

Cressbrook & Litton Flyfishers Club

Fishing Report

31 July 2013

Had it not come from an otherwise unimpeachable source, I might have hesitated to open an email, purportedly from Dr Chris Austin, headed "Chris has a whopper!". As it was, it turned out to be a perfectly innocent fishing report from Dr Austin detailing the capture of this superb rainbow from Duffers.



The fish measured 23 inches and took a mayfly pattern. Chris was asking if I knew if any research had been done to calculate the weight of a trout from its length and girth, similar to the work done on salmon. If there has, it has escaped my notice. However, you do get a feel for the likely weight of a trout and in our river an 18 inch fish is likely to be around 2lbs and I'd say this one would be between 4 1/2 and 5 lbs. I suggested he carry a Maclean Weigh Net but Chris prefers not to use a net. For most of the time I'd tend to agree with him but I'd be mighty pleased to have one to hand with a fish like the one above.

I've been in Iceland with the C&L party this last week, so I don't have much news to impart from the River Wye, other than, up until last Saturday, the river was down to its bones. It has made up for it in a big way after the torrential downpour on Saturday night, when it went into the "danger of flooding" zone on the EA's flood warning website and the residents of Stoney Middleton were out with sandbags in the early hours of Sunday morning.

I don't want to make you too envious, but I ought to let you know that we had a pretty good week on the Big Laxa, with everyone enjoying incredible dry fly sport with lots



of fish in the 4 - 6 lbs range. We had clear skies and heatwave conditions for most of the time and everyone was blown away by the raw power of these wild Icelandic torpedoes. I very much hope that we will be able to make a return trip next year. Meanwhile, I will ask one of our number to write up a piece on the week for our End of Season Newsletter.

Just before I went away, I fancied an evening of Tenkara on the Derwent. It was incredibly hot and humid but I expected some caddis activity as the light went, so I didn't rush to get there, arriving about 8.00 pm. I tackled up in shorts and shirtsleeves and was only mildly irritated to find that I was without my wading stick, it having

been sent for disinfection with all my other Icelandic kit. Needless to say, after only 5 minutes in the river, I lost my footing. After a few teetering moments I bowed to the inevitable and submitted to a full immersion. After the initial shock, I thought - this is actually quite pleasant so I sculled around for a bit until I found a spot where I could clamber out and drain my waders. Fortunately I'd had the foresight to put my phone and car keys in a waterproof bag, but not so my wallet, necessitating a trip to John Lewis the next day for a new one. Undeterred, I fished damply on until dark, pulling up lots of wild brownies and a lovely cock grayling of around a pound and a half to an Elk Hair Caddis. Fortunately there was no one around in the car park later to witness the stripping off, towelling down and change of clothing, courtesy of the falling-in kit kept permanently in the back of the car.

Peter Gilman rang me yesterday to say he'd been down to the pool below Monsal Weir as soon as the river had fined down to a fishable state after the recent flood. The river still had a bit of colour in it and was coming through at a lively pace. Nothing was showing on the top, so he fished a s18 Hares Ear nymph and was rewarded with some very confident takes. He finished up with 10 fish, culminating in a beautiful brown of around 4 pounds.

Later on the President and I went to Stuart Crofts' Bug Evening at the Locked Bridge. There was a very good attendance despite the forecast of heavy rain, which turned out to be completely erroneous. Stuart had set up his in-stream net to capture drifting nymphs etc in the top of the water column. Starting at 8.15 he did four 15 minute samples which he placed in four white plastic trays. The first sample had a preponderance of spinners and a few caddis shucks, and as the hour progressed the numbers of caddis increased, until at

around 9.00 the spinners disappeared from the samples. Stuart explained that spinners need the reflection of light from the water surface to orient themselves so that they can lay their eggs in fast water. Once the light starts to fail, they retreat to the bankside vegetation to await the next opportunity to oviposit, often at dawn the next morning. Close observation of the spinners under magnification showed how their bodies were contorted (just like Stuart's cranked shank spinner) and how long and thin their wings are compared to the length of their bodies. I think most of the examples were Blue Winged Olives.

By now it was getting dark, and our attention was directed to the light trap Stuart had set up on the bridge. The caddis attracted to this were mostly *Hydropsyche* and *Rhyacophila* but we did find a very big Cinnamon Sedge, with its distinctive smell, which is a defence mechanism to deter predators. Stuart demonstrated with a live *Hydropsyche* how they can cut through the surface film and swim underwater in their winged stage. They swim down to the river bed to deposit their eggs on rocks and research in the USA has shown that they can get down to depths of 20 feet. All in all it was a fascinating demonstration and Stuart is to be thanked for going to all this trouble for our benefit.

The evenings are already starting to draw in but with further heatwaves predicted I think I'd be inclined to concentrate fishing effort to the last hour or two for the next couple of weeks, or you could get up early and test Stuart's assertion that spinners return to the water at dawn.

Tight lines,
David