



The Vice



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.

Volume 17, Issue 6 Summer 2024/5

Inside: ... Cane, Flies, Euro Nymphing and more...

For payments to the club

BSB: 807 007

Account No: 12130456

Name: Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club Inc.

Please enter your name and what the payment is for and/or email the details to the Treasurer

Please remember to clearly identify yourself for ease of recording your payment

Office Bearers President	Andrew Reed
Vice President	Wayne Bellette
Secretary	Paul Markey
Treasurer	Norm Cribbin
Committee	David Travalia
	Scott Haslock
	Tim Lewis
	Tim Urbanc
Acting Vice Editor	Doug Miller

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

President's Report



Well, the summer is drawing to a close and we are all getting ready for the tail end of the season. There has been a lot of activity in the Club over the last few months.

The Great Lake Tie In was mentioned in my last report and I have a further update. The Organising Committee has been presented with a Certificate of Excellence for Community Contributions from the Central Highlands Council Australia Day Awards. The GLTI Committee is made up exclusively of Club members and this is well deserved recognition of their hard work and commitment to Fly Tying.

The call went out to members for another Bug Collection Day at Penstock Lagoon in early December. This was a great day of 'Citizen Science' at work. Ten members were joined by scientific specialists for collection, classification and counting insects. There were some new sample sites added to last year after feedback to AAT. Thanks to Malcolm Crosse for providing his shack as a base for the day and accommodation for some of the helpers. The BBQ was well attended and some people even managed to get in some fishing.

The research numbers from the Bug Day have been added to the Shallow Waters Report and will

soon be available. There have been ongoing meetings and discussions amongst Hydro, IFS, AAT, IFAC, UTAS and Mainland University Scientists about how to disseminate these new results to the angling public. It was great to see the gathering of like-minded people interested in insect life, the highland aquatic environment, trout condition further research and future management.

Christmas drinks were held at the Lenah Valley RSL with about 35 members enjoying a beer and a catch up. It was an opportunity for members to meet our recently appointed Patron John 'Chookie' Fowler Jr. and his wife, Dianne. They were both on crutches which meant they were a captive audience. John introduced himself and his wife to the crowd and gave a brief description of his farm in Bothwell. He spoke of his family's long and rewarding association with our Club over the last 50 years.

An invitation was issued by the Tasmanian Fly Fishers Club to attend the Cane Day at Little Pine Lagoon on Sunday 26th January. Our Club organised a dinner on the Saturday night beforehand as a social get together. 21 dinner guests made their way to the Great Lake Hotel and all had a great evening. The Cane Day was very well attended and Peter Rasmussen has provided an activity report. \$620 was raised for Prostate Cancer research and the FFCT were excellent hosts. I was very happy to managed one fish on my J M Turville Venus cane rod!

Wednesday Night casting is ongoing until the Last Night BBQ on 26th March. You can find out details by searching for 'The Wind Knots Flycasting Group'. Many thanks to Wayne Bellette, Adrian Scott and David Travalia for their time and effort in running this great activity.

Weasel Dam Camping Weekend is tentatively planned for 11th-13th of April this year. We're waiting for this date to be confirmed so we can get ready. Nick Ingles has offered his skills as the 'Provider of Venison' on the condition the Club can secure the services of a 'Club Butcher of Large Animals'!

We will run our usual Casting Trophy Day at Salmon Ponds with a prospective date of Saturday 10th May. The Clubs Casting Instructors and BBQ Chefs are under starters orders when confirmed.

Friendly competition and involvement are actively encouraged for all members.

Speaking of involvement, time is running out for Fowler Trophy entries. This is open until the end of the season, so if you have entered and not fished the day get a move on. You can find the draw on the Club Website under the 'Fowler Trophy' banner. If you can't find it, please send me a text.

There have been some changes to the Committee over the last few months. Tony Abel has resigned as secretary and been replaced by Paul Markey. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Tony for his many years of service to the Club. Tim Lewis has filled the casual vacancy and give us the benefit of his vast experience.



Tight lines for the remainder of the season and I will see you on the water!

Andrew 'The President' Reed

Editorial

Once again apologies for the lateness of the Summer Vice. My excuse is that although the Summer has been generally unimpressive as far as fishing goes it has been quite spectacular for other activities such as camping and swimming

and these activities do not lend themselves to elves to writing articles!

Cormorants and lack of duns seem to have dominated conversations although there have been some reports of great days sprinkled in with the poor ones. Recent reports of a Jassid being found inside a fish on Penstock immediately make you want to be there0 just in case it happens!

In this issue there are reports about the Cane Day at Little Pine from Peter Rasmussen and another brilliantly informative article piece from Tony Dell about the different possum emergers that he ties. Any advice from Tony is well worth trying as he is a legend of the club and Tasmanian fly fishing in general!

