

EPFFA River Fly Fishing Championships 2015

The 2015 EPFFA River Championships were held on the River Ure, North Yorkshire, fishing the Bolton Hall Estate beats in early November, with Grayling being the targeted species.

Although the Trout and Salmon seasons had ended, there were one or two Brown Trout caught and safely returned and although no salmon were caught, there was an awful lot of large fish seen splashing about in the river and giving one or two anglers a nasty surprise when they jumped within a few feet of where they were standing...a good indication of a clean and healthy river and one to note for the future.

Our sincere thanks go to the Bolton Hall Estate for allowing us access to the river for this event and hopefully they will allow us to return and fish again in the future.

Two members have produced reports in respect of the event and they give a fine account of the two day event. Thanks to Iain and Kevin for their reports.

The Results

Name	Day 1	Sub Total	Day 2	Sub Total	Total
Iain Fraser	35,41	76cms	34,32,26,27,29,30	168cms	244cms
Henryk Pycz	27,33	60cms	30,34,22,36,31,24	177cms	237cms
Kevin Weller	37,16,28	81cms	35,36,32	103cms	184cms
Bob Casey	29	29cms	33,46	79cms	108cms
Tony Smith	44	44cms	28,28	56cms	100cms
John Proverbs	31,27,15	73cms		0	73cms
Nick McMullen	25	25cms	42	42cms	67cms
Doug Johnston		0	24,30	54cms	54cms
Malcolm Naylor		0	36	36cms	36cms
Rory Noble	34	34cms			34cms
Colin Alexander		0		0	0
Pete Langham		0		0	0

Fishing Report on River Ure- EPFFA River Fly Fishing Championships 2015

By Iain Fraser

The River Ure in North Yorkshire is a river I knew nothing about except that it was reported to be an excellent grayling water but I could find nothing much about it on the internet regarding methods. I travelled up from Essex with Bob, my old fishing mate of 40 odd years, and arrived in the outskirts of Leyburn about 2.0 pm in the afternoon. We found the river and had a scouting foray and we were pleasantly surprised to find a falling river and signs of a few fish rising although we could not identify what the fish were rising to.

On to the town and the local tackle shop where the manager and staff were very helpful but were not fly fishers but they did hold a very good selection of flies. I usually reckon that when faced with a new water and a local tackle shop I always look to see what fly selections are nearly empty and so found only 5 pinkish klinkhammers in size 12/14 left in the tray which I purchased along with a selection of other shrimps and dries.

Next stop the Golden Lion hotel to unload all the gear and try out the local ale and catch up with many of the old friends who had come from as far afield as Hampshire, Gloucester, Nottingham, Middlesex, West Yorkshire, Northumbria and all points in between.

After a good hot meal and a few more pints in the bar and talking to anyone in the hotel who might be able to give some pointers on the methods which were unsuccessful it was time for a quick briefing on the next day – a practice – with maps and access points to be found. A few more pints and an early(ish) night.

The following day was very mild, damp and a little misty and we drove down to Lords Bridge to wet a line. Unfortunately so did everyone else and we figured that the river would not support so many anglers so we set off immediately and explored various access points and laybys wetting a line here and there to get a feel for the water. Not much insect life about but we eventually found what appeared virgin water downstream of Wensley Bridge.

With few fish seen rising I opted for the Czech-nymph style with a 3 fly set up heaviest weighted nymph – a pink shrimp in the middle and two lighter nymphs each side on a 5 foot leader.

I had nothing, zero, zilch for over an hour steadily casting a watching for any movement on the line. Mid-afternoon and still very mild a small hatch of a brownish fly appeared and I changed methods to the dry.

A small brown sedge and one of the pinkish klinkhammers on a short dropper and I took a couple of reasonable grayling on the– klinkhammer. Only a few fish were rising but at least something was feeding.

Having found a method that worked and not wanting to disturb the water before the match too much we decided to drive back to Lords Bridge to see how others were doing and while we should not have been, we were very pleased to find most people struggling with a lot of blanks and the odd couple of fish here and there. We fished for an hour or so and Bob had a grayling but I could not get an offer at all.

Back to the car and a short drive to Wensley Bridge for a look by the bridge itself...nothing.

In the bar that evening it was encouraging to hear the tales of woe and frustration with no-one catching more than 3 fish that day although the methods seemed to be very much nymph tactics on the Bolton Abbey, Lords Bridge stretch. After dinner (and a few pints) the briefing for the following day and an early night.

Bob and I reckoned that with all the pressure on the water at Lords Bridge we would be best to fish downstream of Wensley Bridge as we had seen no one else come there and although it was a mile hike (or seemed it) the water had not been hammered like Lords Bridge which was a much easier walk and did offer a good variety of water.

