

JULY - THE INVICTA



HOOK: Size 10 - 14.

THREAD: Black 8/0.

TAIL: Golden pheasant topping (crest).

BODY: Yellow seal's fur or substitute.

RIB: Fine oval gold tinsel.

HACKLE: Red game cock, palmered.

BEARD HACKLE: Blue jay.

WING: Hen pheasant centre tail, matching slips.

This traditional wet fly was devised in the late 1800s and has certainly stood the test of time. It is a great fly if fished quickly just under the surface when sedge (caddis) flies are hatching. These hatches usually occur in the evenings during the summer months and the fish make the most of it. The Invicta seems to represent the confusion of an adult sedge fly emerging from the pupa at the surface. With a quick retrieve and a floating line, be careful you don't get snapped as takes can be quite violent affairs. Try to avoid

pointing the rod straight down the line! A fly on a size 12 hook is probably the most useful. Also worth a try is a sedge pupa pattern such as the amber nymph or a closer copy such as the one below. Most of the pupae I have found here have either yellow or green abdomens with black or brown markings. The thorax region is generally darker. Spooning the fish you have kept may give you an idea of the colours and sizes to use.

Below: Yellow sedge pupa.



If you find the fish are not responding to wet flies or nymphs, try a dry sedge. The G&H sedge, elk-hair sedge and various sedgehogs should all work. After casting out, allow your fly/flyes to sit motionless for a few seconds. If a fish has seen them land on the water, it could take immediately. If there is no response after a while, a steady figure-of-eight retrieve across the surface may get some interest. In calm water it will help if your leader is sunk, use a good quality fluorocarbon to achieve this. The sinking leader may eventually pull the fly under, but they will still catch subsurface if you continue with the steady retrieve. Whether fishing dries or wets, if you have bank space, keep moving a pace or two between casts to cover plenty of water. Similarly in a boat, I would choose to drift rather than drop the anchor and stay in one place.



Above: An adult sedge on one of our boats.

Other flies to try at this time of year are fry patterns, foam beetles, hoppers etc. Providing conditions are favourable, I will fish dry flies and emergers for most of the summer as this method seems to be the most reliable at Hallington. When I looked back at my catches from last year, (you do keep a fishing diary, don't you?) I found that two thirds of my fish were taken on surface flies.

Phil Bilbrough