

THE BOBBIN

The newsletter of the

Durban Fly Tyers



www.durbanflytyers.co.za

August 2013



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Next Meeting

Visitors and beginners are welcome.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Date | 5 August 2013 |
| Venue | Room G1 Westville Library |
| Time | 7pm for 7.30pm |
| Tie | Fresh Water |
| Tyer | Mike Backhouse |
| Pattern | Kamberg Nymph |
| Special Instructions | Bring olive green 8/0 thread |

The man who coined the phrase "Money
can't buy happiness", never bought
himself a good fly rod!
Reg Baird

The Monthly Tie

Papa Roach

Demonstrated by : Marco Breschi



Roach by Marco Breschi (demo) Andrew Criticos (Snr Winner) and Christian Calliontzis (jnr winner)

MATERIALS:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Hook: | 3X shank-wide gape (wet/nymph type) in #6 or #8 |
| Thread | Olive or brown 0/6 |
| Tail | Zonker strip (part of the body) |
| Body | Olive or brown Zonker strip (preferably short fibred) (spring/summer or winter) |
| Eyes | Large Black /round plastic beads |
| Wing case | Olive or brown Mallard breast feathers (2 on each side) |
| Thorax/head | Olive/brown dubbing mixed with fur from Zonker |
| Legs | Round rubber in olive or brown |

TYING:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Step 1: | Lay a thread foundation to the gape of the hook and coat with a layer of head cement (Sally Hanson's) |
| Step 2: | Tie in the eyes just behind the eye of the hook leaving sufficient space for tying off |
| Step 3: | Select a suitable section of Zonker strip and measure off against the hook shank allowing only 3-4 mm skin to extend past the hook bend. This will help reduce/eliminate tail wrap. The rabbit hair will give the fly its length and shape. |
| Step 4: | Spread the hair fibers and tie in Zonker strip at the bend of the hook ensuring that only 3-4 mm skin extends past the hook bend. |
| Step 5: | Advance the thread forward to at least 4/5 of the way along the shank, spread the hair fibers and tie in the Zonker strip. Advance the thread further to within 4-5 mm of the eyes and complete the tie in of the Zonker strip. Apply some head cement to ensure the strip does not come undone when a fish is caught. This gap is necessary for you to tie in the wing case, the rubber legs and to dub the neck area. |
| Step 6: | Select 4 Mallard Breast feathers of approximately the same size and strip off only the bottom 2/3 of the feather, leaving the tip full. This ensures that no feather fibers extend below the hook shank. |
| Step 7: | Tie in 2 feathers on each side behind the eyes ensuring that the feathers meet up on top of the Zonker strip tent-wing style. The feathers should flank the Zonker strip along 1/3 of its length. This helps to contain the movement of the Zonker strip and to give the fly the correct shape |
| Step 8: | Tie in a length of round rubber leg in the space between the eyes and the end of the Zonker strip and adjust/set to position the legs slanting forwards and backwards. Repeat this step on the other side of the hook shank. |
| Step 9: | Dub the neck area, separating the legs and between the eyes. Whip finish and tease out the dubbing so as to create a slight halo around the abdomen. |
| Step 10: | Nip out some of the long base fibers of the Zonker Strip to form a bluntish tail and adjust the length of the abdomen/thorax to 4/5 of total fly length. Rather have a longer abdomen than a too short one. |

The Chairman's Chirp

Hi Everyone,

Thanks to Marco for tying the Papa Roach for us at the last meeting. This is a great fly and I'm sure we will all have lots of success fishing it. The beginners table did it again, congratulations to Andrew Criticos who tied the winning fly in the seniors section. Fortunately Christain won the junior section or it would have been an all Criticos affair. Well done to both of you and to everyone who tied, there were plenty really good roaches tied.



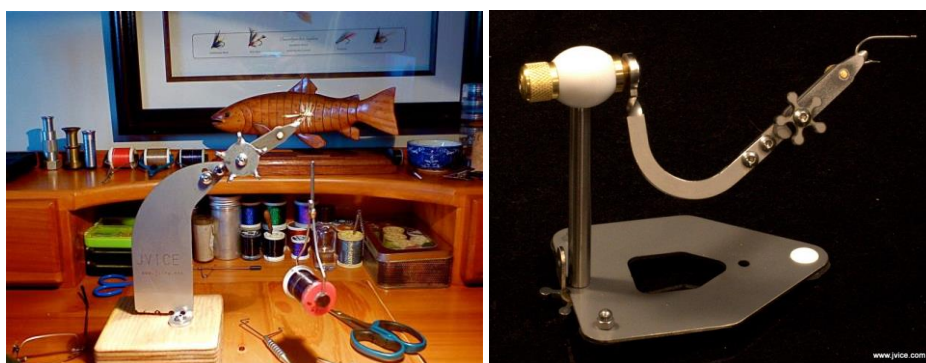
I did not manage to get any fishing done in July but did manage to spend some time with fellow tires at the Ufudu Outdoor Fair last weekend. Thanks very much to Gordon who came down and tied for us at the DFT stand and also produced lots of all round entertainment.



Gordon giving it horns

It was great to finally meet Steve Boshof, the renowned bamboo fly rod maker in person and swap ideas with him and also hook up with many old acquaintances. It was wonderful to see most of our member there giving their support to what has become a really enjoyable event. Thanks to all of you who assisted with the fly tying. Special thanks to Ian Jackson who made a weekend of it.

I have been playing around with various options for a lightweight travel vice and with all the experts in one place ideas were flowing around in abundance. First there was the Tendele Vice, which morphed into the Spooler Vice below.



Then on to the ultra "lite", the coke bottle Vice.



Now Stephen, not to be outdone came up with the Kos Blik Travel Vice.



Who knows where this will all end, any ideas anyone. (Ed: The J Vice?)

Mike Backhouse will be tying the Kamberg Nymph for us at the next meeting. This is one not to be missed.

See you all on the 5th August.

Cheers

Jay

From The Editor

It was heartening to learn that some people actually read the Bobbin. I know this because I got feedback on last month's Bobbin.

