

THE BOBBIN

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March 2019

CHAIRMAN'S CHIRP

Well I trust that all have you have been tying and of course more importantly wearing the flies you have tied out!

The rivers are still fairly low but in the last week some decent rain has fallen in the Bushman's Mooi river catchments. This bodes well for the later part of the season although fish are being caught in numbers even under these conditions. Our club outing to Snowflake is starting to look like the waters will be almost perfect and the six of us that are going are starting to get excited about the trip.

A significant development which has happened in the last month is the opening of Xplorer's new retail shop just off Nandi Drive, Durban North. The FFA and NFFC clubs were invited to a talk by Jandi Trading on their latest kit and of course to view the shop.

They have done a great job. The shop is styled on a fishing shack (upmarket one) within a mini factory and it is very nicely done out. They are stocking Sage, Redington as well as their in-house Xplorer series of rods. They are going to be stocking Patagonia, Umpqua, Partridge and Tiemco hooks and actually they will bring in whatever flyfishers want.

But it is perhaps the fly tying materials that blew me away. They have in stock everything that all the other fly shops have and more. Golden Pheasant crests...they had it in 14 different colours! The range of fly tying material is in my opinion the best in the country currently. As far as kit is concerned it's up there with the best shops in the country. Do yourself a favour take a drive and go and see the shop.

Till next time...



FROM THE EDITOR

Last month we had a very short Bobbin – the shortest ever, truly a first! This month we have a longer Bobbin – and another first. The two articles submitted were written by father and son....Gordon and Andrew Gove. Gordon tells us about the strange truths behind the shape of rod handles and Andrew gets down to a fishing trip for yellows at Sterkies.

The next issue the Bobbin will attempt to get a few members to write up profiles of themselves – and hopefully this will become a regular feature. It is one way for members to get to know each other better. The selection of who will be featured will be done through a mathematical algorithm that will randomly identify who will be featured – so watch your emails/ what's app to see if you are the luck one.....and watch for the next Bobbin!



NEXT MEETING

**4 March 2019/19.00 for 19.30/ Room G1
Westville Library**

Gary Glen-Young (Ex Protea team member) will be
tying a bloodworm



FRESHWATER SHRIMP BY RAYMOND MENESES

MATERIALS

- **Hook:** Mustad Carp Power Ref: 12871NPBL
- **Dubbing** in cream, San of cream sculpting fish fiber
- **Legs:** Egyptian Goose Flank feather
- **Eyes:** Burnt Mono
- **Additional:** Lead wire, Brown marker, Orange marker/orange dubbing

METHOD

Step 1: Tie in three or four turns of lead in the middle of hook shank. Wrap the lead down well.

Step 2: Prepare two burnt mono eyes and place on top of hook with tag ends the full length of body

Step 3: tie in a small clump of sculpting fibre. The ends must stick out over eyes and be long enough to wrap back down hook to eye.

Step 4: Take Egyptian goose flank feather and select a small section for legs. Use fingernail or scissors to curl them. Tie in above sculpting fibre.

Step 5: Wrap sculpting fibres back down to hook eye and tie off.

Step 6: Either add orange dub as an egg sac or use orange marker. Colour the back in a light brown

Step 7: Coat with UV resin and set it off.



FLY ROD HANDLES - GORDON GOVE

An aspect of our fly rods that we tend to overlook is the design of the rod handle and its effect on our casting style, accuracy of our cast and the comfort of the handle. Also very important is how long we can cast before we start getting a sore hand or at worst cramps in our fingers. Most articles that I have read, focus is on the aesthetics of the design rather than the functionality of the handle. The major rod building companies have taken a different view, they make hundreds of handles at a time so they make one or at most a few different handle designs, and this is to save on setup time on the machine sanding the handles. It's a case of like it or leave it.

We are unaware that their clever marketing has got the fly fishing community to accept the cigar shape mixed with a bit of a reverse half wells to be the Alpha and Omega of handle designs. Look at your rods and you will find that the handles all look similar to the following picture:



My question is, is this the “best” design? These designs may fit the production planning of the Sage organisation, but is it the best design for you, does the handle fit comfortable in your hand, does it give you the necessary control over the rod to enable you place a pin point accurate fly. Does the handle allow you to comfortable cast that little extra distance needed to reach the good spot on the other side of the river without your hand cramping or the rod slipping out of your hand? I can hear you all saying: your Sage or Orvis has a perfect handle. It's a Sage, of course it must be perfect, but is it perfect for you?

