

BLANK DAY! TRY THAT DDD

by Ron O'Donaghue

On a number of occasions the DDD (now known as Duckworth's Dargle Delight) has saved me from having a blank day. It has become one of my most favoured flies. In Tom Sutcliffe's latest book, *"Reflections on Flyfishing"*, he has dedicated a whole chapter to this fly and has the following to say:

"When there are no rises to guide the angler to the fish, the DDD is often cast onto the water at random in the hope that some unwary trout will happen to see it."

The following three stories will give you an idea of what Tom is referring to:

A cold, windy, miserable day at Highmoor with nobody having touched a fish all day, I decided to put out a DDD so that I could sit down, out of the cold wind. I hardly had time to get comfortable when a hen fish happened to see my fly and take off with it. An angler nearby, who seemed to be new at the game, came across and his first question was, "what retrieve did you use?" My first thought was that he had just read Tom's first book, *"My Way with a Trout."* I then pointed out to him that I was fishing with a dry fly. Again he asked, so in order to satisfy him I said, "dead slow". He was happy with the answer.

Fishing in the Dargle one summer's day with Tony Clark, he soon had two lovely fish, both caught on a nymph. I waded into the water and put out a DDD. The fly eventually got water-logged so I flicked it through the air to dry it off. I then put it into the water to see if it had any intentions of sinking again. Not even a rod's length away from me the cock fish latched on. I looked around to see that nobody had noticed the surprised look on my face and proceeded to land the fish.

The third occasion, that resulted in my biggest fish to date, was also in the Dargle, in May last year. The honourable editor and I got to the dam fairly early. By lunchtime Jon had one fish in the creel. He decided to have lunch and push a few Z's. I informed him that I was going to try a dry and even if I only caught a stockie, I would be able to say that I had caught something. I waded in along a shale shelf and put a DDD out, slightly cross-wind. It was not long before a "stockie" with my DDD firmly lodged in his mouth was taking line from me. With the "stockie" eventually in the net, I went to wake Jon up. I didn't know his eyes got that big. The stockie weighed just on 7lbs 11oz. Jon was not yet convinced that a dry fly was the answer for the day. So with Jon, I went back to the same spot and wham! a stockie of 6lbs 9oz. By now Jon thought a dry fly was perhaps the answer. He came and stood where I had been and I very kindly moved to his left. A couple of casts later, at almost right angles to where he was casting I had the good fortune to get another fish of 5lbs 8oz. It was at this stage that Jon hinted that he wanted to go back home.

By the way, it's not necessary to put out a long cast at times like these. Dermot Wilson in his book, *"Fishing the Dry Fly"*, says:

"There is an old fishing expression "fine and far off", which may have cost fishermen a good many trout. Casting for a trout from farther away than is strictly necessary is a bad idea. The cast will be that much less delicate, and when you strike to drive the hook home, you will do it less well. It is always difficult to strike with a long length of line lying between the rod and the fish. There is really very little point in setting yourself exercises in long-distance casting if you can possibly help it."

Further reference to the DDD can be found in *The Creel*, the compendium of the official publications of the Natal Flyfishers Club from its inception in 1972 up until 1983. This publication makes for very interesting reading, especially for new members and there are a few copies left at R15,00 each - available from the Secretary.

D...D...Don't forget to try a DDD!

Published courtesy of "The Creel". The Natal Flyfishers Club Newsletter, March 1991