First to respond was Peter Brigg who in response to Laurence Davies article referred me to his Blog, "[Call Of The Stream](http://callofthestream.wordpress.com/2013/04/)". Peter doesn't advertise these things but he has been posting seriously good stuff on this site since December last year. It is well worth a visit. In April he posted a piece on how to make your own strike indicator tool. You will find the article along with some superb photography at <http://callofthestream.wordpress.com/2013/04/>. Peter was not the only one who was impressed by Laurence's article. Ed Herbst also requested a copy. So keep it up Laurence.



The other response was more in the nature of an induced take. Peter Hayes took issue with me on my assertion that fly fishing is not about casting a fly line. He is not alone in this view. A similar debate has run for some time in the correspondence pages of the [Fly Fishing and Fly Tying Magazine](#). Mike McKeon is similarly inclined. The debate that followed with Peter was lively and colourful, far too colourful to be repeated verbatim here. The Western Cape might not forgive me if my views on the antecedents of their dry fly movement ever got into print! I don't want to rehash the arguments but basically it's all about casting the line, other versions of presenting a fly or lure being relegated as primitive forms of the art. Here is an expurgated version of what was said.

I would argue that for the majority of 'fly' fishermen it is about the cast. Otherwise we would all be Tenkara fishing on rivers. That is what is unique about fly fishing. The line must travel first if you wish to cast the fly. At least a fixed length or increasing length must for a loop and 'tow' the fly....To my mind fly fishing must

combine the use of the specially weighted line (a fly line - there is no other name for it) with an artificial lure (sometimes made with feathers but not necessarily).

To which I responded a couple of e mails later:

So fly fishing started about 150 years ago with the invention of the weighted casting line? That isn't factually correct but if that is the premise you start from, you will get to your conclusion. And yes you are historically correct in saying that a fly is an insect. Although the early record is sparse, I think it true to say that the early tackle limited fisherman to surface and sub-surface fishing. That meant they were limited, to all practical intents and purposes, to imitating insects. So though it only got scientific in the early 1800's with Ronalds and his book, The Fly Fishers Entomology, I think it true to say, that for most of fly fishing's history the fishing has been about imitating an insect and not, as you accuse poor Dame Juliana, about dapping a lure. You are being unkind to her and unfactual. The flies she wrote about and indeed Basurto before her were intended to and did imitate insects. So flies in that old sense do constitute an unbroken line between what we do now and what was done in ages past. Ditto with Tenkara. What was a very clear line between fly fishing and everything else (we fish with insect imitations) blurs with the advent of the casting line. With that comes the ability to deep sink a line and to retrieve it in a manner that imitates other animals such as fish, frogs and crustaceans. This takes one into the realm of the lure caster, the only difference being, in truth, the manner of getting the fly into the water and its retrieval. So fishing a woolly buggie, mantuka or Mrs Simpson, or even a grey ghost or muddler minnow is probably closer to lure fishing than fly fishing if you are going to be true to the past. None of those flies ever got into my Grandfathers fly box for that reason. But that is silly. Nothing stays the same. Thus the ability to cast a lure with a fly line must inevitably change what we regard as a fly. Does that mean that the line becomes the all important factor, excluding what was part of the sport for millennia because it no longer boasts the right stuff? I would like to think not. It does however beg the question what is now a fly? And to that, I do not have an answer.

To which Peter wrote:

It would be interesting to canvas your member's opinions. Give them perhaps half a dozen ideas to rate from 1 to 6. If you give them my idea the fly line carries (the artificial) I know the majority will support it. I will buy you a beer next May otherwise.

Now lawyers are taught at an early age to mind the dangers of submitting their arguments to popular vote. After all look what happened to Socrates! We deal in fact, principal and logic and, it has to be said, how to apply the B.S. that binds them. Politicians and salesmen deal in delivering the sizzle without the steak and are handsomely rewarded for doing so. But in this case the stakes are low and I am feeling reckless. So what, dear reader, do you think? Does Peter have the right of it or do I? Remember there is a beer in it!

Oh and don't you think Peters' contribution to this Bobbin is the stuff of magic? I do.

"There's more B.S. in fly fishing than there is in a Kansas feedlot." Lefty Kreh

Stop Press

The minister of environmental Affairs promulgated regulations under the National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act NEM:BA along with a list of prescribed invasive species on 19 July 2013. Rainbow and brown trout are listed as invasive species under category 1b. This means that trout must in be controlled in terms of invasive species management programme. It also means that it is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to ten million rands and a prison sentence of up to ten years to carry out a restricted activity concerning trout without a permit. Restricted activities are very widely defined and include fishing. Fortunately these regulations are not yet in force so we are not all criminals just yet. That will happen at some future date to be announced by the minister. We are told that is contemplated that this very harsh regime will be relaxed in certain areas and

for certain activities but whether this will happen before the regulations are implemented or but quite what those will be, no one can say at the moment.

It's A Giggle

At a world brewing convention in the States, the CEOs of various brewing organizations retire to the bar at the end of the day.

Bruce, CEO of Fosters, shouts to the barman: "In Australia, we make the best bloody beer in the world, so pour me a Fosters, mate."

Bob, CEO of Budweiser, calls out next: "In the States, we brew the king of them all - gimme a Bud."

Hans steps up next: "In Germany we invented beer. Give me un Helles, ze REAL King of beers."

Jan, chief executive of Grolsch, follows by stating that Grolsch is the ultimate beer and asks for one with two fingers of foam on top.

Norman, chairman of SAB, is next: "Barman, give me a diet Coke with ice and lemon please."

The other four stare at him in stunned silence, then Bruce asks: "Aren't you going to have a Castle, Norm?"

Norman replies "Well, if you guys aren't drinking beer, then neither am I."

**COMMON SENSE
IS LIKE DEODORANT.
THE PEOPLE WHO
NEED IT MOST
NEVER USE IT.**

**My boss told me to dress for the job I
want, not the job I have...**

**The next day he wrote me up for wearing
my fishing waders to the quarterly
budget meeting.**

COMBATFLYFISHING.COM

The noblest of all dogs is the hotdog. It feeds the hand that bites it.