All manufacturers' designs are a compromise, aimed at the “average fisherman” with average hands, average strength, fishing an average river or dam, with an average casting ability.

So let's look at some other options that just may be a better for you.

I have big hands and tend to cast with my thumb on the handle pointing upwards in line with the rod so I find the cigar and reverse half wells don't suit me at all as the handle is sloping in at the front and I can't get the leverage I need with my thumb. Below are two of my old Hardy rods, the bottom one having seen the most action and as you can see my thumb has worn away the cork exposing the cane underneath. These are double wells handles which suit my casting style. Not the best of cork as well, but these wonderfully slow rods served us well in the “distant” past, heavy and slow, but we were young and strong and could get good distance, as long as you where patience and waited for the rod to slowly load itself.



With these hardy handles, I find the handle diameter a bit small and tend to like a good handful of a handle. The photo below is a 5wt 7'6" rod and the handle is considerable bigger than the Hardy rod's handles, same double wells design, but just considerable thicker. This has become my rod of choice for most fishing occasions. This rod sits firmly in my hands and gives an accurate cast with reasonable decent distance. (For my age that is)



Below are two 6wt rods 8'6" long with a long handle, tapering towards the reel seat. Again, this type of handle suits my casting style, I agree, these handles may not look as pretty as your dainty production handles. But try a handle that fills your hand, once you get used to the firmness of the grip, you will be surprised at how much more comfortable the rods sits in your hand.



We have become so used to the handles currently produced by the rod manufacturers, so it's natural that, if you have been using a particular style and size of handle for many years, anything different from this "norm" is going to feel a little awkward and a somewhat unnatural. Your hand has become accustomed to these smaller cigar shaped handles, but, once you get used to bigger handles on your rod, fitted to the size of your hand, these bigger and better shaped handles will become your new "norm". Sadly the price of cork has been escalating for the past couple of years and it is often difficult to find the better grades of cork, at a reasonable price, a lot of discussions have taken place over replacement products that can be used for fly rod handles. I think the black rubbery PU handles look terrible on fly rods but especially horrible on lovely handmade split cane rods. Tree bark and light timber are other options that are a bit more acceptable than a plastic type product.

I have tried leather as a handle material, and below is a kudu leather handle fitted to a 3 wt 6' rod, not the ideal combination, as the leather is considerable heavier than cork and this tends to give this very light rod a butt heavy feel, which I find particularly uncomfortable. The positive aspect of a leather handle is the handle flexes in your hand as the rod bends which makes casting with it feel very different.



Below is my "hydrogen bomb" handle, fitted to a 9' 7 wt salt water rod, notice the up locking reel seat hardware designed to stop the reel dropping of if I ever catch that big fish. Funnily enough, I don't find this handle particularly comfortable, so it will remain a "once off" handle never to be repeated.



Well, if we can't find decent cork, let's go back to when classical split cane rods were the norm and the best where fitted with rattan grips, elegant and beautiful. A split cane rod with a rattan handle is not only wonderful to look at, but brings a special feel to your fishing experience. It's like a Rolls Royce car; they just have got that something special about them.



In the picture above, the lower handle is a 7'6" 2 wt and upper one is a 7' 6" 5 wt both hollow built for lightness.