Thursday Morning – The draw and the pairings. For those that don't know we usually fish an hour about with one fishing and the other being the measurer and judge of any infringements of the rules. Because the fishing had been so hard the previous day and the prospect of heavy rains and a rising river it was decided that both anglers would be permitted to fish at the same time but the judge with the ruler must always be within 30 yards of the main angler for that hour – the ruler being swapped each hour. The angler without the ruler being in charge of where to fish along the several miles of river available. Bob and I reckoned that the water we wanted could accommodate 2 pairs fishing without a problem. The names kept coming out of the hat except mine or Bobs until only two remained and they were ours. Wonderful luck to start with – we knew where to go and no need to share the water with anyone else hopefully.

The cars were all loaded and the 'go' was given and everyone set off to their chosen areas in a thick mist yet still warm temperature.

Parking in a layby close to the bridge the car was unloaded, waders on and tackle and flask fitted into my new fly vest and back pack. What a great buy – no more having a shoulder bag slipping down your arms, rods fitting into the side pockets and no weight to notice. I had first seen the vest on an Irishman in the 5 Nations earlier this year when fishing the River Clyde in Scotland and noticed how easy he walked carrying his tackle effortlessly and was able to wade without having to deposit his gear on the bank.

Bob and I set off on the long walk through the mist downstream arriving at the stretch we had chosen, Bob sweating and puffing and me far less out of breath thanks to the new vest.

We tossed a coin for up or downstream and I won choosing a stretch by an overhanging tree where I saw a few delicate dimples breaking the surface. Crawling through the obligatory barbed wire fence which seems to be a compulsory feature for fly fishing venues and designed by wader manufacturers to ensure year on year sales, we found some flattish ground to tackle up.

There were a few splashy rises and tiny dimples breaking the surface just downstream of the tree but Bob and I both agreed that these must be very small fish, salmon parr perhaps or fingerling trout or grayling – even minnows.

The water was starting to run a little harder and rising just a fraction with a lot of leaves being carried downstream. The odd rise only feet from the bank with a few to about half way across the 60/70 foot of river which had steep banks and few access points. No terrestrials seen so I put on what I had used the previous day. First cast a savage take no more than 8 feet from the bank and busted. What was it?? I can only suspect a small salmon/sea-trout or a large brown. I was using 3 lb breaking strain (there is a maximum allowed of 4lb to ensure we don't get any salmon)

Bob casts out downstream of me and the air is shattered by some Anglo Saxon expletives as he is likewise treated to a fish breaking his line. A mixture of frustration and excitement pervades over us both as we tie on new leaders and flies. I don't know what Bob is using but I tie on another pinkish klinkhammer on the dropper and a black gnat on the point.

The fish are still rising and little tiny dimples show in the water. I have had umpteen rises and splashes near my flies but nothing has tightened my line. Best part of an hour has gone by and a small dimple appears by my klinkhammer, I pause for half a second before striking gently and this time things go solid and a fish is on – a nice grayling around 28 cms. (*I have not decimalized yet but all measurements of fish are done in Centimetres*) One in the net and safely returned alive.

Time for a coffee, a well-earned pipe of tobacco and a sit down. Bob is still struggling and missing a lot of bites. He comes up-steam to me and we discuss flies and why we are not hooking up more. Bob is convinced he is getting takes on a black klinkhammer; I think all my takes are on the pink.

We swop areas and two or three casts and a little duple results in another grayling a bit bigger. Into the net and then a trudge up to Bob for the official measuring 32 cms and recording on my card.

Half an hour later and another one in the net. Back to the tree for our swop around, another coffee and a smoke.

The leaves are getting more and more and the rises are getting fewer, nearing lunch-time and I get another grayling and its change round again and Bob is still to open his account.

I am now fishing downstream and have taken off the black gnat and am fishing a single fly – the pinkish klinkhammer.

A pull but this time it is undersized, then another decent grayling, then a salmon parr which does not count either. The fish seem to have switched on and another grayling of 30 odd cms and then another fish but it's a trout and no use to me.. Change around time and things seem quiet near the tree now. I put up my nymphing rod and try that method – nothing. Meantime Bob has at last got one which I measure and record. I have by now given him one of my pinkish *Klink's* as I figure I have a decent lead and even though he is a very good mate it is a competition after all.

Nothing shows interest to the nymphs so it's back to the pink klinkhammer and downstream of the tree and I bag two more nice grayling. As I said Bob is a good mate and although it's not time to move I vacate the spot, tell Bob the method and let him fish where I have been catching. He hooks into a very solid fish which turns out to be the best of the whole competition measuring 46 cms a beautiful grayling.

It's turning quite chilly and the rain has started, beginning with a few light drops about 1.30 and steadily intensifying to a cold and cruel onslaught by 3.30pm the rises have all stopped and despite changing onto nymphs fished across and down nothing is interested. nlt's 3.30pm and we have a fair walk so I have ended with 6 grayling and Bob has two but one is a big'un.

