

# Water~Lines

News from the Haddon Estate Fisheries Issue No.1

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## Message from Lord Edward Manners

What a pleasure it is to extend a very warm welcome to all of you reading this, our first issue of the bulletin "Water~Lines". Whether you visit us once a year or once a week your enjoyment of the water is of vital importance to us. Your day ticket contribution is ploughed back into fishery projects and maintenance, so you help us keep the river in a healthy state. Among the varied river work, we are proud to be undertaking the first national reintroduction of two year old native crayfish from stock reared on the Estate and research continues into the wild Wye Rainbows and Lathkill Brownies.

It is clear to see that the rivers are at long last benefiting from winter rain, which is filling the aquifers and should ensure good flows during the summer. We are hoping for another very successful season. The Head River Keeper, Warren Slaney and his team have been very busy all winter making more improvements, which as well as enhancing the habitat will also add to your enjoyment of the fishing at Haddon.

I do hope you enjoyed your fishing at Haddon last year and we want you to enjoy yourself again on the riverbank this season.

## Six frequent observations from our regular anglers

Although it is true to say that everyone who takes pleasure from their fishing at Haddon enjoys success, we are constantly asked how the wild fish of the Wye can become more catchable. Here are some clues, given up by our regular rods.

**1. “Stealth is key.”** All our most successful anglers say that the fish must not know you are there, (excepting the town water at Bakewell). Where it is impossible to get into position without the fish seeing you the advice is to get into position, sit down and wait for the fish to relax and start rising again and then fish for them. Most casting should be carried out either well back from the water or from a sitting or kneeling position, preferably from behind some cover such as a bush or other marginal vegetation.

**2. “Polarised sunglasses help you to see the fish.”** As well as helping you to stalk a particular fish you can be aware of fish between you and your chosen quarry. This gives you chance to avoid alarming the nearer fish so that it does not flee wildly, disturbing the fish you were trying to catch all along.

**3. “Drab clothing is essential.”** The fish will see bright clothes and this can put them down and they cease rising. A hat with a brim to shade your eyes when fish spotting is helpful but it must be drab in colour. This is the most likely part of you the fish may notice.

**4. “Dull coloured fly lines are best.”** There are many views on the best colour for a floating line with most protagonists of the light coloured lines pointing out that the sky is bright so a bright fly line is less likely to be seen on the surface of the water. On the Wye the trout will stop rising if a fly line lands above them. The monofilament leader is the only part of the line that should land near the fish. From this aspect the colour of the fly line is not important. However, the Wye is a dry fly river and demands frequent false casting from the angler to get the fly dry and to gauge the cast before the delivery. The aerialising of a bright fly line makes a flash similar to that made by piscivorous birds as they attack fish. Drab colours such as khaki, olive, brown and dark green make less of this flash so scare fewer fish.

**5. “Don’t stay in one spot too long.”** If a fish is rising and ignoring your fly, try another, and another. If they carry on rising but are plainly ignoring your offering despite trying a finer point on your leader and experimenting with different flies then you may do better at the next spot. If you carry on you could be educating the fish to a point where they never make that vital mistake...

**6. “Try places where casting is difficult.”** Under the trees it can be awkward to cast a fly into a rising fish’s view. If it is awkward for you it is probably awkward for everyone else. These fish will not have had as much fishing pressure on them as the rest and may be more ready to take your fly...

## Derbyshire Fly Box – April, May and June

Matching the hatch is often the very best route to success on Derbyshire’s rivers. The old books going back to 1496 would list flies for the month of the year but closer inspection shows that these were really starting points. The angler was still recommended to look at the flies being taken and to make his flies accordingly, by the waterside...

Even today it is worth having a starting point based on what flies to expect for the time of year. A few anglers still dress flies by the waterside and make changes in their dressings in order to get nearer to the impression made by the real thing. Most of us adopt an alternative policy of carrying well-stocked boxes of flies in a variety of sizes and patterns taking a leaf out of the Boy Scouts’ book to “Be Prepared”. What follows are some suggestions for inclusion in your start of season fly box for Derbyshire.