Laurence J. Peter

Fly Tying and Other Tips

Tips for Tyers

Phi, proportion and the art of fly tying



Most if not all fly tying instructions manuals will at some stage deal with the question of proportion. While some of the more advanced manuals will refer to the insect you are trying to reproduce, most will point out that correct proportions are an important trigger and then proceed to suggest the body or abdomen of your fly should be a tad over half the length of the shank, the thorax a tad over a third and the head what is left. If you take the trouble to measure that out you get roughly the following proportions:

- Abdomen: 63%
- Thorax 23%
- Head 14%

That is the [golden ratio](#) or Phi. For those who are mathematically minded this is the ratio of 1:1.618. Now you can go mad trying to find meaning in Phi so I am not going to try. What we do know is that it is a ratio that is visually pleasing to the human eye. And no doubt it is pleasing to the eye because approximations of it be found in so many things that occur naturally around us, like insects for example and, for that matter, the face of a beautiful woman. And because of that we tend to see it where perhaps it isn't and read far more significance into it than we ought. As I said, I don't want to go there. Suffice to say that if you tie a fly that maintains those proportions, chances are other fly tyers will speak warmly of your tying abilities.

So:

- a tail will look good on a fly if it is either about a third or one and two thirds of the length of the fly.
- a hackle looks good if it is one and a half times the gape of the hook though you can get away with longer than that if it is in proportion to the shank.

This is what fly tyers like Gordon Van Der Spuy call balance.

So when tying a fly it is not a bad idea to visualize that balance before you put thread to hook. Ask yourself:

- how long should the tail be?
- what is the shape and size of the abdomen?
- ditto the thorax and the head and the hackle.

And if you find that difficult lay down a bed of white thread and mark it out. And above all take care when tying tails wings or hackles to measure your material.

This of course all begs the question; what is it you are trying to imitate? Hence the reference to [entomology](#) later in this Bobbin where you will find that some of what fish eat is disproportionate and downright ugly. So don't treat what is written above as an absolute. It isn't. But as a general rule of thumb it is not at all bad.

Of course you will want to scrunch up your perfect creation when you come to fish it. The adage "don't kick a man when he is down" exists only in the mind of man. It does not exist in nature. There, and I suspect, often in real life, the rule is; prey on the weak. Low hanging fruit is so much more nutritious than the stuff that is hard to get. So a crippled looking fly is far more likely to be attractive to a predatory fish than a healthy one.

This is why so many rotten fly tyers say that they tie badly on purpose because untidy flies catch fish. That isn't really true. Picasso could get away with a squiggle because under his hand it is a distillation of something beautiful. I agree with Gordon van der Spuy, a beautifully executed fly that is scrunched up to look crippled is more likely to catch fish than one that was rubbish to start with.

Lessons from Peter Hayes

Australian master casting instructor



Lesson 2

Dream, Believe, Dare, Do

These 4 words were first put together by Walt Disney and ever since I heard them I have had them written on the fridge door at my fishing lodge. It constantly amazes me at how just reading these four simple words strung together can motivate people to do great things.

I have always loved to combine fishing with travel and half my lifetime ago I travelled to a world casting championship in Toronto. Afterwards I was lucky enough to backpack and fly fish through much of North America. This gave an all too brief glimpse of the superb river fisheries of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.

Since then I have dreamt of revisiting this iconic fly fishery and float fishing the Great Maddison and the Snake River. Catching caddis feeders on the beautiful and unique Firehole River and throwing stoneflies to Bitterroot cutthroats. Just being part of the fly fishing culture in of the North American west does it for me.

I've dreamt of meeting and casting with Lefty Kreh and having dinner with Joan Wulff. I wanted to catch a rainbow trout on a Royal Wulff and my cane rod on the Beaverkill which was Lee Wulff's home water.

Before 'Dream Believe Dare Do' my life motto was 'if it is to be it is up to me'. A great combination of mottos don't you think?

So, after guiding finished last season I put the motto into practice and I booked a ticket to the Federation of Fly Fishers Annual Conclave based in Montana. I got on the net, asked a few questions, booked a few meetings, paid for some tickets then started to get excited. Pretty simple really.

Sage

I have had a lifelong use of Sage rods and I thought it would be cool to visit their factory in Seattle and learn more about how they make rods and their design philosophies and future directions. When it was put to me by Scientific Anglers Bruce Richards that Gerry Siem the head rod designer at Sage was 'one of the smoothest and most powerful casters on the planet' - Sage became a must visit for me.

Well, happy, long term employees make beautiful rods in a beautiful environment and many employees fish regularly. I can assure you that the future of our rods is in good hands with Gerry Siem at the design helm. He is a wise and skilled caster combined with a delightful personality. Gerry is indeed one of the planets smoothest and most powerful casters. He impressed me as did the whole Sage show.

Fly Fishing in Montana

I arrived into Bozeman airport at midnight and somehow managed to meet up with my host for the following week. Chuck Ravetta is a fishing mate of a fishing mate and we didn't know each other from a bar of soap. It wasn't until the crowd dissipated from the baggage carousel and there were only two of us left standing that Chuck said 'you must be Haysie'. Chuck is a famous Montana river guide and he had been working the past two weeks straight at the Big Hole River Lodge. He had left work then driven 6 hours across the Rocky Mountains to meet me. Don't you just love the way fly fishermen look after each other!

With Chuck I floated his home waters of the Maddison the Bitterroot and the Big Hole rivers. I waded the thermal waters of the firehole casting to caddis feeders under the shining light of a full moon. It was awesome. All of it.

The fishing was great, the hatches as unbelievable as the scenery. I caught a zillion fish on my new Taransky cane rod. Browns, Rainbows, Brookies, Cutbows and Cutthroats came to my dry fly. I saw a Grey Wulff chasing a huge Deer and watched Bison and Elk feeding as we drifted quietly by. I felt I was living in a fly fishing postcard and I constantly had to pinch myself to believe it was really happening.

Chuck has been guiding for 17 years, 2 years longer than me and he almost exclusively guides on big rivers from a raft or drift boat. There were three things that stick in my mind from my time fishing with Chuck. One is that in Australia we don't use small enough, or sometimes, large enough flies. Secondly, when compared to Chuck there is no one in Australia that is very good at mending. Thirdly, generosity of spirit is such a wonderful attribute.

Whitefish Conclave

The small ski village of Whitefish lies at the foot of the Glacier National Park in northern Montana. I spent a week here participating in, and conducting, fly fishing and casting workshops at the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) annual Conclave.

There were over 100 workshops covering all aspects to attend. I loved my time with two handed rods and I enjoyed the thorough and entertaining teaching methods of Al Buhr. I developed the deepest respect for Bruce Richards who in my opinion is the greatest technician of fly casting on the planet. Bruce has designed fly lines for the Scientific Anglers Company for 33 years. The Sage casting analyzer and Sharkskin lines are both Bruce's babies too.