Hot glue flies are not that common from what I have seen and this material could well be very useful for making different bodies for both wet and dry flies. The glue sticks are readily available and have many different properties that our talented Tyers might be able to exploit. If you have any great ideas please let me know!

Euro nymphing has been a growth area in the club recently with many members becoming very proficient at it. I have included a very basic introduction for those who, like me, are at the beginning of the adventure. Hopefully the more experienced members can help add their insights and expertise on these pages.

This time the vouchers go once again to **Tony Dell** and **Peter Rasmussen** for their contributions in this issue of The Vice.

Send your stories to 55dmiller@gmail.com

Inside this Issue	Page
President's Report and Editorial	3
Cane Day 2025	5
Euro Nymphing 101...	6
Possum Emergers	8
Melt Smelt	12

Cane Day 2025

As club coordinator for this event it was so gratifying to see large numbers of members in attendance. Thank you members for embracing this event so heartily.

The event started with a well attended meal at the pub. Thanks to Anna for your help here. Some cane rods were made available for casting on the front lawn. Several members including myself took advantage of this opportunity. I soon discovered that Chinese (cane ?) rods might be a tad deficient!



The meal in the atrium was enjoyed, as discussions on the merits of modern cane rods prevailed.



The event on Sunday 26th Jan. was a great success. The fishing was tough for most. The bright day saw heaps of caddis, some black spinner & duns but little sign of Mr Speckles. Some in boats did ok near the river mouth.



The event raised \$620 to be donated to prostate cancer research. A fine and worthwhile effort by all attending.

So the raffle saw number Tim Urbanc score the latest Greg French book. We all hoped he would win the whisky - as I am sure it would have been opened for all to enjoy.

Chris Crawford the organiser from the Fly Fishers club of Tas. was delighted with how the day went.

Our bond with fellow fly fishers is strengthened further. A great event. My thanks to all members in attendance



Peter Ras
Club Coordinator

Euro Nymphing 101...

Euro Nymphing in the rivers and streams that have managed to escape the worst of the cormorants that have been everywhere this year is becoming increasingly popular. Proponents of this style of fishing delight in finding tiny streams often with tiny fish (and a few surprises) in both far flung and unexpected urban settings. It is a surprisingly productive method of fishing with a fly that can be totally absorbing. But what exactly is Euro Nymphing? For me the name doesn't seem to add anything towards capturing the essence of what is required.

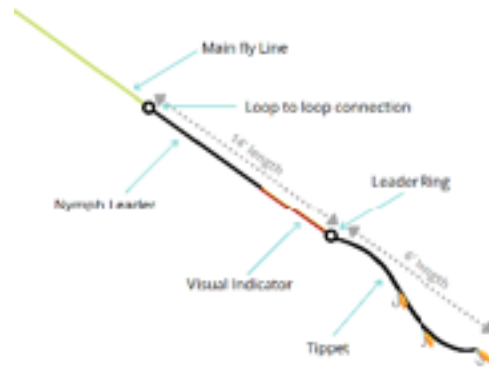
I have been lucky enough to have had some fantastic teachers in my introduction to this form of fishing - namely Brian West and David Travalia - both of whom are skilled and increasingly passionate about this form of fishing and the biggest idea I have gleaned from them is that it should, more accurately, be called '*Tight Line Nymphing*'.

The overall key to this method is to constantly be in direct tight-line contact with your fly or flies. No part of the leader sits flat on the water in an ideal drift. It doesn't matter whether you have a pair of nymphs or a nymph and a dry or even a single nymph. There should be no leader laying on the water. You need to be direct contact as soon as they enter the water - think how many times you have been surprised by a trout grabbing your fly the instant it hits the water! This seems simple but I still find it tricky!



There are of course specialised rods reels and lines available at varying levels of expense but the basic set up is relatively

simple. You can choose to use your 'normal' fly rod and reel and just adapt the leader and dropper. A longer flexible tip rod however is ideal and 3 weight or even less is probably best. Because the casting really only involves the leader and very little actual fly line at all for the beginner it doesn't seem to matter too much what weight fly line you have. There are of course specialised level lines for the more experienced and deep pocketed fishers. A 'zero weight' fly line is often chosen (or recommended) as it will not in theory add weight to or cause deviation to the line of direct contact by the line sagging under its own weight when out of the rod. The fly can come into play in larger rivers but often in our smaller streams only the leader is cast.



Source: <https://www.anglingactive.co.uk/>

The leader set up for a basic rig is to have about double your rod length in a level leader. These are often a bright colour so you can see them. A multicoloured 30cm 'sighter' leader is then attached to the straight leader and then the final tippet of fluorocarbon is tied on via tippet ring or perfection loop. It seems the leader construction is still evolving around the world (mainly through competition fishing) so it can be difficult to keep up. Westy still uses the Tom Jarman set up which, although quite old, is certainly still serviceable.