April	May	June	
Large Dark Olive Adams, Grey Duster and other “Olives” are all good representations.	Hawthorn As for April but watch out for sizes. They get bigger as the days go by.	Mayfly & Spinner of the Mayfly Use the same as you would for late May.	Pale Watery A tan coloured dun works well as does Tup’s Indispensable if dressed sparsely. Grey Duster in size 16 and 18 is also a very good standby.
Olive Upright (extra wings) The same flies for the Large Dark Olive are fine for this other early large Dun.	Medium Olive Use the same patterns as you did for the Large Dark Olive but in smaller sizes	Blue Winged Olive An important fly to the angler on the Haddon waters. Traditionals like the Orange Quill and Kite’s Imperial still work but there are modern dressings that could be just what is needed if the fish are proving difficult to tempt.	Spinner of the Pale Watery A small Rusty Spinner takes some beating.
Hawthorn (St Mark’s Fly) From the end of April for about three weeks this is a vital fly.	Spinner of the Medium Olive Tup’s Indispensable and its variants are very good and so are the Rusty Spinners in the smaller sizes	Blue Winged Olive’s Spinner This is the famous Sherry Spinner. A very good American pattern, originally for a completely different fly that occurs in America, is the Rusty Spinner. It just happens to make a very good impression of the Sherry Spinner, as it lies cruciform in its death throes on the water’s surface. Rusty Spinner’s effectiveness seems to stem from the very flat way it lays in the surface film.	Needle and Willow Flies The fish do eat these. Look to your terrestrials, bumbles, other palmered flies and small floating ant patterns for suitable fakes.
Various windblown terrestrials Representatives of the Hawthorn are very good for other terrestrials too. Add the Double Badger, small sedge representations and the Peacock herl bodied flies like the Red Tag and Sturdy’s Fancy for a full armoury.	Mayfly Grey Wulff variants and others that take your fancy become very important as May drifts into June.  Spinner of the Mayfly Make sure you can get your pattern to lay flat on the surface, trimming the hackle underneath the hook if necessary		Midges and Smuts The Black Gnat has been tricking trout in the Wye for over a hundred years. It is unlikely to stop doing so now. Add the small Grey CDC to these ranks, you will indeed “Be Prepared”

## Why Dry Fly? (A very personal opinion) by Richard Ward

Of all the methods of angling, dry fly is the one I love to return to. Yes bigger fish are generally caught by other methods. The largest fish I ever caught was taken on a wet fly, but dry fly still has the edge for me personally. Why?

Well, for me, I am sure that fishing is a means to satisfy the inbuilt and natural instinct that we all have to hunt. Hunting demands use of all the senses, especially those that set humans apart as the ultimate predators - our consciousness, our ability to mentally narrate possible future events for ourselves. Our ability to plan, to **imagine**. Other skills come into play, like the ones we learn in handling rod and line, from casting, setting the hook, playing and landing the fish. But these are secondary. Before we can deploy these skills and the tackle we have acquired we have to plan, **imagine** what may happen. In dry fly fishing, before we can plan, we have to observe. We have to **look**. This is the seed to the full pleasure that can be derived from fishing the dry fly.

Wet fly fishing in the hands of a skilled angler is a wonderful art that, like dry fly fishing, requires the stages of planning and handling rod and line with significant skill. Searching the water, feeling and watching for signs of a take are brilliant skills that we should all take trouble to learn and enjoy. But with wet fly fishing there is no real need to carry out the observation stage first. The wet fly angler can arrive at the waterside and using the skill of reading the water can simply start to **fish**.

Observation in wet fly fishing comes after the fishing has started. The process is more of feeling than of looking. After a fish is caught the angler will carefully **evaluate** what has just transpired and may make some adjustments to the tackle or process. This "thinking through" stage is common to all angling methods.

In dry fly fishing we get an extra stage right at the beginning - we have to **look** first. Observing is a source of great pleasure in its own right. There is so much to see. We also get the benefit of planning before we fish. We get this chance to **imagine** in addition to the plans the wet fly anglers and we make and adjust - whilst we fish and after we fish. The four stages of dry fly fishing are really:

Carefully get into position and have a good long **look** at what is going on.

Plan and **imagine** how you will carry out your approach.

Carry out your plan - **fish** for your quarry.

Afterwards **evaluate** what happened

You can then make any adjustments you judge to be required before enjoying the whole process all over again. Getting into this thoughtful, observant frame of mind burns the experiences deep into your memory. In later months and years you will be able to enjoy these days all over again in fondest reverie. It is one of Nature's delightful coincidences that the most successful use of dry fly fishing comes about by using all of its four stages. The four stages offer not only the greatest possibilities of pleasure but also the greatest potential for success. That's LIFE...

**L**ook, **I**magine, **F**ish, **E**valuate

## The Evening Rise

by Warren Slaney

The most important factor that determines whether the spinner fall or not is the time of year. Late afternoon and evening temperatures are often more suitable in July and August than in September.

Blue Winged Olive occurs in the Wye in numbers that can only be imagined. They hatch throughout the day and evening only to disappear into the local trees, bushes and hedges. This hatch is often consistent, with flies "coming off" for most of the day but there is usually a flurry for about an hour, which really gets the fish up. If you catch one of these little flies you will notice they have three tails. This characteristic is quite unusual amongst the up-wings although it is shared with Mayflies and Caenis. Over years of observation you can spot BWO from a long way off because the wings are cocked back at a slight angle. The Peacock holds an excellent copy of the dun called the Thorax BWO.

After the flies reach the cover they change their form and become the perfect adult although I always think the dun isn't a bad effort! Here they will stay until the weather is correct for their final push. I imagine them to be only a shell now with the smallest amount of energy left.

The best evenings and afternoons to see a spinner fall are overcast and warm. The males will show first and begin their up and down dance, well up into the air. If the weather changes and drops cool they return to their cover and continue the wait. Out they come again where the females join them. The ladies fly up into the swarm and copulate for about ten seconds. He falls away and plays no more part in the story but she fly's upstream until she comes across a weir or faster part of water. She drops down and bombs the water, dropping egg packets off. The final decent is just too much effort and besides, her life is complete now and she is free to die. Drifting down, the little corpse is taken with a sip or a roll by food lane trout and so comes an angling opportunity.

