

Winter Meeting 9th January 2025

Craig Barr - Flash Attack Flies



What a resilient bunch our members are. Despite being the coldest night of the winter so far, around 24 members turned up to hear Craig Barr give an excellent presentation on his fishing thoughts and methods.

Craig concentrated on shrimp and buzzer fishing and the changes he has seen over the past few years which have affected his approach to set up and methods. He feels without doubt that the proliferation of invasive mussels in midland reservoirs is the main cause of the gin clear clarity that we now see on a regular basis and fish can now see and are more wary of heavier tippet and fly spacing. He now regularly goes down to 7lb and for dries 6lb BS with a #5wt rod whereas a few years ago 10lb line with # 8 line and rod was norm. Craig supported the theory that these mussels have filtered out the plankton and consequently starved the daphnia that used to be the main food for rainbow trout out in the open water. The standard method was to pull three or four coloured lures and nymphs through the water now he usually sets up with just one or two flies at wider spacing as four flies on a leader spook the fish in the clear shallow margins where they feed on shrimps and snails.

Fishing the margins is often neglected by boat anglers and he is surprised how often you see boat anglers pulling up the drogue well before they have reached the shore. In recent years he has had some of his best fishing by casting to within a couple of feet of the bank frequently in only a foot or so of water.



Asked for tips for our first Invicta trip to Blithfield Craig advised washing line buzzers in the top two feet although he recalled winning a TEFQ Qualifier with a record 66 fish fishing buzzer on a di7, a method discovered by accident on practice when his flies sank to the bottom while he sorted a tangle, (encouraging that even he gets these !)

Craig was fairly protective and secretive about one method which has bought him success recently, but flies and lures never stay secret for long. Basically it is what most of us would call a green snakelet or mini snake (about 2") but the main difference being that it is unweighted and fished almost static on a floater or slow glass initially on the surface. He had lots of success with this at Rutland during the season and tried to keep the method and fly to himself but Graham Pearson soon found out and so they are now available from his FlashAttack list.

He brought a large selection of flies for members to purchase including some very nice mini daddies – almost gnat size, (I think Gary How left a few), and some in rather unusual colour

shrimps, I'm not sure I've seen many Grafham shrimps like those above but Craig said that he has noticed some green shrimps at Grafham but not so far at Rutland.

He said that in his opinion the AWs stocking level is fine they are just harder to catch but does have a few concerns about smaller fish as he has witnessed cormorants take them.

Craig talked about his popular FlashAttack flies, hooks and his latest Japanese fluorocarbon, it's a challenging business for example he has to order 50,000 hooks of each pattern and size from the manufacturer.

Craig attributed his success to a complete focus on everything and everyone around him and not carrying on doing the same thing if it wasn't working. The main points to take from the evening is the importance of adapting to the change in fishing set up now that water clarity is such an important factor. Tippet size, fly size, spacing, longer droppers and maybe a move towards lighter weight rods and lines.