by its members, who in return for their payment expect to be able to fish on a healthy well kept river and catch fish which are of good condition and quality. The Club operates a strict fly fishing only rule on its waters.

"As part of my duties as an Assistant River Keeper I am required to patrol the River Wye within the Club boundaries, either by vehicle or on foot, in order to detect and deter illegal fishing activity.

"At around 19:10 hours on Saturday 5 June 2016 I received a telephone call from the Head Keeper informing me that he had been contacted by a local resident reporting that 3 men in a black car had driven down to her farm and asked if they could park while they

went camping and fishing in Monsal Dale. They had now left, but I was asked to conduct a full patrol to check the Club's waters.

"At approximately 19:50 I met with the resident and she explained that she had seen fishing tackle, camping equipment and beer in the mens' car. She said she had informed the 3 men that there was no public fishing on the river; that the river was frequently patrolled by river keepers and that this was the case from Bakewell to Buxton. She felt that the men fully understood what she had said and would not be a cause for further concern but called in the event anyway after the three men had driven off. She identified the car as a black Honda Civic but did not have the VRN. She described the men as speaking with Eastern European accents and stated that they had told her they were originally from Poland but had travelled from Manchester. One was wearing a yellow T-shirt. (The resident will provide a statement if required).

"At approximately 20:05 I began my patrol. Ten minutes later, as I drove through Ashford in the Water, I saw a black Honda Civic parked on the road bridge over the River Wye and identified 3 males associated with the vehicle walking around and looking at the river, one of whom was wearing a yellow T-shirt. I was satisfied I had found the men who had initially approached the local resident. Aware that they were not on the Club's water or doing anything illegal, I parked up to observe them as I felt their continued interest in the river, given their previously declared intent to fish, was suspicious. I noted the VRN of the Civic as **** * and accepted offers of support from fellow Keepers DP, SB and JH who subsequently arrived on scene.

"At around 21:00, the men drove off and so myself, DP and SB headed towards Buxton and resumed patrolling the Club's waters. At 21:05, whilst approaching the bridge by the New Bridge Fish ponds, myself, DP and SB all saw a man bent over a bag on the left hand side of the bridge, and 2 others walking away from a parked Civic towards the bridge on the right hand side. The Civic, confirmed as being VRN **** *, was parked by a gateway to a private car park for Club Members. One of the men walking away from the car was wearing a yellow T-shirt (who I now know to be Mr A S**).

"We drove past and, now certain that the 3 men were about to start fishing illegally, agreed that I would park upstream of the mens' location and walk down on the far bank to observe their activity, whilst DP and SB remained in phone coverage to coordinate any police response should it be necessary.

"At approximately 21:30 I arrived in a position to observe the men and immediately identified Mr A S** fishing illegally with a spinning rod, just upstream of the bridge, and asked DP to contact the police. To avoid detection I retreated to a safe distance, but during further intermittent observations, I witnessed all three men fishing.

"At approximately 22:05, as the police arrived on scene, I confronted the men, two of whom were at that time standing facing me and urinating directly into the river.

One was Mr A S**, the other was not positively identified at the time. I asked them to stop urinating in the river, and advised them that they had been seen fishing illegally and the police were waiting for them on the bridge above. As I made my way up to the bridge the men delayed a few minutes before following and I saw (albeit nearly dark by now) what appeared to be attempts to hide and discard fishing tackle. I advised them that there was no point in doing this.

"The Police Incident Number was 5 Jun/*** and the attending Police Officers were Police Constable ****, and Special Constable ****. The police obtained the mens' details which I also noted as:

Mr A S of *****, Manchester,
Mr P S also of *****, Manchester,
Mr P of *****, Chester.

"I advised them that they would be prosecuted by the Club for poaching and could expect letters from the Club's solicitor in due course.

"All 3 men were vocal throughout the next 40 minutes, making taunting comments and swearing and such like, but not threatening violence. Specifically, Mr A S** denied they had been fishing, whilst Mr P S** was keen to argue that there should be signs that said the fishing was private. Mr P S** would not accept that the 2 signs in the tree directly above the spot they had been fishing, and the sign on the gate adjacent to their parked car, was more than sufficient. At around 22:35 Mr P S** identified DP as the Keeper who had caught and successfully prosecuted him for poaching on the Club's waters 2 years ago. (His previous court hearing was at Buxton on 17 February 2015).

"SB, meanwhile, was conducting a search of the river and banks by torchlight and retrieved 1 spinning rod intact, the lower half of a rod with reel still attached, a ruck sack containing 3 dead trout. A tackle bag containing 2 spinning reels and multiple triple hook lures, a rod bag, 3 bottles of Perla beer and a roll of kitchen towel were also found. There were empty Perla beer bottles in the river and 2 of the men continued to drink Perla beer whilst the police spoke with them.

"Having searched the men and their vehicle, the police allowed them to leave the scene and at 22:45 I resumed patrol.

"Given the warnings of the local resident, the signs at the location they were fishing, that they remained by or under the bridge and hidden from passing sight whilst fishing, and Mr P S**' previous prosecution for poaching on the same water, I am in no doubt whatsoever that all 3 men knew full well that they would be poaching.

"Given the previous prosecution by the Club of Mr P S, the Club would ask for his fine to be increased based on the aggravating factor of persistent offending against the Club.**

"The majority of the above incident was captured and recorded on video, but timings on the video are in error by 49 minutes due to an incorrectly set time stamp".

Another incident, a few days later was disrupted but the individuals escaped before the police were able to apprehend them. However, their vehicle was found to be untaxed and



uninsured so the police arranged for it to be towed away. Hopefully by now it will be a small metal cube.

I gather that the Bugs and Burgers Evening was a great success, despite the weather which did its best to make it a wash out. Our thanks to Stuart Crofts and Tom Bell. The ETHK had forgotten to bring a coat, got completely drenched and left Crofty to do the barbeque on his own. Fortunately Peter Radford stepped in and gave Stuart a hand.

Now the Mayfly are over, we can look forward to Blue Winged Olives, Iron Blues, Pale Wateries, Caenis and the main Caddis hatches. I've got a few guests joining me over the next week or two, so I should have more to report at the end of the month.

Don't forget to book for our mid season Hog Roast at Cressbrook Hall on 12 July. Partners and guests welcome!

Tight lines!
David Marriott