

Fishing in Ireland – some comments on dapping techniques

Unfortunately, Simon Johnson of the Wild Trout Trust, had to call off his trip to the Invicta meeting due to ill health. Doug managed to rustle up some videos of fishing in Ireland but we had to listen in unaccustomed absolute silence, as the sound was only available from the PC. Anyone with better ideas of kit please step forward. Thank you Colin, next time we will take advantage of your speakers!

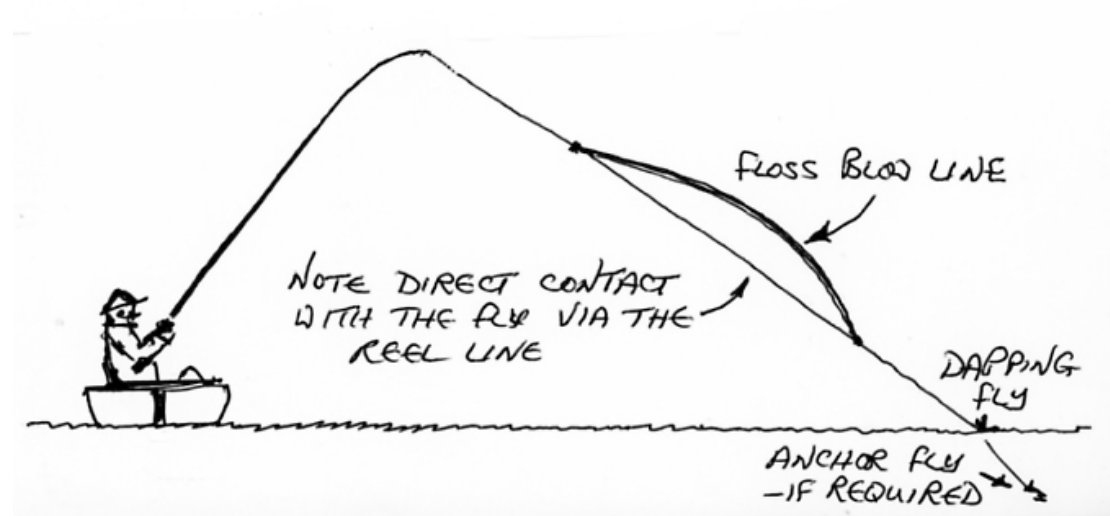
The videos were concerned with fishing the large Loughs in the NW corner of the Republic. These are limestone based and were described as “crystal clear”. I am not sure that is necessarily the case and they are as likely to suffer eutrophication as any other lakes in intensively farmed areas. I did notice a comment in the March issue of FT&TF to the effect that the devastating effects on Sheelin are hopefully a thing of the past.

I think the audience found the films a bit boring - apart from the sound problems - perhaps it was the fact that catching fish seemed too easy. I was interested in dapping which apparently came into its own during the mayfly season. Plenty of pictures of mayflies and trout going bonkers seeking to suck them in. The kit for the dapping operation was antique but OK effective. Who am I to comment?

Well for starters I was not quite sure what the rods were made from. They almost looked like bamboo poles but I suspect that they were probably fibreglass. Perhaps I shouldn't be too hasty here as again, according to FT and TF, glass rods are making a comeback in the States. Yes Mr Reeves, for Spey casting! Nevertheless, there are some brilliant coarse fishing rods available now, in carbon up to 17 feet in length that must feel like wands in comparison to the brutes used by the Irish anglers. I am a fan of Ron Thompson rods. The 13-15ft match rod seems an ideal weapon to me and, at under £50, what a steal! I suggest to the baiters amongst you (we know who you are!) that it would also double up as an excellent trotting rod for grayling. It might also be useful for Czech style nymphing which in its extreme forms doesn't appear to require much fly line! Ask if you want to try it but beware, the reel slot is on the narrow side and compatibility should be checked in advance of the trip.

The films must have been quite old because the recommended dapping line was silk floss. Perhaps this has merits but most people nowadays would use polypropylene floss. We had a speaker many years ago who seemed to know a lot about dapping. It was unnecessary to use a long length of floss and certainly not used as the only connection between the reel and the fly. My limited experiments showed that a rods length of floss supported by a reel line of 6-10bs main line was all that was required. Of course, a compromise is needed depending upon the strength of the wind and the weight of the fly. So we have a choice: continuous floss, floss knotted to nylon reel line every foot or so, or a 5 yard length of floss joined only at the extremities (see drawing). I would go for the latter every time. Incidentally, the fight from a trout not reduced to towing a thick, heavy fly line around, is truly spectacular.

Irish dapping technique uses one or two live natural flies secured through the hump behind the wings on a size 6-8 hook. I seem to remember that it was possible to buy hooks incorporating wire clips: whatever, the fly was tripped along the surface, occasionally leaving the ripple. I think the conditions shown in the video must have been ideal for this set up. In reality the angler might well experience a real wind in which case it is near impossible to keep the fly on the surface for any length of time. Here you need an anchor fly, which might be leaded, and fishes below the surface whilst an attempt is made to get the dapping fly to skit across the top. It is a lot trickier than you might think. This is beginning to sound like traditional loch style fishing if anyone remembers what that was.



Local anglers might find natural flies in short supply although there have been the occasional reports of mayflies at Grafham. Hence we are forced to use imitations. I was very impressed by the method shown for producing realistic bodies for mayflies. Here a sheet of window glass was coated with a film of Copydex. The underside of the glass was warmed over a lamp to accelerate the drying of the rubber based adhesive. A couple of parallel score marks were cut in the Copydex layer about 12mm apart. One end of the film was peeled and then wrapped around a bunch of pheasant tail fibres which were then wound until a fly body thickness of Copydex film was built up. The body can then be tied into the fly rather like a detached Daddy body, finished with a badger hackle tied in a spent style. A couple of black rings were added to the tip of the body with a marker pen in order to complete the realism. A couple of minutes later it was suggested that a ragged Wulff type fly was just as good as the long body (in fact a well built up tail) was a good representation of a mayfly. It was either exact imitation or a caricature. What really matters I wonder?

Well, maybe the films were a bit dated but they provided food for thought. I would be interested to hear from anyone who tries out dapping in the coming season.

Dave J.
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