When I asked Bruce what he thought was the most important aspect of the cast he thought it was 'smooth acceleration and straight line rod tip path'.

At the conclave I met so many wonderful and skillful people. It was a privilege to be part of it. Oh, let me share a defining moment in my teaching career with you. At the completion of a beginners learn to fly fish class a teenage girl student approached me. She thanked me for teaching her to cast then went on to explain to me another way of describing 'delayed rotation' which was a casting concept I had explained to the class.

"Peter... you could describe a really good cast to me in an email using just two keys on the keyboard.

\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ produces a great cast.

\\ produces a poor cast".

I hope you can understand this. It is important. Very important.

Lefty

I was met at the baggage carousel by a short, stocky old man wearing a signature side flapped fishing cap. He was sporting a crutch under one arm. It was Lefty Kreh and from the moment our eyes met we got on like a house on fire. A more delightful and generous spirited man you could not meet. I have never met a more informed nor more interesting fly fisherman. In subsequent stories I will write reams about my wonderful two days with the great Lefty Kreh.

We talked casting, fly tying and fishing but we mostly talked about life. It was grand. He would make a superb Grandfather and for the entire time I was with him I had the constant feeling that this wise old dog was trying to impart some wisdom to the young pup. I can assure you that I was listening.

Lefty is humorous and entertaining. Some Leftyisms that came out over the couple of days are worth relating.

‘He was so lazy he married a pregnant woman’.

‘So and so’s wife had less friends than an alarm clock’.

When Lefty was married an old black guy told him he would now learn two things real quick. ‘That you can’t wear out a hole by banging a post into it and A woman can look up a whole lot longer than a man can look down’

‘A hippy is someone who looks like a Jack, acts like a Jill and smells like a John’

‘She was so skinny she could tread water in a garden hose’

Just before I left I asked Lefty what he thought was the most important thing for me to tell fishermen that would improve their catch rates. He pondered this for a moment then said. ‘Never attack the fish with your fly Peter’. This is very sage advice that I might explain further one day. Email me for the full explanation. It is worth it.

Joan

A train ride later I arrived in Connecticut where Simon, a client and friend, picked me up. I spent a few days with Simon in the Catskills and I found it difficult to understand how such a beautiful and pristine river full of trout like the Beaverkill could exist just two hours north of the 15 million people of New York.

The Beaverkill Trout Club is steeped in fly fishing history and this became my home for several days. The BTC was a private club with 4 miles of private fishing. That explained a lot. Yes..... I caught a rainbow trout on a Royal Wulff using my cane rod. I netted the trout in my Bob Jacklin net just moments before Simon’s black Labrador, Cess, mouth landed the fish. Cess was remarkable. During false casting Cess’ head would move back and forward watching the fly on both back and forward casts. When the fly landed on the water Cess would lock his vision to it and follow it down stream. The moment a trout rose to it he would start howling with excitement. The howl would intensify if the fish jumped and as it was pulled closer. If Cess lost sight of the fish he would take a deep breath then stick his boof head under water until he could see the quarry. Once the fish was ‘dogaroided’ underwater Cess would swim in and seize the unsuspecting trout amidstships. It was remarkable. Needless to say, Simon never needed to carry a net.

An afternoon was spent with Floyd Franke. Floyd had been the head instructor at the Joan Wulff casting school for 28 years. Again, I was listening and I heard lots. When I asked Floyd what he thought was the most difficult aspect of the cast to teach he said ‘the forward loading move Peter’. More words of wisdom from Floyd included ‘you cannot squeeze a squeeze’. Email me and I will explain.

My last afternoon was spent with Joan Wulff at her house and casting school. Fly fishing’s First Lady, and what an impressive lady. Here’s a quote from my diary.

'We arrived at 4 minutes past 4. She was waiting for us outside and I wished I wasn't late. Joan had made an effort but on the other hand I figured she is the sort of lady who wakes early and makes this effort a daily ritual. White trousers, pink blouse and perfect hair do and make up. The sunglasses came off as she extended the other hand. I kissed her on the cheek. Her husband Ted came down to meet us too.'

I learnt lots about teaching from Joan and one thing that sticks in my mind from my visit was that she was determined about the value of teaching with indoor yarn rods.

A huge mirror hung on one wall and Joan explained how useful it was for students to see themselves casting. Video analysis in real time I guess. When I left Joan kindly gave me a pair of posters. One was of Lee standing by his Piper Cub holding a brace of Salmon. The other was a shot of her distance casting in the early sixties. This she signed with 'to Peter, who shares my passion for teaching - Joan Wulff'. I was so pleased that she was perspicacious enough to see this.

A final diary extract. 'as we left Simon and Rosita shook her small hand, I kissed her cheek. Then she said to me no...no... come on... give me a hug. We hugged for a full 5 seconds and I actually had time to think – I am hugging Joan Wulff'.

Don't forget. Dream, Believe, Dare, Do. It is important to think like this.

Peter Hayes

Articles

Fly Fishing Entomology

An Introduction

By

Ian Cox

Entomology is a powerful word in fly fishing circles. It is a word that can, and often does, invoke strong and contradictory reactions in those who engage in the so called gentle art. It is far too often seen as the metaphorical salt that divides mere neophytes from the real thing. Hence the loathing which often greets any fly fisherman who introduces words like Heptageniidae and Chironomidae into otherwise polite conversation.

So in our sport we find two extremes. One the one hand are the imitation purists who hold that you are not fly fishing if you cannot identify the imitation you are casting by genus and sex of the natural. These so called tyro's are most frequently found in the dry fly movement loosely and I think unfairly defined as the Halford School. At the other end of the spectrum is, if you will forgive the oxymoron, the devout iconoclast who holds that fish are dumb and given the right circumstances can be caught on absolutely anything at all. In and between these two extremes lie any number of theories all of which the American fly fisherman and Dutch Reformed minister [George Washington Bethune](#) dismissed as far back as 1847 in these terms:

The reader may be aware that anglers differ widely in their theories respecting the choices of flies, some contending that the nicest possible imitations should be made of the fly on the water, or rather that on which the fly is feeding at the time; others holding directly the reverse, and asserting that no imitation deserving the name can be made, and when the natural fly is abundant the fish will reject any resemblance that is thrown at him.