Our rod handles are an overlooked part of our fishing experience, because our favourite rods come with cigar shaped handles, we accept that that's the way we roll. It's all because someone in a factory far, far away decided on the shape and size that rod handles were going to be and since then, every handle made, has followed that "average fisherman" path. If you get the chance, try other styles of handles and you will be surprised to find out that you are not that "average fisherman"

**Most trout are caught on a falling barometer.
However, they are very difficult to cast on a fly
rod and will quickly wear out your casting arm.**



SHOOTING LINE



DURBAN FLY TYERS COMMITTEE

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Treasurer	Dave Smith	083 251 1629	smiffam@absamail.co.za
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The Bobbin	Stelios Comninos	082 574 3722	stelios.comninos@gmail.com

STERKFONTein 2018 - ANDREW GOVE

320km from Durban nested above Oliviers Hoek Pass and surrounded by the mountains of the Eastern Free State lies Sterkfontein Dam. This majestic body of water is part of the Tugela-Vaal Water Project and the Drakensberg Pumped Storage Scheme. It holds 2,616,900 Mega Litres of water and is the third largest dam in South Africa after Van Der Kloof (3,171,300 Mega Litres) and Gariep (5,340,600 Mega Litres).

But of more interest to us, it is full of fish.

The main target species are Small Mouth and Large Mouth Yellow Fish, but one might find a rare trout as unsuccessful attempts to stock the dam have been made. Barble, Carp and Moggie are also in abundance.

Enough of the facts, I'm a fisherman not an encyclopaedia! FOSAF's Guide to Sterkfontein (http://www.fosaf.org.za/documents/Guide_to_Sterkfontein.pdf) is as a comprehensive guide to fishing Sterkfontein as you will ever need.

The basic set up for is simple, 5wt rod, the longer the better, floating line with a 12 ft leader, maximum 6x leader with a single dry fly on the end. Beetles and Hoppers work wonders, we had the most action on a size 8 dark purple beetle but when you go do not leave your size 24 mayflies at home, when the conditions are right you might regret it if you do. Despite there being an abundance of food being blown onto the water the fish are still hungry and will attack a fly more greedily than my father attacks my lunch snacks. However they spook very easily so mind your false casting, ideally you want to get your line out in a single cast. Don't go larger than 6x tippet, I only had 5x and this caused much irritation as I could see the fish turn away when I presented the fly.

The clear water makes for some extreme sight casting fishing which will either infuriate you as SMYs leisurely cruise past you perfect presentation or set your heart pumping as your fly gets smashed in the most spectacular cacophony of water, fish, jumping fathers and screaming reels. The condition of the fish is fantastic and their fighting ability is exceptional. Yellowfish are truly a world class fish to catch on fly and Sterkfontein is a world class venue.



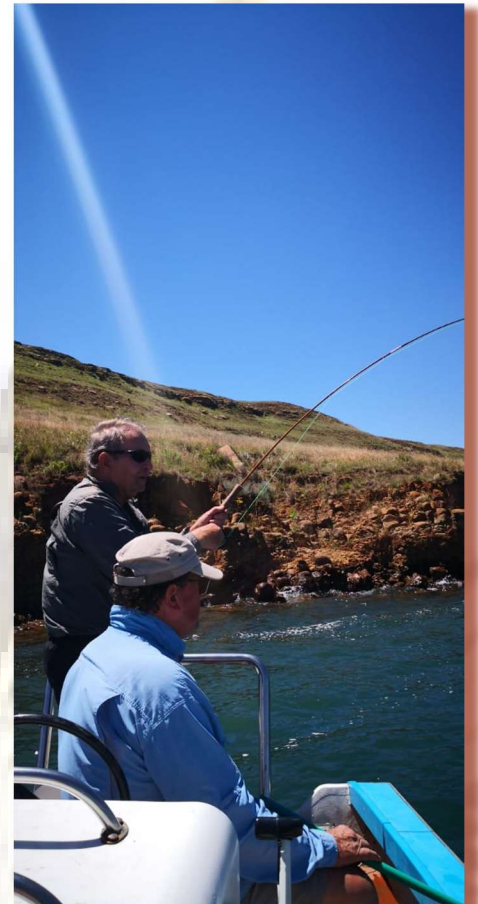
My father and I fished Sterkies in December, we fished off a boat rather than walked and stalked on the banks, this is a trip that is on our future must fish list, hopefully for later this year. Fishing off a boat invariably produces more fish as one is able to cover more water and get closer to the fish. Fishing off the banks has its own thrills but can be hard work mixed with a fair bit of walking. We found that the fish tended to sit hard up to the bank so care would need to be taken when approaching the water, off the boat we were catching fish in as little as 10cm of water as they were eating terrestrials that had been blown to the bank.