Choosing the nymphs are usually about the colour of the bead as this is really what the fish sees first. In a river, the body of the fly seems to be of secondary importance. The heavier bead is usually on the point and a slightly lighter one on the dropper (if this is used). Dry flies can also be tied on the dropper and these make a useful sighter for the beginner.



Casting is very different to normal fly casting in that it is really only the leader that is cast. It is a combination of a backcast and a 'flip' into the desired location. Often you can use the drag of the water to propel the flies forward. Bubble lines and seams in the river are general hotspots and fish are often caught in runs and rapids where normally you would

walk straight past them. The 'bow and arrow' cast also becomes a necessity in those small creeks.

Ideally the flies should be fished in a dead drift so it is not dragging or behaving unnaturally. If there is any movement at all, a slight straightening, slowing down or a change of direction is the coloured sighter then that is the time to set the hook. The sighter also helps to judge the depth and movement of the flies. As the casts are generally quite short ones the drift is often around 5 seconds. So short casts, quick drifts and lots of them!

I am at the beginning of my Tight-line journey and have enjoyed developing a new skill and exploring rivers from areas as local as the Hobart Rivulet to more far flung areas such as the Florentine and the rivers in the North East of Tasmania.



Many thanks to David Travalia and Brian West for their input into this article and their generosity in sharing their time and knowledge.

DM

Possum Emergers

So...

What is a Possum Emerger???

There are so many different Possum Emergers that the name has now really become a generic one and you need more information in the name to give any clear idea of what the fly might be.

For example: are we talking about a Loop Wing Possum Emerger; a Back-wing Possum Emerger; a Forward-wing Possum Emerger; a Parachute Possum Emerger; a Possum Shaving Brush or one that I tie - a Wyatt Variant Possum Emerger [which is my possum version of Dave Wyatt's Deer Hair Emerger (DHE)].

Do we also have to reference the name of the person who designed or popularised it? For example: David O'Brien's "OBE" emerger which originally had a possum-tail loop wing as the post for the parachute hackle. There are of course many, many other examples.

The bottom line is that if someone says to you that they caught fish on a Possum Emerger, you really have no idea what the fly actually is unless you ask and are lucky enough to be shown it or, by other nefarious means, you get a look at it!

In my own case, as many of you will know, I have had a long-time fascination with possum as a fly tying material. My first all-possum fly dates from the early 1980's at Lake Sorell when I tied a sparsely dressed all-possum fly for Stone Fly dry feeders along the Duck Bay shore. That fly was a simple no-hackle job with a lightly dubbed body of natural grey possum body underfur and a back wing of light-ish possum tail (from the base of the tail). I still use that fly occasionally (it has also been re-purposed as a caddis pattern with an orange or green body) and it has been the precursor, for me, to a number of other all-possum and possum plus hackle flies.



Possum Stone Fly - current tie

These days I use dark possum tail for all my parachute posts. Firstly, because it is a very functional and resilient material for this purpose; and now, secondly, because my older eyes can pick it up more easily in a fishing situation.

Also, I use it extensively for wings, both with hackle and without. A favourite is my possum-wing Barry Lodge Emerger tied with a dyed dark brown possum fur body and a sparsely tied cut possum back wing.



Possum back-wing Barry Lodge Emerger

This fly works well on its "home water", Lake Leake, fished as a conventional dry in a hatch. I haven't found it as successful on the Pine or at Penstock fished conventionally, but it will still take fish on its day. It does, however, come into its own on those waters when fished in a bit of top and slowly retrieved.

There are three Possum Emergers I mostly use: my Possum Parachute Emerger; my Possum Wyatt Variant; and the forward-wing Possum Emerger. I tie them all in a variety of colours - dark brown, light brown, grey, black, claret, orange etc., all with dark possum tail wings. With the parachute, I tie it with a range of different hackles - olive, black, dark brown, ginger and grizzle.



L to R: Possum Parachute Emerger, Possum Wyatt Variant and Forward-wing Possum Emerger

My normal start to dry fishing, if nothing is showing, is to prospect with either the Possum

Parachute or Wyatt Variant on the top dropper with an un-ginked Duck Fly (Trevor Berne) or a Possum White-tail emerging nymph (Charles Peck) on the point. The white tail represents the trailing shuck. If fish start to rise, it is also an effective team to cover them.



L to R: Trevor Berne's Duck Fly, Peck's Possum White Tail

If fishing is tough and I get a few boils, refusals or missed takes with the two-fly rig I will retreat to a single fly. Usually that will be either the Wyatt Variant (tied on a Kamasan B110) or a Parachute Emerger (generally tied on a Kamasan B830), both in a size #14, and usually with either dark brown, black or claret bodies, depending on light conditions (and my personal whim at the time!).