He went on to observe:

In fact, almost every practised fly fisher has a creed and a system of his own, though the advocates of the exact imitation speak with artistic contempt of all who differ from them; and in return are ridiculed in return as pedantic pretenders, or mad with too much learning.

The good dominee concluded:

The truth, as in most vexed questions, lies between the extremes. If nature be nature be too violently contradicted, the trout are too keen sighted not to detect the clumsy trick, and the success of certain flies at certain seasons, and not others, proves that the fish have some rule in feeding.

That was written some 20 years before Halford wrote his first book, but I don't think anyone has put it better in the 166 years that have since followed. I think that human beings are addicted to ideas. Furthermore, I am not convinced that we have evolved to a point where we are able to engage sensibly with this addiction. Far too often what looks like a good idea overwhelms fact, reason common sense and sometimes even decency.

I think this is particularly bad in our pursuit of the holy grail of a single great truth that binds, as it were, all other truths. We see this in the tendency to express things in absolutes, even where the facts point to the contrary. I think it is a tendency that has a huge potential for harm.

We are taught as lawyers to observe and respect what Rudyard Kipling called his six honest men:

*I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.*

But in the realm of ideas, especially those involving fly fishing, these honest men are often ignored in pursuit of the single big idea. For example, the importance of imitation is championed as the one true way, ignoring perfect imitations don't in fact catch more fish than other flies.

It has to be said that there is something perniciously tenacious about this idea. I have just read Swisher and Richards on selective trout. It's a book that irritates me immensely. It also looks, to me, like a re-tread of Halford. I could not help noticing that they did not acknowledge Halford, despite copying him right down to how to collect and observe insects and their own list of special flies. I am fascinated by the fact this book did so well. I sold over three hundred thousand copies. Now that says a lot, I think, about the nature of the addiction I referred to earlier.

It is not just the naturalists like Swisher, Richards and Halford who are guilty of propagating the big idea. Presentationists, like Bob Wyatt, can be just as bad. For example, Bob Wyatt promotes his generalist theory of GISS (general impression, size and shape) in his book [What Trout Want](#) against the backdrop of this statement:

Most of what is written on fly fishing for trout is based on the single premise: trout are intelligent, suspicious, even capricious creatures that are wise to our tricks. But that is not all; it seems the harder we try and the more flies we throw at them, the harder they are to catch.

But while that may be true of Swisher and Richards, it is not a general statement of fact. To my mind Bob Wyatt is guilty of what he unfairly accused the late Gary LaFontaine of doing when he says that the generalist school has been set up as a straw man. (See page 137). The real straw man is the fiction that LaFontaine set up any such thing at all.

In truth La Fontaine belonged to no school. He was a true scientist, polite about the efforts and contributions of others, even when they did not align with his own findings, always curious and always prepared to take his research to the next level. His was not the pursuit of an ultimate truth but rather the never ending and minutely documented voyage of discovery of an open and enquiring mind of many truths. In fact I think you can fairly attribute a lot of Bob Wyatt writes to the work done by LaFontaine. Perhaps that is why I enjoyed Bob Wyatt's

book so much when I first read it. I am no longer so sure I was right. I am now inclined to see it as a book that should be approached with some caution.

There is for example, also nothing new in Bob Wyatt's GISS or the emphasis he places on presentation. GISS, as a fly fishing concept, first saw print in 1914 in "The Dry Fly and Fast Water" where George La Branch's wrote:
My own experiences have convinced me that imitation of the natural insect is absolutely necessary, and I put the forms this should take in the following order – the order of their importance:

1. *Position of the fly on the water;*
2. *Its action;*
3. *Size of fly;*
4. *Form of the fly;*
5. *Colour of the fly.*

Halford extolled the importance of presentation in his book "Floating Flies and How to dress them" That was published in 1886.

You will perhaps by now have gathered that I have a very high regard for the late Gary LaFontaine. This does not mean that LaFontaine was always right. No discoverer of new knowledge is. However his two books Caddisfly and "The Dry Fly" are examples of what proper research should look like. Each book took ten years to research and write. He spent fifty two and a quarter hours underwater on scuba studying Caddis in their natural environment. The extent of his fishing experience is even more impressive. Here are some of his river stats (published in 1990 in "the Dry Fly" when he was 45 years old):

- Farmington River 1147 angling days
- Clark Ford River 967 angling days
- The big Hole River 901 angling days
- Little Blackfoot 847 angling days
- Housatanic 491 angling days
- Missouri 487 angling days
- Madison 460 angling days
- Lolo 283 angling days
- Battenkill 265 angling days

That is 16 years spent just fishing rivers day in day out. That is a lot of fishing. But if truth be told fly fishing was his day job and he worked damn hard at it.

I wholeheartedly agree I agree with what LaFontaine wrote in an article entitled [Anticipating a Caddis fly Hatch](#):
He said

Even a regular on a stream, lacking an understanding of entomology, cannot fully master such a situation. (a caddis hatch) He might have enough experience with a particular insect to use proper flies and tactics during the main hatch, his methods worked out by past trial and error, but he can still only take advantage of the activity he sees, the hour or so of actual surface feeding. He cannot take advantage of the subsurface activity he does not see.

The fly fisherman who understands the typical life cycle of stream caddis flies, however, knows the vulnerable subsurface stages. He discovers where, when, and how the concentrations occur during an emergence, which allows him to anticipate and prepare for the appearance of the insect. This knowledge also allows him to take full advantage of the predictable daily feeding schedule of the trout. Such an angler is not a member of a scientific cult, but simply a fly fisherman who is prepared to match his tactics and flies to the changing concentrations of insects.

Knowing what it is you are trying to imitate gives context and depth to your fishing experience. That is not to say that the other ways won't work. They almost certainly will. Fishing would not be the popular sport it is, if it were

otherwise. Fish are stupid and feeding fish will often take anything. But if you want to increase your skill beyond what LaFontaine calls the trial and error fishing of the empiricists (that's us), then you need to learn about the bugs your prey is feeding on. And it does not really matter to my mind if you strive as his so called naturalists do for the exact imitation of a particular species or adopt the more general approach that emphasises presentation or even if you are a chuck and chance empiricist or, for that matter, if you are an amalgam of some or all of the above. Any way your fishing experience will be a more enriching one and you will catch more fish than you do now.

