

First Experience Fishing for England Ladies Fly Fishing Team -2009

It all started off when I fished the National at Bewl Water in Aug 2008 and, much to my surprise, qualified as Travelling Reserve for the Team. This was the first time I had participated in the National and I qualified despite not having fished Bewl before!

The team then had to be ratified and contracts signed with each individual committing themselves for the full year. A team briefing at Grafham Water was followed by official team fishing practises at Draycote and Eyebrook; Uniform(s) had to be purchased and my fishing kit updated. My fly tying friends (bless them) helped to provide me with some flies needed to fish Loch Lein in Ireland where the International was to take place.

The Home International

Monday June 15th – We checked into The Dromhall Hotel, Killarney by 2pm and straight away had the first team briefing. Our Captain (Sue Hunter) had put in a number of practise days on the loch and, along with information from one or two others who had fished the Loch, gave us instruction about what to do and when. Before the official reception the team were presented with their Caps and those of us who were new to the team were given our Red Lions Badge, a red rose to put onto our Blazers.

The Official Reception was great. It was a chance to mingle and meet people from the other teams, and official team photos were taken before we were entertained with some excellent Irish Dancing and speeches from local dignitaries. A goodie bag was given to all team members with details of people fishing, boat pairings for Match Day and some Irish mementos. This was followed by a Dinner after which I was ready for bed!



Tuesday 16th June – First Practise Day 9am – 5pm. The Manager, having organised boat pairings and ghillies told us where each pair should fish through the day. I fished with Mark Andrews our Manager with Tommy as our gillie. The day started calm and bright. We fished with varying lines to experiment and see what and how the fish were taking. I started well with 2 Keepers, 22 cm and 25cm caught on a Flash Back Diawl Bach and a JC Diawl Bach (tied by Dave Cammiss and Eve Outhwaite) 2 up on Mark and my confidence high, although I could not believe how small the fish were compared to my UK fishing. These wild brownies are so beautiful.

We had a 30 min stop for lunch on an Island and a chance to catch up on how a few others were faring. Olive Bumbles and Blues Snatchers (Alan Smith great tying tks) worked for me later in the day. After fishing we went back to the hotel and into a debrief when methods etc were discussed. Then , after a quick change and dinner, we retired to sort fishing tackle for next day. Meanwhile the Fly Tyer had instructions to tie the most successful patterns for the morrow.



Wednesday 17th June – was a repeat of the previous day, except that it had poured with rain all night and it was very wet in the morning. We had to have official photos taken in fishing uniform (being Irish timing the photographer was late so we missed an hour on the water!). Ben was my ghillie and Kate my boat partner for the day. The wind had got up and I found fishing much harder. Kate started off better than me, however, later in the day I did well with a Kelly Green line and Red Arsed Green Peter, Peter Ross, Claret Hopper and Claret Bumble. Moving on the Loch from one area to another was very rough and conditions worsened through the afternoon. After briefing, dinner and a final brief to collect code cards, decide who was to fish where, I fell into a much needed Hot Bath!



Thursday 18th June – Match Day. After 6.30am breakfast we were all off to the Loch to tackle up, with me as the reserve with my kit just in case! There was plenty of tension, and all I could do was make myself useful as and when needed, give out score sheets etc. At 8.30am the Teams were piped down to the water which I found very moving.

People then got into their respective boats and onto the water. 9am and OFF! I was now redundant and went off with other hangers-on to explore the Ring of Kerry, the most beautiful countryside. We returned well before finishing time and ambled about Killarney Country Park with binoculars in case we could pick any of our team out. At 5pm in they came, and those of us waiting thought our team had done ok, certainly in many cases better than practise days. However, as this was fished entirely on a C & R basis it had to be worked out away from the water and the result was not known until sometime later.

In the event Ireland had a resounding win – they had not won before so that was special England? Well someone had to get the Wooden Spoon! All the girls worked very hard in very windy conditions. I was sort of happy not to be going out in the morning owing to the wind, but I wished I had been out when they came back!

The day was completed with a debrief, an Official reception, and the teams piped into a five course dinner, followed by many speeches and presentations. If you had the stamina you could then party all night!

It was an experience I felt privileged to be part of, and although I did not get to fish on Match day, I felt that I had contributed to, and thoroughly enjoyed being part of, the team. Fabulous to have the chance to fish this stunning Loch in a wonderful part of Ireland.

Results:-

Ireland	138 Fish	79880 Points	
Scotland	112 Fish	65620 Points	
Wales	107 Fish	62860 Points	Best Rod Debbie Morgan 19 Fish – 11840 points
England	93 Fish	54320 Points	

My personal thanks go to Newark & Sherwood District Council for their financial support, to all my poor friends who bought Raffle Tickets to help the team funds, and to our very hard working Captain, the Manager and several others who travelled out and supported the Team in every way. And to the Irish for the Crack!

Rosemary Gunn 24.6.09.