

beginners CORNER

Tying One On!

Put your hook into the vice. If it's smaller than size 12, consult your ophthalmologist beforehand. Now wind on the incredibly fine thread all up and down the hook. After you've accidentally broken the incredibly fine thread, start over.

You are now ready to tie on the tail. Take a hackle feather, tear off about 15 hackle points, and tie them on. Make sure the tail is sticking straight out. Having performed this procedure, get out some dubbing wax and rub a little gob of it between your thumb and forefinger. *Warning: It's pretty gross.* Now get some rabbit fur or some of that synthetic stuff gleaned from carpet remnants and kind of rap it around the thread that

should be hanging down. It isn't? Hmmm.

Anyway, you are now ready to tie on the wings. This is a real pain, particularly if you're trying to tie on duck feathers. You have to make them stand up just so, and one always seems to wind up on the bottom of the hook. Keep the glue off it. *Oops, nice move.*

Now that you've welded the wings together, it's time to tie on the hackle. Tie the hackle feather just ahead of the welded wings, and then wrap it around the shank of the hook. Take the end of the feather and tie it off. The artistic part comes into play here. Tie off the head. Put a glob of black glue on it. I said, you wanted to avoid breaking the barb off the hook. *Gee. You'll have to start over again.*

beginners CORNER

At My Fly Tying Bench

by Jack Blackman

When dubbing the thread we have been taught to use various waxes, which are put onto the thread by stroking, this so often results in too much wax on the thread and even leaves small lumps.

I am currently using Overton's Wonder Wax, but any suitable dubbing wax will do. Holding the material to be dubbed between the finger and thumb of your left hand together with the bobbin in your palm.

Dab the forefinger of the right hand with a stroking movement on the wax. A little wax is left on your finger, pick a tiny amount of material and spin. As you spin, the wax leaves your finger onto the dubbing, exactly where you want it.

This works well for all dubbing, both synthetic and naturals, especially when using difficult to spin seals fur (if you still have some).

beginners CORNER

Casting

I constantly believed until recently that one cannot fly fish on windy days. Some time ago, when Richard Schumann told me that he and his fishing mate spent the day fishing in almost gale force wind, I thought that they were quite out of their minds. BUT, it inspired me and made me realise that it was not impossible. Since then I have tried to fly fish whenever I could, and tried not to use the wind as an excuse for not fishing. Now, I prefer fishing in a slightly windy day, than when there is no wind at all. Please don't get me wrong, I still have to learn a lot about casting — casting into the wind, roll casting, steeple casting, etc. On a windy day you can let the wind help you to get your fly out, whereas on a calm day, you have to put in all the effort yourself. Don't be afraid to try different styles of casting, and don't be afraid to imitate some style which you have seen someone use — if they can do it, so can you! Recently, I have frequented the North Pier where the

wind usually comes from one of two directions, viz. north east or south west. I found that if you try to keep the wind blowing over your left shoulder (if you are right handed), you can still cast out a full length of line. This said, it is also important to learn how to cast backwards. i.e. cast a fly in the direction in which you normally back-cast. For starters, if you can follow these two hints, you at least won't be doing the fly ducking dance one does when the wind blows the fly straight back at you. It also helps to watch your fly as it travels through the air, so that you may adjust the timing of your forward or backward motion. If you are just starting, use the smallest fly you have when you practice. Large flies are difficult to cast as the resistance in the air is much greater. As and when you get your timing right, you can try the bigger fly. But, all in all, the only way to improve your casting and develop your own style, is to practice as often as possible.

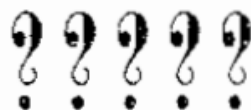
beginners CORNER

Knots

Recently I was asked the question about what sort of knots should be used when rigging up fly lines, leaders and tippets. It brought back memories of the time when I asked Richard Schumann exactly the same question (in the context of saltwater flyfishing). As helpful as he always is, he told me the knots to know were the surgeon's loop, the Albright and the Bimini Twist. In addition to this, Jack Blackman had told us at a King's Sports Flyfishing Clinic, to know a Needle knot and the Texan Twist. These "basic" knots are covered in most flyfishing magazines and books.

If you do not already have documentation on these knots, visit the local library and copy them from the books there. If you would like, please write to me and we will cover these knots in the forthcoming issues. Remember that although you may have the best equipment, many prized fish are lost because of poorly tied knots. Just to give you a brief summary, the Surgeon's loop is used for joining leaders to the main line and tippets to the leader. A Texan twist is used to tie on flies to tippets, to allow the free action of the fly when in the water. The Bimini and the Albright are used to increase knot strength since the knot weakens the breaking strain of the line.

beginners CORNER



The future of this section of *the Bobbin* is in the balance. The reason for this is that the meeting structure now far outweighs the information that could be discussed in this column.

Once again, if you are a beginner or you are unsure about certain techniques, then the Club meetings is where you should be. Over the next two months, the topics for the meetings are "Back to Basics — Part 1 and 2". As is to be expected, over the next two months you should learn enough basic techniques to get you going and tying decent flies.