So it is with these lofty principals in mind that I embark, starting with the next issue, on what for me has been a learning exercise, a series of articles on entomology. Though I will refer to certain flies as being intended as imitations of various insects, it is not my intention to promote a list of prescribed mayfly nymphs or caddis pupa. The truth is that in the main a handful of flies will stand you in good stead for most of your fresh water fly fishing in South Africa. It is what you do with them that make the difference.

In The Market

On A Point Of Order

Craig Thom of [Stream X](#) was quick to point out that he also stocks tube fly materials (he carries some of the [Eumer](#) range) at prices, he says, that are lower than the [Tubeology](#) products. Now I can't vouch for that, but check it out for yourself and let me know. We consumers of fly tying products do so love a price war!

Jig Hooks



Jig hooks are one of the many contributions that competition fishing has made to the development of fly fishing. Jig hooks are designed to be used in conjunction with a slotted bead. The slotted bead is necessary to enable the bead to get around the jig. The advantage of jig hooks is that they swim upside down and are thus much less prone to hook-ups than normal hooks. (For more about them, see [Henry Cowen's article](#) on using jigs in the salt, or [Pavel](#)

[Adamovský](#) on Jig hooks and French Nymphing.) The disadvantage is that they are not that easy to come by and are not cheap. Though most hook manufacturers make them the range in South Africa is limited to Hanak, Daiichi and Tiemco. [Wildfly](#) is the only shop in KZN that stocks them (the Hanak competition range). Otherwise they can be bought online from [Stream X](#) who stocks Hanak (at R59.00 for 25), [African Fly Angler](#) who stocks Dohiku (at R50.00 for 25) and [Frontier](#) who sell Tiemco (at R74.00 for 20). As expensive as this may seem South Africa is still competitively priced when compared to prices internationally. This is unlikely to last. It is only a matter of time before the effect of the plummeting rand impacts local prices. I am not wild about the quality of these hooks. I have found the Hanak and Dohiku hooks to be rather brittle. Gordon Van Der Spuy swears by the



Tiemco hooks which certainly look a lot sturdier. But the price! The slotted beads are also expensive. They come in packs of 20 which is a bugger given that most hooks sell in packs of 25. They sell for between R38.00 a pack to about R67.00 depending where you shop. At R38.00 for 20, the price here is significantly lower than overseas. It is just as well that these hooks don't hook up as often. At a cost of at least R4.00 a fly you don't want to lose too many.

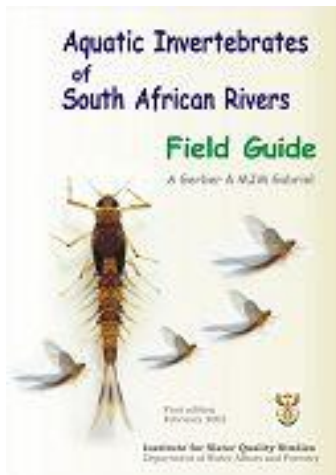
There's only one sport that has more books written about it than fly fishing, and that's chess. It's the same reason for both sports. It's a mental game. It's the challenge of trying to catch fish.

La Fontaine

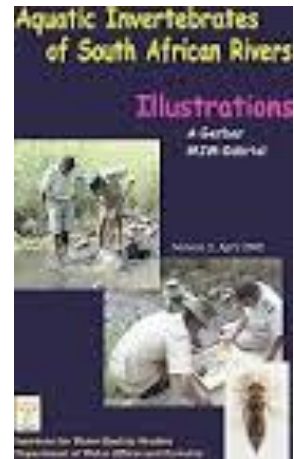
Aquatic Invertebrates

Of South African Rivers

By A Gerber and MJM Gabriel



Those of you who were fortunate enough to attend Gordon van Der Spuy's fly tying course will remember that he started with a brief viva on entomology. And weren't we all embarrassed at how little we knew! There is an antidote. It's a book by the above title published by the Department of Water Affairs. It has all the gen on those creepy crawlies that we try so hard to imitate but know nothing about. Those who attended the last meeting will recall that Marco Breschi referred to this guide extensively when demonstrating the Papa Roach. I have been trying



to find it for some time now and thanks to the heads up from Sacha Degner am now able to get it online on the [DWA website](#). There is also an illustrative guide that the competition fishermen live and die by. (So much so that none of them could tell me where to get it!) You can download that [here](#). Unfortunately they are now out of print.

Peter described the success to catching more fish as having three distinct elements. First, know the quarry – know everything there is to know about the fish you are targeting. Secondly, understand the environment and conditions in which your quarry is found. His third key element, and that which he can assist with, is to make the perfect presentation to the fish.

Linda Gorlei writing in Tom Sutcliffe's *The Spirit of the Stream* on the recent visit by Peter Hayes

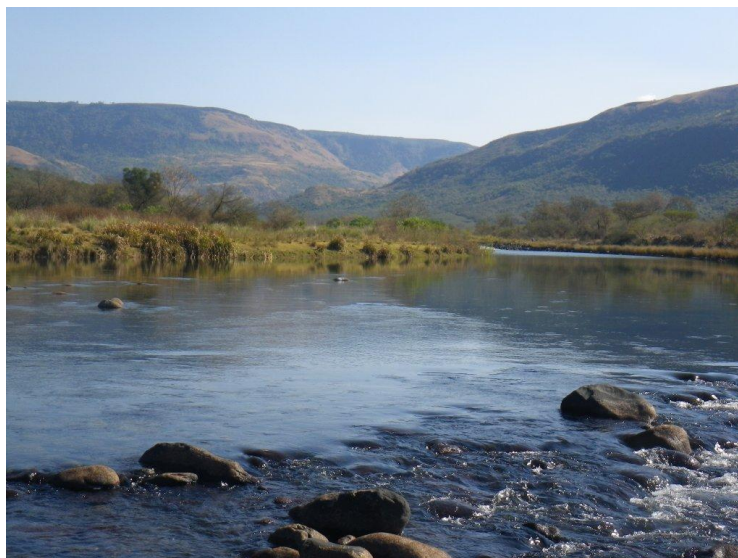
Reports

Winter Yellows

Nyala Pans June 2013

By

Ian Cox



One of the less agreeable features of winter is that river trout are out of bounds. No law makes this so other than those that bind one's conscience and, regrettably, in matters fishing, those rules bind very tightly indeed. So the fact that one can fish for yellowfish through winter is a great boon. It does not matter that the fishing is difficult. As Gordon van der Spuy was at pains to point out, we are lucky to have any fishing at all. On the Highveld, nature rather than conscience puts paid to one's fishing, at least as far as rivers are concerned. You see it gets far too cold.

