

The Three Wise men - December 2017



Left to right: Keith Gilchrist, David Moore and Peter de Kremer

The results of some of the competitions last season showed that there are some talented anglers in the club: hence it was decided to get some of them together in order to pick their brains!

David Moore

David Moore was a long-term employee of AWA, initially in a capacity as a biologist before retiring in 2008 as Anglian Water Recreation Development Manager under which capacity Rutland Water fell within his remit. I think he spent some time with the Angling Trust but it was when he turned his hand to competitive fly fishing, that he really developed his skills as an angler; a lesson for all of us then? Join one of the Invicta teams - no previous experience necessary!

Wearing his biologist's hat, he has often performed an autopsy on some of his catches. Out of interest, the impression that a trout's gut is often empty following spooning, is probably because most of the contents were regurgitated during the capture. Hence the basis of his talk was to

describe some of his findings as the result of an in-depth study carried out after gutting and how the contents varied through the season.

I was a bit surprised that in April/May (At Rutland) the guts contained small lime green buzzers. However, there were also the expected black buzzers often with an orange flash on the cheek. He didn't say if it was made from crisp packets! Black buzzers at Grafham were smaller than their Rutland equivalents. Sedge pupae appear in June/July. These were altogether bulkier than chironomids, but a nymph pattern was an effective imitation. He rarely found adult sedge flies in the gut. Now that was surprising for at one time, stripping a dry sedge across the surface at Grafham was a sure way of exciting interest from a trout or two. Damsel flies appear in numbers, particularly in June/July at Eyebrook. July sees the appearance of shrimp as a food form. David's preference for an imitation is a Golden Ribbed Hares Ear with a small modification to enhance the appearance of the fly over the masses of naturals. In September he became aware of more small green buzzers in the gut which he took to be a second generation from those which appeared in May. In September, terrestrial flies such as daddy long legs appear as a food form. I presume that Hoppers started out as a Daddy imitation? At Rutland, Daddies tend to have a yellow rather than a brown body. Corixa are also an important part of the diet at Rutland towards the end of the conventional season (although Peter de Kramer would subsequently claim otherwise). No assessment of food can ignore fry. David showed a photo of a 6lb rainbow which had spewed up 110 roach fry in the 2-3" range. Pink shrimps appeared at Rutland about 3 years ago but this appeared to be a one off. Another interesting photo showed a gut full of green nymphs together with a single chunk of white plastic. David concluded that this was an example of how a foreign body (a lure) could distract a trout from preoccupation with a particular food form.

Keith Gilchrist

At one time, Keith was pleased if he managed to catch a single fish but he perfected his skills with the RAF competition team and was widely regarded as the King of the Evening League last season. In the Floating Line match (2017) he had his limit within an hour! He started out with a plan using a bung set-up and soon landed a couple of trout. The fishing went dead but his boat partner was getting some interest. He deduced that the fish were higher in the water than he originally suspected. He shortened the leader length beneath the bung and four fish quickly followed. The fishing went off again and he decided that a figure of eight retrieve was required. He removed the blob and caught 2 fish in successive casts!

I am not sure that this is an accurate description of his tactics on the day but it is an illustration of his philosophy which is to change tactics if a method is not working. Keith's experience has shown that even an apparently small change in tactics can result in an enormous difference in the level of success. It helps if the angler can carry out modifications as quickly as possible. As an example of this he recommended using the Davy knot for attaching flies which was not only quick and easy to tie but consumed the minimum of leader material. (Davy Wotton visited the club in the days of meetings at Cottenham. He had driven up from Kent. I think we were all astounded by the speed with which he could tie a fly. When we finally finished the meeting well after midnight, the temperature was far below zero and his car would not start without a bit of pushing from club members!).

Peter de Kremer

Peter de Kremer resides at Oakham and is well placed for regular expeditions to Rutland. Peter believes that trout are always looking upwards and the surface of the lake is the natural dinner plate. Dry fly fishing on the reservoirs was popularised by Bob Worts and crew at GWFFA and it was a widely used method especially in competitions in the early 90's. A survey of the audience showed that only 2 or 3 member anglers now used the method on a regular basis. Peter on the other hand has employed the dry from April to December for most of his fishing.

Peter again stressed the need for confidence. The big advantage of spotting a rising fish is that the angler can be fairly sure that it is feeding and therefore catchable. Moreover, unlike sub-surface feeders, the angler knows where the fish is and where it is going - almost always up-wind. Dry flies attract the bigger specimens, he said!

