

Worlington House

Instow

N. Devon

30 June 1918

My Dear Henderson

Many thanks for your interesting letter – oddly enough whilst I was dressing I said to myself it's a long time since I heard from you and I determined to drop you a line before the week was out if I could find time and lo and behold your letter arrived after breakfast.

It has been a strange spring and with the fine and hot weather I reckoned that the fly would be early this year, maybe not so early as it turned out to be – fancy the hedges being covered with fly on May the 9th. Considering how cold Brooks said it was, it is surprising.

No one seems to have done very well on Arrow from all accounts and no big fish were got apparently. I would so like to have a small duckfly season on Arrow before my sight gets too bad, it's been troubling me much of late. I consider small fly dry fly work far more interesting than the big chunky may fly and spent drake –

One has to use finer tackle both in gut and rod so it is far more exciting – I had great fun last autumn with a 6lb 10 oz trout on a tiny olive and another of 5lb 12oz on red ant. I wish I saw a chance of repeating it this autumn (Sept) but I see no chance until after the war, whenever that may be, though to me it seems a long way off yet.

I wish there was no perch fry on the Irish lakes as it spoils the fish for surface feeding. Then I suppose if it wasn't for the perch fry we wouldn't get such big and well-conditioned trout in the Irish lakes – as in Scotch lakes, which are void of such trout rarely grow to over two pounds if so much – but certainly I have noticed of late years that the Irish trout “go off” the May fly earlier than they used to and get on the perch fry earlier.

The gulls of course are a great curse – thank goodness the hard winter of 1916 killed off tens of thousands of them but they are gradually exterminating the flies on different lakes – the olive has nearly become extinct on Carra and ants are getting scarce there – and when there is a fall of ants the gulls mop them up before the trout have a chance – so that on the whole I fear that trout fishing (as we have known it) on the Irish lakes is doomed. You had the cream of it when first you went to Arrow.

I think with you that the perch fry are partly responsible for the trout not rising on Owl. Though I fear there are not a great lot of any fly there due to excessive tree cutting near the lake.

I had very little salmon fishing here this season the rivers being very low all the time sport was very poor. I only killed 13 fish. The rivers are now dead low, reduced to nothing. The nets are getting lots of peal, 1 ½ - 3 & 4 lbs. Salmon none too plentiful thou a grand 34 ½ lb fish was netted in the Ridge Pool the week before last. My only sport now is an occasional day with the bass near the bar buoy casting a single fly with my 9 foot split cane trout rod. It is quite good sport. Shooting a long line I got 29 the other day- 30lbs. Last year I got them up to 6 ½ lbs in weight. I am so glad to hear that all your sons are alright. It is a marvel to me that anyone gets back safe after such terrible fighting.

I hope Ashwin will get over his eye trouble. Electric light is very harmful to the eyes. I feel sure as it is too white a light. We are dried up here though the hay crop was of course well saved, the fruit and vegetables have suffered from want of rain. As for apples they are none in the whole county due to blight mainly.

Roses were a sight but the rest of the garden is too dried up to make a show. I've taken up bees this last year. Interesting brutes but I wish they would make more honey and swarm less. I've had

7 swarms from 3 hives. I only started bees last June with one swarm (Dutch Bees). Hoping that Ms. Henderson is keeping well like yourself and with kindest regards from us all.

Yours sincerely

F B Hinchcliff