I made a short clip of the trip which can be viewed on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhQrVUA92ko>. The clip features mainly my father as the photos and videos he takes are terrible, well that and he was catching more fish than me so his cellphone hardly left his pocket!

Dennis lives near Kerkenberg, he has special access to the dam and waters where people can't normally get to. I would recommend contacting either Denis or Mark Yelland if you were going to Sterkfontein for the first time, hiring the services of a guide definitely helps as

Sterkfontein is not a particularly easy dam to fish for a first timer.

Sterkfontein is on our door step, a mere 3.3 hr drive away. This dam should be on your list of favourite venues and if you have never been then call me. I'm keen...



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2018 are now due and payable. At the AGM the subscription was raised marginally. Subscriptions are now as follows

Joining Fee	R220 senior R120 Junior
Senior Member	R240
Junior Member	R140
Family Member	R240 plus R50% of fee for each subsequent family member

Cash will only be accepted by Dave Smith at meetings of the DFT. All other payment to be made by EFT into the club bank account. No direct cash deposits.

Bank details

Bank: Standard Bank, Westville

Branch Code: 045 426. Account #: 053 189 647

Note: If you pay by EFT, please e-mail Dave Smith

smiffam@absamail.co.za with your proof of payment stating the type of members and the member(s) names.

QUICK LINKS

DURBAN SHOPS THAT STOCK FLY TYING MATERIAL

The Complete Angler	Shop 1 6 Village Rd Kloof, 3610, Tel 031 764 1488 <i>Superb freshwater selection of fly tying materials. Salty stuff too</i>
Kingfisher	http://www.kingfisher.co.za/shop.php <i>A wide selection of fly tying materials balanced more towards the salt</i>
The Fish Eagle	105 Victoria Rd, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal https://www.facebook.com/THEFISHEAGLE <i>Jan Korrubel runs this shop. Say no more!!!</i>

SOUTH AFRICAN ONLINE SHOPS

Frontier Fly Fishing	http://www.frontierflyfishing.co.za Situated at Coachman's Crossing, Centre, Peter Place, Bryanston, and Johannesburg.
Netbooks	http://www.netbooks.co.za The Home of Craig Thom
Stream X	http://www.streamxflyfishing.co.za
The African Fly Fisher	http://www.theafricanflyangler.co.za

KZN FLY FISHING GUIDES/CASTING INSTRUCTORS

Jan Korrubel	083 99 33 870 jlkorrubel@gmail.com jan@wildfly.co.za Small streams and custom fly tying, casting
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 fishing
Graham McCall	793 033 735 Casting Instructor
David Weaver	083 303 4230 / eff@ohs.dorea.co.za All things about Sterkfontein: local knowledge, boat and or accommodation.
Jeremy Rochester	083 607 6100 Casting Instructor

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
FOSAF	http://www.fosaf.org.za
The Underberg and Himeville Trout Club (UHTFC)	http://www.uhtfc.co.za
Wildfly	http://www.wildflytravel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=282&Itemid=451

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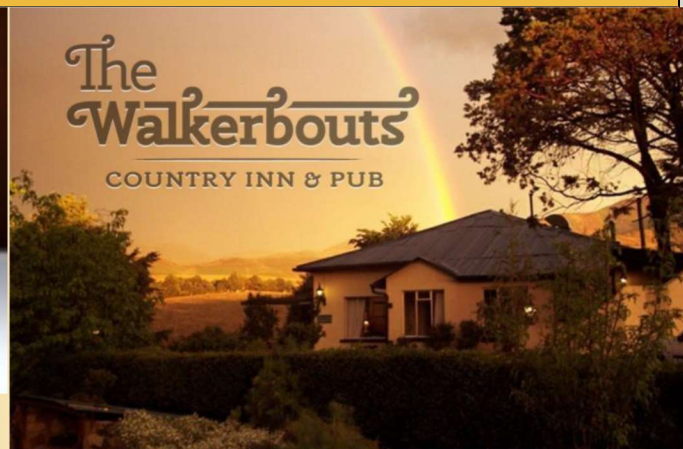
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