The match ends at 4pm so we decide to give it best, take down our tackle and trudge back to the car through the rain and mud. Everything is soaked and getting out of our waders at the car and getting on dry shoes in not easy so everything is thrown into the boot and we drive back to the hotel having no idea how we have fared. Tackle to the room and into the bar for a pint and a chat with the others. No one seems to have done that well although my old team mate from Middlesex is sitting with a hint of Cheshire Cat. The measuring sticks are returned and the results cards handed over to the organiser. Off to the room – shower and change into blazer shirt and tie for the meal and results.

Announcement – the Trophy Cup will not be presented tonight as Kevin from Gloucester (last year's winner) has left it behind. His wife did phone him but by then he was 2 hours up the motorway.

Announcement – the medals for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places will not be presented today as they are in Scotland as the UK Secretary who was bringing them could not get away from work at the last minute.

Never mind – the official announcement of places and qualifiers for the EPPFA England Squad is made.

Bob finishes in 4th Place (Phew – thank goodness I have someone to travel with to Ireland next year) 3rd place – Kevin who forgot the Cup, 2nd place - All is hushed its between me and Henryk from Middlesex and he is second. I have beaten him by 7 cms; my second win in three years.

One win could be luck, two wins in three years probably luck but I like to think I know a little more than some others.

If anyone is interested my internet site is www.flyfishingwithfraser.co.uk where there are photos of the 2013 Championships and grayling on the River Eden

Fishing Report on River Ure- EPFFA River Fly Fishing Championships 2015

By Kevin Weller

Here we go again, it was that time when a small but great group of guys get together for the annual river fluff chucking event, this time it was being held on the very picturesque River Ure in North Yorkshire.

Last years event was held for the second time on the River Eden which on its day is a great river, unfortunately for the second year running the weather Gods were not kind to us which made this year all the more important as we were due some decent conditions and the River did not disappoint us.

Bag and kit packed I set off with my fishing partner John, all was going well when two hours into the journey the mobile goes and John answers it and informs me my wife is on the phone and wanted to know why I didn't take the Trophy with me, the response is not printable. The best I could hope for was that either John or myself won in which case there was no problem and we could have our own little presentation in a pub back in Cheltenham.

We stopped off on the way to visit a Fly fishing shop in Harrogate which had been recommended, what a good move that proved to be not just for me but also for Nick McMullen who was to be my fishing partner on day 2.

Having purchased all the hot favourites and armed with a load of top tips we made our way to the Golden Lion Pub in Leyburn where we met with all the other normal suspects. The evening followed the normal pattern drink eat drink with loads of catching up plus the interrogation of Henryk who had arrived earlier during the day and had already spent some time on the river.

The following Day we all set off, I was partnered with John and we set about walking up from Lords Bridge, this was a lovely stretch of water and where you were able to try all methods. During the visit to the shop in Harrogate I had purchased some small pink coloured nymphs which the chap ties specially for the Ure, these did not disappoint and the day brought a combination of Grayling and Trout.

The evening back in the hotel was very enjoyable and for me the social side is as important if not more than the fishing itself, its great to catch up with like minded people and enjoy some good stories from the day and at the same time have a few pints.

The following day the draw was done and I was partnered with Nick McMullen from Northumbria, like me he was all about enjoying the day on the river and while nice to catch fish it was a day of relaxing and away from the normal demands of work.

We started off at Lords Bridge and quickly made our way up river for about a mile as the previous day I had found a lovely stretch where the river split with an island and where it joins there was an area which as you say "seemed very fishy"

We set about seeing what was there and within a fairly short space of time I had caught some beautiful grayling, the best I had ever caught. Nick at this point had lost some fish but had yet to bag a grayling so I offered up the spot where I was and gave him one of my pink nymphs, what happened next was he went and landed a monster of 42cm, a cracking fish and fair play he deserved it and I was glad Nick had caught what I believe was his first ever grayling.

The day done we headed back to the Golden Lion for the totting up and presentation, the normal conversations followed "how did it go" "any luck" with the responses in the main being very guarded "not bad" "got a few"

My embarrassment of forgetting the trophy was softened by the fact that no medals were available as they were in Scotland, first place went to Iain from Essex, followed in second place with only 9cm the difference Henryk from London and myself creeping in at third place with my partner Nick managing to secure a spot in the reserves with the 42cm.

It was overall another fantastic event and I cannot thank Malcolm for doing such a grand job in organising the event, and would highly recommend to anyone who hasn't participated in this event to come along and give it a try as unlike the reservoir fishing you get the chance to walk along some beautiful stretches of river and enjoy some fantastic company.