The best copies of the spent BWO are simple copies of dead flies. Their wings are flat and the tails are long. Try a Rusty Spinner or tie your own with Polypropylene wings. Remember to use floatant to make the flies fish just like the naturals.

### Interesting facts:

During the late summer up to the end of the season, the spinner can be a good fly to fish with from lunchtime.

Watch for the type of rise. The fish know the spinner is finished so they rise slowly and confidently, sometimes rolling, nose-head-dorsal-tail, sometimes sipping but never with a splash.

Don't get stuck on one fly. If the rise forms change and there are flies *leaving* the water, use a dun copy.

If a river mist picks up, surprise your partner and arrive home early. Mist means dropping temperatures so the flies stay in the trees.

The spinner fall can be superb after a few cooler nights. They tend to stack up in the cover until the time is right and they all come at once.

WGMS

# A Meeting with a Bakewell Crocodile

## By Regular Rod

My friend John, a genial and kind man when it comes to sharing his unbounded angling knowledge with the polite enquirer, was fishing the town water of the Derbyshire Wye where it flows through Bakewell. Bakewell is a thriving market town, picturesque and popular with tourists. It is common to have people come and enquire. Those of us who fish this bizarre setting have learnt to be friendly. John, ever helpful, was approached by the head of a "crocodile" (a teacher leading children on a walk out and about).

"Excuse me but what kind of fish do you catch in this river?"

"Well there are three main types of fish in this river: brown trout, wild breeding rainbow trout and grayling."

At this juncture John's mayfly is taken and he responds in the normal manner. Moments later he shows a brown trout in the net. The crocodile curls round him to get a close look and John explains adipose fin, salmon family, spots, colouration, eye and mouth position. The crocodile's components are all now fully familiar with the external features of the brown trout and the fish is returned to cheers.

The crocodile lingers whilst another cast is made. The fly disappears immediately and John's rod "assumes the position". More curling of the crocodile and John explains the features of the rainbow trout that lay in the folds of his net.

As the fish dashes off and the cheers subside John explains:

"Well those are the two types of trout that we get in this river. There is the other fish, the grayling, but grayling don't very often take such a big artificial f..."

He breaks off conversation as the fly is taken again.

"Well bless me children I think this fish IS a grayling!"

The grayling comes to net and the perfect Public Relations exercise appears to be coming to a perfect conclusion. All smiles and murmurings of approval, a gathering of polite children keen to learn, an old man showing them in real life exactly what fish *do* live in their local river, what could be better? Not much eh?

Just before the crocodile could reform and continue its progress and unseen by all and sundry, John's excellent fake mayfly had fallen on the water an inch or two from the edge. A mallard decided it was real enough for her to eat it and grabbed the fly. Not expecting the attachment that came with the fly she bolted and took wing.

John, despite his impaired mobility (suffered since polio in early childhood), was quick enough to grab his rod before it was dragged out of reach. It was here the PR became somewhat imperfect...

The duck was nearly vertically overhead at a height varying between 8 and 15 feet. John whisked up his landing net and, by a combination of shortening the line and leaping with the net, he hoped to rescue the duck and remove the fly from her feathers where it could be clearly seen, entangled therein.

The scene was reminiscent of the centre court at Wimbledon: the leaping and waving athlete, arms out at full stretch and the noise - the tumultuous roars of the crowd.

The crowd (crocodile) had quickly dislocated into factions of supporters.

There were those who simply found the whole thing hilarious and had grouped into a huddle of raucous laughter.

A separate group was terrified and screaming in hysterics, with floods of genuine tears and each suffering from sincerely felt heartbreak.

The smallest group became angry and decided that this man was nasty and cruel. One of this group, a boy of about 12 or 13 years, felt that he should do something about it and grasped John round the hips in mid-air during one of the leaps.

"Leave it alone you horrid man! Let it fly away!" His grip tightened.

"Get off will you? I'm trying to rescue it!" I don't think John had ever joined in the hula-hoop craze but he shook his hips as well as any South Sea Islander.

The boy's grip gave way and he went head long - into the river.

This brought the noises from all groups to a massive crescendo.

The angry brigade bawled in righteous indignation.

The scaredies were even more terrified as it now looked like a colleague was about to drown, their screams increased in volume.

The ones with a sense of humour laughed louder than ever.

Then, like magic, the scene was soothed. The engulfed one stood up. The sight of this ridiculous, sodden figure, blubbing like 12 or 13 year old boys are still prone to do, was enough to win the scaredies over into the sense of humour camp. The screams stopped and the laughter increased, but by now diaphragms were tiring, so chuckles replaced belly laughs. Simultaneous to the standing up, the duck released herself and flew away.

Angry noises stopped - there was no point now as the duck had flown - in fact, laughing at the wet one quickly became the thing to do.

John retrieving his tackle intact, made eye contact with the teacher. Speech in such circumstances is unnecessary. In silence the angler moved upstream, leaving the head of the crocodile to deal with any, and all, obsequies.