DO NOT FORGET to bring your vices along — the only way to learn properly, is to try the techniques yourself, under the guidance of the many expert tyers we have in the Club.

As will be the case usually, materials will be supplied. BUT, it will be to your advantage if you carry some of your own materials — like thread, a few hooks and bits of this and that. Do not forget your tying tools.

Anyway, it is going to be a fantastic year for us beginners. See you at the meeting with your vices!

beginners CORNER

Flaring with Bucktail

When tying deceivers with bucktail, I have always had the problem of flaring. The bucktail always seemed to end up looking almost as if it had been spun. I sought the advice of the experts, and these were the solutions which they gave me.

Firstly, the fibres you select must be the finer fibres found usually towards the pointed part of the tail. Also, you may use the thicker fibres found towards the upper region of the tail, but it must be cut from much higher up from the base.

Secondly, when tying, do not wind the thread on too tightly over the bucktail fibres. This coupled with thick fibres, is what causes the flaring. The

thread should be wound on rather loosely, but tight enough to hold the fibres intact. If needed, you may cover the thread with a bit of epoxy, super glue or varnish.

Thirdly, if you tie on a fewer strands at a time, you eliminate the problem of flaring. It only means that you have to add fibres a couple of times to build up the body of the baitfish you are trying to imitate.

Hopefully, these hints will help you tie better deceivers.

On the topic of flaring, some fly tyers believe that a deceiver should have a bit of flaring. Their reason is that it gives the fly a better action in the water as it is stripped in.

beginners CORNER

Dubbing Made Easy

Last meeting was just great for beginners and the next one promises to be just as great.

It was at the last meeting that Rob Hibbert demonstrated a new dubbing technique while constructing his favourite fly. This technique eliminated the use of wax — so no mess and no gunge all over your fingers.

This technique involves using doubled-up thread with the dubbing material placed between the two threads. First make a loop of approximately 10 to 15 cms in length. Take bits of the material you wish to dub and place it on the inside of the loop, evenly distributing it along the entire length. Now grab the actual loop with a hook or some other equivalent tool. I think that there is a tool

available for this purpose. Start rotating the hook gadget in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction while keeping tension on the thread. Rotate in one direction only! The dubbing material gets trapped between the twists in the thread. With the hook still on the loop, start winding the the dubbing onto the shank of the hook. This dubbing will almost never come off. If you want, it can also still be teased. Tie off as you would normally do when you use the regular technique.

There is only one disadvantage of this method, but it is not serious. Once you have trapped the dubbing material between the twists in the thread, the material cannot slide along the thread, it is fixed.

Thanks Rob, for sharing this fantastic technique with us.

beginners CORNER

Matching the Hatch

Look down at the water. Reach under a rock and see if there are any caddis houses (tiny shells that the caddis insects emerge from when they hatch). If you find one, make clucking noises to yourself about how scientific you are about all this, that the trout have no chance of survival, and then tie on a Royal Coachman. Trout have vastly

overrated powers of observation. The proper fly should be one that cost more than two bucks. Failing that, look for a fly that does not have the eyelet rusted over or a big glob of head cement on it. If it matches the hatch, GREAT! If it does not, well, it's not like wearing brown shoes with a blue suit.

beginners CORNER

Just Starting. . .

*R*ecently, I have met many people who have just started flyfishing. As I listened to their frustrations, it brought back memories of similar words which I had used to describe my similar situation. But, I also realised then that perseverance was important and will one day pay dividends. I tried to convey this message to them — it did seem a bit far-fetched. But I have seen most of them back there at the same spot in the following days, still not catching anything but flogging away.

Perseverance is important as a beginner if you consider the amount of

hard-earned money you spend kitting yourself out — you owe it to yourself. The bright side is that now is the perfect time to be starting since the many summer gamefish are gradually starting to make their appearance and one little fish, a two minute fight, that adrenalin rush and then the release of the fish, will lift your confidence.

If ever you are doubting whether anyone ever catches any fish with a fly, just listen to any of the more experienced club members talk of one of their more memorable outings, and I am sure that your faith in the sport will be restored.

beginners CORNER

As much as you may read every book or magazine on flyfishing, fly tying and techniques involving them, the best way to learn is to practice. This may be done either by fishing or tying as often as possible. Remember, the main purpose of the Club is to teach members how to tie their own flies as well as to promote the sport of flyfishing. So, if you would like to learn to tie, or you would like to perfect some technique, then bring your vice along to the meetings. Ask one of the more experienced tyers to demonstrate

whatever you would like to know; I am sure that they will oblige. What books do not teach, are the conditions under which fish may be caught. This can only be learnt from fishing in all conditions. It is very wise to document every fishing outing — even if you did not catch any fish. I know that when you are starting out, just to catch any fish is a thrill. But, try targeting one specie and after you have had reasonable success, target another. You end up learning a lot more in this way. Remember, document your fishing.