

Grayling School 2008

Wednesday

Gathering around 6pm we met Dave Taylor, Bob Milne, Dave Pomfrett, Neil Pinnington and Alan Holleran. During dinner, a delicious homemade lasagne using Kirkwood beef, it became apparent how we were to tell the two Dave's apart - Mr Pomfrett is now known as "Champagne Dave" while Mr Taylor is known as "Claret Dave". After dinner Chris Bowman gave an excellent short talk all about the life cycle of grayling using Powerpoint and showed photos of where we would be fishing tomorrow.

Thursday

After a hearty breakfast, Glyn Freeman introduced everyone to wading at the river, with a particular emphasis on safety, not just at wading but in all aspects of fishing. Chris and Glyn then dredged a small bit of river bed to extract the insect life which we examined and kept in a bucket. Then Chris tackled up and gave a demonstration of trotting with maggots, using both a centre pin and a fixed spool reel, casting both Wallis style and Nottingham style.

In the afternoon the guys started fishing at the Boat pool, Gosselins and Manse. Maggots were the bait, trotting was the method, and some used centre pin while others used fixed spool. Everyone caught a grayling. Alan had two. Champagne Dave caught a 2 lb fish, the biggest today. Claret Dave caught a trout as well as a grayling. In addition to a 1 lb fish, Bob also hooked a really big grayling but it came off. Neil's was his first grayling ever.

So there were big smiles at dinner, and Champagne Dave was even more blissful as he could watch his beloved Spurs, drinking Veuve Cliquot with dinner on his knee, having caught his first grayling! Beef stroganoff - home made - was followed by home made strawberry cheesecake. After dinner, Chris talked through the insects, invertebrates, we had found in the river and Glyn gave a demonstration of knots and leader preparation.

Friday

Again off around 8.45am after a big cooked breakfast. It was a frosty night but the river was slightly higher. First up was fly casting and everyone was taught Spey casting with single handed rods by Glyn. All bar Champagne Dave then put this into action at the stone pool with gold headed hare's ear nymphs but no-one caught..... except Champagne Dave who had two grayling - about 1 lbs each - ledgering with maggots. After lunch the other 4 tried Czech Nymphing down the manse and Claret Dave caught a grayling and a trout while Neil caught two grayling. Nothing big but Neil said "this was one of my best days ever. Not only have I caught a grayling but I've done it on a fly!"

The evening was spent fly tying with Glyn after a home made shepherd's pie for dinner.

Saturday

Neil's days get better and better. Today he had so many grayling he lost count - 10 or 12 was his estimate including two at 2 lbs. He also had a few trout. He was

trotting, all day, down the boat pool stream. Champagne Dave, just downstream of Neil, started off ledgering for a chub with bread but that did not work, so ended up using maggots and had two grayling and a couple of trout. Alan Holleran was the unlucky man today but Claret Dave caught a couple of grayling as did Bob Milne.

So it was the final dinner at Kirkwood House with plenty of fish caught and several new friends made. Whisky was on the menu in addition to champagne and claret, and Kirsteen Steel's Thai chicken curry and chocolate torte.

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