So we are blessed in Kwa Zulu Natal with rivers that are fishable in winter. And in the Umkomaas we are double blessed, not only in the quality of the fishing but also because of its outstanding beauty. This is especially so in winter when crystal clear waters match the sky. And we members of the Durban Fly tyers are blessed again by the enthusiastic support of Karl Ardnegard. Karl owns Nyala Pans. He is also a committed and keenly observant fly fisherman.



Our latest visit to Nyala Pans took place on a warm and sunny 30 June. Despite my warning to those who attended that pickings were likely to be thin, it proved a productive and a highly enjoyable day. Everyone caught at least one fish, which is by no means guaranteed when fishing in winter. Our special guest Gordon Van Der Spuy made a pig of himself and caught eight. Mike Backhouse was not far behind on five. The rest of us trailed behind with ones and twos, thus boosting the days tally to just shy of twenty.

Interestingly, as was the case last year, all the fish came out of one run. If there is a trend it would seem that the fish gravitate to runs that like Goldilocks' bowl of porridge are just right. Neither too deep nor too shallow, too fast nor too slow, but instead a perfect balance between warm, shallow water and protection. So there we were stacked up like shad fisherman taking pot luck with cruising yellows of up to a kilo in size.

I suppose you could, by virtue of this proximity, determine who the better fisherman was. I prefer not to think about that. I chose to think that fly selection ruled the day. Thus high contrast flies such as GRHE's and Hotspots seemed to do best, followed closely by that old Umkomaas favourite, the green flashback nymph.

Here is another tip. You tend to be fishing on the bottom when going after river yellows so in the interests of preserving the contents of your fly box, use jig hooks. The lie upside down (i.e. point upwards) and don't snag

the bottom nearly so often. Finally keep the tippets light. 6x is best though you can get away with 5x if you must. You can even use a sinking line.

Gordon Van Der Spuy Fly Tying Clinic

Teaching an old dog new tricks

By

Laurence Davies



The old dog learning a new trick

Gordon's presentation of the clinic, coordinated by Ian (great one Ian) was refreshing and his enthusiasm was infectious. Gordon showed both new techniques and materials, and emphasized critical parts of his tying which both intrigued me and taught me more about my hobby.

Gordon started off the clinic by asking all to draw a picture of a mayfly nymph, a dragonfly nymph, a caddis pupa and a midge. It was clear that the majority of people at the clinic had little idea of what each insect looked like. His point was that many have been tying flies to represent a particular insect and yet they have

no idea what the real insect looks like. Never mind the size, colour and action, all critical aspects for the imitation of these insects – a very good lesson indeed.



Gordon declaiming on a hackle. "I knew him well."

Some of the techniques that he uses on all of his flies were a good reminder of sticking to basics. Firstly, he lays down a close binding layer of thread on the hook shank, and secondly, he uses the pinch loop in tying of his materials. As he rightly says, the layer of thread keeps all of the materials in position when tying, and the pinch loop keeps the materials on top of the hook, without slipping. Of course, many of us, of the older generation, who were brought up tying traditional wings on wet flies, know full well how essential the pinch loop, or soft loop, is for tying in the material exactly where you want it.

Gordon was able to show both the original tie of some of the flies as well as his techniques and variations for the same flies. And here he offered an alternate to twisting stripped and unstrapped peacock herl (i.e. Zak) for abdomens. He showed that the same can be achieved using goose, or turkey biots. Again, although I have seen its use, I had never used biots before. He also showed how to use grey squirrel tail fibers as a halo hackle on a parachute fly.

"Why does a Frenchman kiss a lady's hand? He has to start somewhere.

La Fontaine

The advantages of using thinner thread were a huge lesson to me. I have always used what was available from the local shops, and the thinnest has been 6/0 thread (140 Denier). Admittedly I rarely tie anything smaller than size 14, but I found that even on the larger flies, I was able to use a lot more wraps with the thinner thread, and secured the materials firmly on the hook. I must mention however that I was using Nano thread (a hand-out of the clinic discussed in the [July 2013 Bobbin](#)) which is virtually unbreakable, and was able to apply a fair degree of pressure when tying. The same pressure would prove a problem when using the standard 8/0 silk thread. As Gordon said, if

the



Wow That's Fantastic.

local shops do not stock the finer thread, pressure them to change. Read Ian's article on tying threads in the December 2012 Bobbin.

Gordon said many, many times that the fly should last for at least twenty fish, but did concede that at times, when using more fragile material, that the deceiving of the fish was more important than durability. He also emphasized that tying of rough and ready type of flies should be of choice, and not be due to poor tying technique - too true. Too many tyers cop out of tying neat bodies because of poor tying technique.

Although I have a second grade Metz cape, which, to me, has many perfectly sized feathers, with minimal soft web, the Whiting feather which we used for tying of the parachute hackles, with its beautiful long feathers which can be used for tying four or five flies, was a nuisance. When you tied the hackle up the post, the feather, about 150 mm long, drooped over the hook and kept getting in the way, especially when tying the thorax – either I must find out from Jay how his gallows tool works, use shorter feathers, or develop a third hand. How about a lesson on the gallows tool Jay?

For the first time I got to see a cape of Coq De Leon after having read so much about it, particularly from Tom and Ed's writings, and I have got to get some of these feathers. I have yet to price and source the material, but suspect that I might need to take out a small bond first. Maybe a few of us could share a cape? ([Editor's comment. No they are really cheap. Frontier Fly Fishing will sell you a cape for R440.00 Stream X sells a Cape for R395 saddles for between R310 and R480 and African Fly Angler sells a pack of 5 tail feathers for R20.00](#)) I can now understand their ravings about the material for use on tails and halo hackles.

Similarly with cul de canard. I have bought a number of packets over the last year or two with a view to using them, but the clinic was the first time that I actually got to use the feathers. And spinning the material nogal,

using a bull dog clip, was a lot easier than all of the illustrations that I have seen – another advantage of seeing and doing it under guidance.