In mid-June he might target rising fish over deep water. The classical way of fishing dries is across wind lanes. However, surprisingly, 75% of Peter's dry fly fishing mainly targeted corixa which spend most of their lives feeding on debris on the bottom of the reservoir but they have to return to the surface regularly in order to breathe. Hence they like to live in the shallow water which is ignored by most anglers. Peter identified Burley Reaches on the north arm of Rutland as a favourite area. He also discovered more shallow water in the vicinity of Deep Water Point on Grafham which is worth exploring. The infamous Grafham shrimp has been known to float to the surface and it is worth trying a floating imitation off the dam.

He has caught on dries under bright sunshine, windy weather and in bitterly cold conditions. His advice was not to be put off even if you cannot see rising fish.

The preferred flies did not fit the conventional concept but were suspender types with flotation provided by a short length of booby cord. 6 or 7 wraps of copper wire tied in at the base of the body ensured that the fly cocked rather like a float. A favourite pattern for corixa feeders at Rutland was the Yellow Owl with the CDC replaced with foam. (somewhat different from the recent tying in Trout Fisherman). These would be tied on 14-16 B400 hooks. GRHE's as a pattern for shrimp feeders, also used booby cord, and were tied in B830's.

The general purpose dry fly, Bob's Bits, was originally composed of wool extracted from a jumper. Peter prefers seals fur which, if given a light coating of Gink, will remain floating all day regardless of the number of fish caught. The original colour was (I think) red/orange/claret but Peter rarely used that, opting for black when he wanted to copy a snail. He likes to keep the design as simple as possible and would never add legs as per Hoppers. 3 flies would be used at 7 foot intervals, unless there was sign of rising trout when the numbers of flies were reduced to avoid multiple catch-ups.

Leaders were constructed from Gigafish Ultra Power monofilament which, at a gauge of 0.20mm, had a b.s. of 9.9 lbs. Although previously only available on the www, it seems that it now sold by Sportfish. The second choice would be Orvis Super Strong although he does not like the pale green colour. Rio Powerflex has comparable strength but, according to Peter, is more prone to kinking when the line is pulled through the top ring under pressure. Fluorocarbon was definitely a no no. Leaders need to be degreased.

The rod of choice would take a No 5 line in order to avoid spooking fish. Anything heavier might lead to hooks straightening out. Casts of 10-12 yards are adequate from both boat and bank. The fly is left on the water for 10 seconds or so and re-cast following a fan pattern unless a rising fish is spotted. Takes should be met with a gentle lift rather than a strike. Watch and listen for rising fish.

There was been much interest of late in catching coarse fish on a fly. Carp fall to bits of foam representing floating bread. Peter and mates from GWFFA went on an expedition to S.W. Spain

where they had heard (at the Rutland Bird Fair!) of barbel in La Serena Reservoir. The lake was one of a series which were formed when a major river was dammed and was only opened in 1990. It is the 2nd largest reservoir in Spain and relatively narrow, but it covers 14,000 hectares. (Rutland ~1500 hectares!!!). The landscape looked a bit barren and it seems that the fish lived on terrestrial flies blown onto the water. Imitations such as grass hoppers, ants and beetles with legs were successful. The barbel came in close to the edge and it was essentially sight fishing, so for once, a flat calm was desirable. Peter referred to them as the European bonefish and "the most exciting fishing he had ever done". I was a bit sad to see that the barbel looked like carp and nothing like the sleek beasts you would expect to catch in a UK river (OK there are several species of barbel in the lake and the examples caught may not have been typical). Give me the Hampshire Avon, with clear water sweeping between luscious weed beds, any time!! Chris Mcleod was a participant in this expedition and confirmed that it was very enjoyable trip. Some members of the group put a grain of sweet corn on the fly and caught terrapins! Still, the birdlife was impressive and included vultures, cranes and bee eaters. Good value too at around £700 for the week including air fares.

The discussion raised a number of questions.

- Chris Mcleod praised barbless hooks and especially those made by Dohiku and claimed that from his experience they were just as effective as barbed hooks.
- Never mind, Keith likes Osprey barbed hooks from Veniards. His preferred leader material was Airflow Sightfree G3 which is as cheap as chips.
- It was observed that nobody mentioned snakes!!
- The reduced fly life at Grafham was attributed to the increased use of pesticides on local farm land. This was pure speculation!

And many more

Ref. for the Davy knot <http://www.animatedknots.com/davy/>

Dave Jones
Jan 2018