



Fishy story

TELL US A TALL
TALE AND WIN
A GREAT READ,
COURTESY OF
COCH-Y-BONDDU
BOOKS

The little black thing

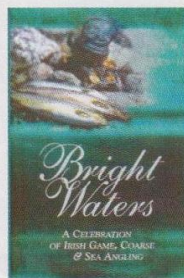
Not so long ago, whilst fishing the Birs, my local river near Basel, I thought of something Ally Gowans once said to a group of fishermen on a visit to Scotland a few years ago. "If somebody offered you a fly that would always catch fish, with every cast, would you take it?" he asked us. We all said no, to which he added, "I thought so – after all, it's called fishing, not catching."

However, on this particular afternoon in June, I seemed to have found the fly that did exactly that job. For almost an hour I caught fish with every cast. Trout after trout took my black gold-head Nymph, from tiddlers to one-pounders. Later, as a joke, I sent my fishing buddy, Markus, what I thought was a cryptic text message saying that "the little black thing works in fishing as well." It took him a while before he realised I was not referring to Coco Chanel's famous contribution to ladies' fashion. I, however, understood what Ally had meant about the difference between 'fishing' and 'catching.' As difficult as

it may be to believe, I became fed up with catching fish with every cast.

I stopped, although I did for two other good reasons: my little black Nymphs had been completely mauled by the trout's teeth, and finishing early allowed me plenty of time to change and get ready for a party I was invited to later that evening – where I then got hooked by someone wearing a little black thing ...

*Martin Pütter,
Basel,
Switzerland.*



This month's winner is Martin Pütter from Switzerland who wins a copy of *Bright Waters – A Celebration of Irish Game, Coarse and Sea Angling*, chosen and edited by Niall Fallon and Tom Fort.

Nature's social union

My late wife, Mary, who was keenly perceptive and had a mischievous sense of humour, once said that the first thing a fisherman catches is himself. Neither I, nor two of my three sons was caught, but the one who was, was happy about it and is now a skilled and knowledgeable fisherman. He is not concerned to pull every fish he sees out of the water, but would fish a quota and leave it at that, and in the meantime look at what that other fisherman – the kingfisher – and all the other creatures were busily doing about the river.

In a year he would catch a number of salmon and maybe a trout or two (and sea trout in the depth of a some summer night), but all this would be over a period of a week or two even though we had a one-and-a-half mile stretch and all the season to fish it.

There were many notable times then, but one stands out in my mind. We had visitors from town one day. They weren't knowledgeable about fishing and didn't really pay much interest to my sons's remarks about the sport. They seem to be thinking, "He's never caught a fish let alone a salmon."

We, visitors and family, were having coffee in our sitting room when my son announced he was off down the river. It was just across the field in front of the house. The visitors knew he was going to fish, but their thoughts were clear from their attitude and few words.

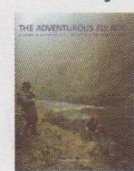
However, they had even fewer words to say when my son returned 20 minutes later with a

9lb salmon.

What they didn't realise was that my son, a real countryman and angler, knew the river, knew where the fish were likely to be and knew that this was the time to go out and get it. That is the true magic of fly fishing; living, in many ways in line with the fish. In *To a Mouse*, Robert Burns wrote of his "fellow mortal," that we are all creatures of the Earth and there are patterns in it.
*WG Cummins,
Maryport,
Cumbria.*

Next month

Send us your 'fishy



story' and the winning entry published in the next issue will

win a copy of *The Adventurous Fly Rod* by Niels Kirch Ørtoft, a fascinating account of Ørtoft's experiences fly fishing throughout the world. It contains useful advice for anyone intent on following him on his inexpensive fly-fishing sojourns.

Guidelines and Entry

Your story should be based on a fly-fishing theme. Keep it brief, ideally no more than 350 words. Try not to wander from the storyline.

Handwritten stories are acceptable, but typed or e-mailed ones are preferable. Copyright for all 'Fishy Stories' submitted belongs to Rolling River Publications Ltd.

Post, fax or e-mail your story to the FF&FT office, and please remember to submit your name and full address.

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