

Blasts from the past

Tricoptera, Caddis or Sedge?

Looking back through his diaries, **Stevie Munn**, finds that these patterns have brought him consistent success on running and still water.



Before I go on my monthly rant I'd like to wish all our readers a very Happy New Year and hope you all have a prosperous angling season in the months ahead. I hope Santa brought you that new rod, reel or those pair of waders you wanted, but if he didn't don't worry – nobody will ever see that horrendous Christmas jumper under your wading jacket! Looking back at my year, I had reasonable fishing with some very memorable days and nights on Irish rivers and loughs. Luckily for me I had some nice trout and a few salmon, so I can't complain too much, although I must say I wish the powers that be would look after our local waters a bit better as we still have problems with illegal netting, pollution and planning permission being given on flood plains. All these issues need to be addressed. Highlight of my year was a fantastic time in British Columbia with a great group of lads, fishing for powerful, rod-bending Pacific salmon. By the way, if there is anyone out there interested in BC fishing trips please contact me – sorry about the obvious plug!

Now here is a tip for success. I keep a log of most of my fishing trips, especially the local ones. My late father George also did this and I find it exceedingly useful simply for looking back at archives of similar dates before setting out to go fishing. These records can remind you of important information like what fly worked for you or one of your mates or sometimes even what tactics to try and spots to fish in comparable conditions. It can give you an edge and I have used this in the past when I fished competitions and I must say it often helped me do well. Recently I decided to go through old records of my father's and my own, just to see what most of our brown trout were taken on over the years. I was not surprised to see many of our old favourite fly patterns turning up, like the Greenwell's, Black & Peacock and the Hare's Ear. What did surprise me somewhat was just how many trout

both of us had caught on caddis patterns of one form or another. I guess this is not a revelation as many kinds of caddis are very common all over our Isle and can be found on almost all of our local rivers and loughs and trout take them ardently in all three forms throughout the year. So here are three trout patterns that kept turning up as fish takers over the years. They imitate three stages of the caddis lifecycle, so make sure you dress a few over this winter for the coming season. Tight lines in 2011!

FACT FILE

Stevie Munn has fished many places in the world but grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he now often guides.

He is a Hardy Greys Academy endorsed game angling instructor, and helps run teaching courses in Ireland and host trips to Canada.

He is a member of the Association Professional Game Angling Instructors qualified in Fly Casting and Fly Tying (APGAI-Ireland) and also a qualified Advanced Professional Game Angling Instructor in Fly Casting (APGAI).

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There are many cased caddis fly patterns, but I find this one designed by English angler Bob Carnill to be one of the best and a dressing that works for me consistently on rivers and stillwaters. It is a fly I will often turn to when other patterns are not working, as I know trout feed avidly on cased caddis. On rivers, try this on a dead drift, upstream nymph style, or cast upstream and retrieve slightly faster than the flow while feeling for takes. On stillwaters, fish on a long leader with a slow figure-of-eight retrieve for

CASED CADDIS (BOB CARNILL)

Hook: Size 10-16 longshank (I use size 12 nymph hooks mostly)

Thread: Black, brown or red.

Body: Lead wire underbody covered with hare's ear fur or dubbing.

Thorax: White swan or goose in the original, but I use white Antron with a wire rib.

Legs: Short black hackle

Head: Black

best results slow and deep does the trick. In John Roberts' book, *A Guide to River Trout Flies*, he states although this fly is regarded as a still water fly he also uses it with great regularity on rivers and he gives a useful hint to dress the underbody with the lead mostly on the top of the hook shank, which causes the fly to swim upsidedown and therefore less prone to snagging. Add some of these to your box – they will come in very handy throughout the year.



SPARKLE PUPA (GARY LA FONTAINE)

Hook: Size 8-20 (For Ireland 8-14 is normal)

Thread: Brown, black, red or orange.

Shroud: Antron 'ballooned' over abdomen. Leave a few fibres trailing out the back.

Body: Green dubbing, though I have used other colours.

Wing: Light deer hair tied sparse

Head: Dark brown/ orange dubbing

American angler Gary Lafontaine was a true modern great and a hero of mine, who sadly passed away in 2002 after a lengthy battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease, or ALS. Regrettably he was only in his 50s. I was asked to dress a fly for him that was included in limited edition posters with other fly dressers' flies from all over the world which were to be auctioned and sold for the ALS charity. I have one framed hanging in my room. I was first introduced

to the great man's works by local angler Bill Armstrong, who showed me a book by LaFontaine called *Caddisflies*, which came out in the early 1980s. As soon as I'd tried a few of the patterns in this book I was instantly a disciple. Gary Lafontaine had made a study of these insects over years and his caddis patterns are innovative, original, intelligent and most importantly, fantastic fish catchers. One of my all time favourites.



G&H SEDGE (GODDARD AND HENRY)

Hook: Size 10-14 longshank

Thread: Black

Underbody: Green or orange dubbing (optional)

Wing/Body: Spun deer hair clipped

Hackle: Two brown cock hackles

Horns: Hackle stalks.

'THESE RECORDS CAN REMIND YOU OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION LIKE WHAT FLY WORKED FOR YOU.'

Named after well-known fly anglers John Goddard and Cliff Henry, this is one of the best dry patterns of all time. The duo made a study on the silhouette of caddis flies as they skittered over the water's surface when trout would often chase and eat them. Using buoyant deerhair they sculpted the material until it matched the insect's wing and body shape. They ended up with a nearly unsinkable fly that when retrieved produced a realistic wake

that trout loved. When the caddis fly hatches the emergent adult tries to swim as fast as it can to the safety of the bank. This frantic dash for survival creates a V-shaped wake. This fly works for me on still waters, loughs and also rivers. Large caddis like Murrrough can be imitated by this pattern, but it pays to have it in many different sizes as it's a great fly to use to imitate any dry or emergent caddis.