I have just touched on some of the aspects which were new to me, or which reminded me of some of the basics which had fallen out of use. Each of the participants, I am sure, had a similar experience. For those that could not make the clinic, for whatever reason, you missed out on a fabulous opportunity to learn from a master. Hopefully, some of what we learned will be passed on through our club meetings in the near future.

The great charm of fly-fishing is that we are always learning. - Theodore Gordon

A Jock Scott tied by Gordon Van Der Spuy

Club Stuff

Subs

Subs for 2013/14 are overdue. If you have not paid please so now!

The new subs are:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Joining Fee | R20 senior R10 Junior |
| Senior Member | R150 |
| Junior Member | R80 |
| Family Member | R150 plus R50% of fee for each subsequent family member. |

Bank details

Bank : Standard Bank

Branch : Westville

Branch Code : 045 426

Account Number : 053 189 647

Please advise e mail Dave Smith proof of payment stating the type of members and the member(s) names.

DFT Committee

A number of members have asked that these details be published in the Bobbin. All we ask is that any communication via email be kept to that of fly fishing and club matters.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| Chairman | Jay Smit | 082 574 3722 | jaysmit@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| Secretary | Geoff Dettmer | 083 785 4997 | geoffdettmer@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| Treasurer | Dave Smith | 083 251 1629 | davesmith@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| IT | Warren Prior | 083 348 9790 | warrenprior@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| Saltwater | Nick Nortje | 083 782 9697 | nicknortje@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| Freshwater | The Committee | | |
| Entertainment | Bruce Curry | 082 774 5514 | brucecurry@durbanflytyers.co.za |
| Editor | Ian Cox | 082 574 3722 | iancox@durbanflytyers.co.za |

The nice part about fishing all the time is that an angler can spare moments for just sitting and watching the water. These spells don't even have to have a purpose, but it is hard not to discover some secrets during such interludes. The fisherman without a schedule doesn't need to rush about, casting furiously in a hunt for every possible trout. For this reason, he usually catches more of them.

Gary LaFontaine, Trout Flies: Proven Patterns

Forthcoming Attractions

| Date | | Venue | Organiser | Status |
|------------------|------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6 to 8 September | Cape Vidal Weekend | Cape Vidal | Nick Nortje | Bookings Open Contact Nick Nortje |
| October | River and Dam on UHFFC Water | Underberg | Warren Prior | Under Construction |
| November | Tiger Fishing | Pongola | Dave Smith | Under Construction |

For Sale

If any club member would like advertise some fly tying kit for sale or is looking for said kit , please contact
iancox@durbanflytyers.co.za

Durban Fly Tyers Shirts

BLUE shirts & BLUE hat @ R200.00 for both
 Contact Dave Smith

Advertisements

These are free for club members. A modest advertising charged is levied in respect of advertisements placed by non members. Contact Dave Smith For details.

dave@durbanflytyers.co.za



<http://www.xplorerflyfishing.co.za/>

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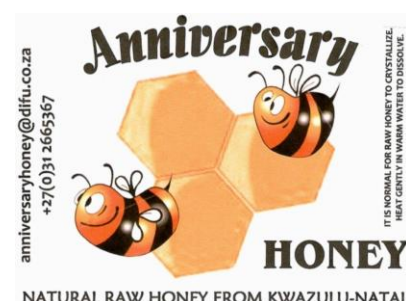


Jay Smit

Cell: 0832508211

Email: jay@ismit.co.za

Web: <http://www.jvice.com>



Honey sales: Anja Smith
 0832951669

Bee removal: Dave Smith:
 083 251 1629

Quick Links

| Name | Address | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| Durban Shops That stock Fly Tying Material | | |
| The Complete Angler | Shop 1 6 Village Rd Kloof, 3610 Tel 031 764 1488 | Superb freshwater selection of fly tying materials. Salty stuff too |
| Kingfisher | http://www.kingfisher.co.za/shop.php | A wide selection of fly tying materials balanced more towards the salt. |
| South African Online Shops | | |
| Frontier Fly Fishing | http://www.frontierflyfishing.co.za/ | Situated at Coachman's Crossing, Centre, Peter Place, Bryanston, Johannesburg. |
| Netbooks | http://www.netbooks.co.za/ | The Home of Craig Thom Check him out at the Ufudu Fair. |
| Stream X | http://www.streamxflyfishing.co.za/ | |
| The African Fly Fisher | http://www.theafricanflyangler.co.za/ | Morne Bayman's online shop |
| The Urban Fly Angler | http://urban-fly-fisher.com/products/ | Where Gordon Van Der Spuy has a weekly fly tying demonstration |
| KZN Fly Fishing Guides | | |
| Jan Korrubel | 083 99 33 870 jlkorubel@gmail.com jan@wildfly.co.za | small streams and custom fly tying |
| Simon Graham | 081 87 44 855 simon@wildfly.co.za | still water and custom fly tying |
| Grevin Price | 082 896 3688 grevin@wildfly.co.za | river and still water (including yellowfish) |
| Juan-Pierre Rossouw | 076 208 5602 juan@wildfly.co.za | river and still water (including yellowfish) |
| Leon Vermeulen | 082 442 4846 / leon@wildbrowns.co.za | river |
| KZN Fly Casting Instructors | | |
| All the fishing guides listed above also give casting instruction. | | |
| Ben Pretorius | http://www.ufudu.co.za/ | |
| Graham McCall | 079 303 3735 | |
| Jeremy Rotchester | 083 607 6100 | |
| KZN Fly Fishing and Fly Tying Clubs & Associations | | |
| The Fly Fishers Association (FFA) | flyfishersassociation@gmail.com | |
| The KZN Fly Fishing Association KZNFFA) | http://www.kznffa.org/public/index.asp?pageid=847 | |
| The Natal Fly Fishing Club | http://www.nffc.co.za/ | |
| South Coast Fly Fishers | | |
| The Underberg and Himeville Trout Club | http://www.uhtfc.co.za/ | |
| Wildfly | http://www.wildflytravel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=282&Itemid=451 | |
| Tides Charts | | |
| Durban | http://www.swell.co.za/durban/tides | Gives you a surf report to. |
| Weather | | |
| Durban | http://www.windguru.cz/int/index.php?sc=4865 | |