

## ENTOMOLOGY EXPOSED

### PART II – MAY, A TIME OF PLENTY

As far as riverside insects are concerned, a time of plenty it certainly is! Most of the flies that were hatching in April are still around and by the end of May the air will be buzzing with insects on any warm day. Ironically the one fly that was hatching in April that isn't on the wing in May is the March Brown, but the wet imitation is still one of the best flies this month. Of the others, the Large Dark Olive is still struggling along, the hatches of Olive Upright are increasing and the Hawthorn is really coming into its own on breezy days. The rest are still there and you will need to use a bit of observation to decide which is on the water.

In the "Mayfly Section", there are a whole host of new arrivals this month. The Iron Blue Dun (*Baëtis pumilus* or *niger*) (Fig.4) and the Purple Dun (*Paraleptophlebia cincta*) are two early arrivals. The IBD is a small fly, very dark in appearance with dark grey wings and a dark brown olive body. As it is one of the *Baëtis* species it has two small oval shaped hindwings with a prominent spur and two tails. The Purple Dun is like a large IBD with a purple tinge. An Iron Blue pattern will suffice.

The next important fly will be the Medium Olive (*Baëtis vernus*). This is smaller and lighter than the Large Dark Olive but otherwise similar. It can be one of the most common flies on the river although it doesn't seem to be easy to successfully imitate it.

The Pale Watery (*Baëtis bioculatus*) is legendary but I will suggest that a similar fly, the Small Spurwing (*Centroptilum luteolum*) is much more common and deserves more attention. Both of these flies are small and have a pale grey olive body and pale grey wings. The difference is really in the shape of the hindwing with that of the small spurwing being very narrow with a very prominent spur, whilst the Pale Watery has the typical *Baëtis* hindwing. They both have two tails. One of the best patterns for both is the Last Hope.

There are several species that are uncommon or unimportant which I will mention briefly. These are the Yellow Evening Dun (*Ephemerella notata*), the Yellow May Dun (*Heptagenia sulphurea*), the Dusky Yellowstreak (*Heptagenia lateralis*), the Turkey Brown (*Paraleptophlebia submarginata*) and the Ditch Dun (*Habrophlebia fusca*). Of these the only one which I believe will occur on PB is the Yellow May Dun. It is commonly believed that the trout do not like these flies and I can say that I have rarely seen one taken, even when there have been a lot on the water.

This leaves one more of this order of flies, the Mayfly itself. I am told that there is a hatch of these at Pettiford Brook. No fly engenders more interest than this one, both by anglers and the trout. It is the fly that even the biggies will come to the surface to take. Fishing can either be easy or frustrating. It is a large fly, no a huge fly! Fig. 1 is the actual size. The size, three tails, upright hindwings and general coloration make it unmistakable. There are three species *Ephemerella danica*, *Ephemerella vulgata* and *Ephemerella lineata*. Any that we meet at PB will almost certainly be "*danica*". "*Lineata*" will be absent. There are many patterns both dun (Fig. 2) and spinner (Fig. 3), the latter being used to imitate the flies lying spent on the water after laying their eggs.

Sedge flies (*Trichoptera*)(Fig. 5), common on most rivers, make their appearance at this time and are especially important in the evening. This order of flies is characterised by its roof shaped wings. There are many species but they can be covered by two patterns, i.e. red and black sedge.



Fig.5

The patterns:

|                |                                  |                                           |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|                | <b>Iron Blue</b>                 | <b>Olive Quill(Medium Olive)</b>          |
| <b>Hook:</b>   | 16UE                             | 16UE                                      |
| <b>Tails:</b>  | Blue dun cock fibres             | Medium olive cock                         |
| <b>Body:</b>   | Stripped peacock-claret          | Olive stripped peacock                    |
| <b>Rib:</b>    | None                             | None                                      |
| <b>Wings:</b>  | Dark starling                    | Dark starling                             |
| <b>Hackle:</b> | Dark blue dun cock               | Medium olive cock                         |
|                | <b>Mayfly Dun</b>                | <b>Deerstalker (Mayfly Spinner)</b>       |
| <b>Hook:</b>   | 10LS                             | 10LS fine wire                            |
| <b>Tails:</b>  | Cock pheasant tail               | Cock pheasant tail                        |
| <b>Body:</b>   | Yellow raffia                    | White deer hair tied along body           |
| <b>Rib:</b>    | Oval gold tinsel                 | Fine silver wire or none                  |
| <b>Wings:</b>  | Mallard breast                   | None                                      |
| <b>Hackle:</b> | Olive/yellow & grizzle cock      | Black cock tied spent                     |
|                | <b>Little Red Sedge</b>          | <b>Black Sedge</b>                        |
| <b>Hook:</b>   | 12-16UE                          | 14UE                                      |
| <b>Tails:</b>  | None                             | None                                      |
| <b>Body:</b>   | Cock pheasant tail fibres        | Black seal's fur                          |
| <b>Rib:</b>    | Gold tinsel                      | Silver wire                               |
| <b>Wings:</b>  | Red hen wing tied low over body  | Any black wing feather tied low over body |
| <b>Hackle:</b> | Red game cock palmered & at head | Black cock palmered & at head             |
|                | <b>Last Hope (Goddard)</b>       |                                           |
| <b>Hook:</b>   | 16-18UE                          |                                           |
| <b>Tails:</b>  | Honey cock fibres                |                                           |
| <b>Body:</b>   | Goose primary herl-buff          |                                           |
| <b>Rib:</b>    | None, use yellow tying silk      |                                           |
| <b>Wings:</b>  | None                             |                                           |
| <b>Hackle:</b> | Very short cream cock            |                                           |

In part III we will look at the immediate post mayfly period – a difficult time on the rivers and streams.

JWL