Sometimes it is difficult to get a take on either of the above two as well, and I will then often switch to Doug Miller's forward-wing Emerger (also tied on a Kamasan B830 #14) which has saved the day for me on a number of occasions. More recently, it has been my go-to searching fly and fly in a hatch.

Another very useful Possum Emerger that I was introduced to by Noel Wilson is the "Yum Yum". It is tied on a bent hook, and similar to my Wyatt Variant but tied to give a finer profile in the water and with a back wing rather than an upright wing.

I had had some success with it at Bronte last February in calm conditions casting it in the vicinity of moving fish and letting them find it. It has also been useful recently in Penstock.



Noel Wilson's Yum Yum

Another frequently used Possum Emerger pattern is the Possum Shaving Brush. It appears twice in the 2016 Australia's Best Trout Flies Revisited: under that name in Simon Taylor's contribution; and as a Possum Emerger under Malcolm Crosse's contribution.



Possum Shaving Brush

I am sure there are many more Possum Emergers out there that have been devised by the inventive minds of Tassie fly fishers and I would love to get photos of them so I can add to my catalogue. So, if you have any examples I would love to hear from you!

One of my key strategies, which I am sure most fishers also use, when fishing Possum Emergers (and other dries as well) is to change size of the fly if I get a rejection. Usually I will use the same fly, but go smaller in the first instance, both in the case of the tail fly of a two-fly rig or with a single fly.

However, this is not always the solution. On many occasions I have gone the opposite way, particularly with my Wyatt Variant, and gone much bigger, both in the case of a top dropper when fishing two flies and on the point if fishing a single fly. I usually fish it tied on a Kamasan B110 #14, but also have some tied on #10 B100 in my box which have proved surprisingly effective when the chips are down. particularly when just prospecting.

Another conundrum I have faced with Possum Emergers is whether to use "bent hook" or "straight hook" flies. Sometimes I get a refusal on a bent hook and change to a straight hook and get a better response, and vice-versa! I don't know whether this is just me finding excuses for my poor fishing or whether it is real. I would be interested in any member feedback on their experiences on this point.

Another popular Possum Emerger is the Loop Wing. Many of my fishing mates have a lot of success with this fly but for me it has been somewhat indifferent. I seem to get a lot of takes which don't hook up. That is very likely operator error, but it has certainly impacted my confidence in the fly to the extent that it has become a bit of a last resort!

Possum Loop-wing Emerger

The great thing about most of the possum emergers is that they are simple to tie. I have set out below instructions on how I tie the Forward-wing Possum Emerger, which is certainly the simplest. Tight Lines!



- Tie wing in securely back to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the hook shank and cut off surplus so it tapers back to the bend of the hook;
- Tie in tail, then ribbing;
- Dub a tapered fine body up to where you tied in the wing, wind rib forward to the same point and secure;
- Dub a thorax (not too bulky) and wind forward to the wing;
- Tie off and whip finish at the eye under the wing, lifting it up as necessary.

Happy experimenting and tight lines!

Tony Dell
January 2024

Forward-wing Possum Emerger

Hook: #14 Kamasan B 830 (or any 2x long equivalent)

Wing: Possum tail (small bunch, cut end to front)

Tail: Possum tail fibres or hackle, to taste (I use Coq de Leon)

Rib: Fine gold or copper wire

Body: Possum dubbing, colour to taste

Method:

- Cut a small amount of possum tail, determining how far from the skin you cut depending on how dark you want your wing. Try to find a possum tail that is not too fine or the wing will tend to matt when wet;
- Tease out the loose fibres at the cut end and tie in wing immediately behind the eye, cut end forward, overhanging the eye by about $\frac{3}{4}$ length of the hook shank;

Melt Smelt

Fly Tyers are always looking for different materials to work with. It helps when the material is readily available and is relatively cheap! This is exactly what appealed to me about using Hot Melt Glue sticks for tying.



Glue sticks come in many interesting colours and have different properties that make them useful for tying flies. (Some of the 'normal' clear glue sticks glow under UV light). They can be found in a range of colours and even in gold and silver with sparkly bits in them. This makes them an interesting material for the bodies of flies - in particular Zonker style flies.



To make the body of the fly you can cut the glue stick to the length of the shank. It can be tapered a bit to resemble the shoe of a bait fish. Adhering it to the hook is simply a matter of heating the hook with a lighter and putting the cut piece of glue on the shank. Further gentle heating of the glue helps make it into the desired shape. A rotating vice is a big help here.



Once the desired body shape is achieved it is a good idea to allow the glue to cool and harden. Tie in the thread at the rear of the shank. (I used fire orange) as a tag. You could use other colours of course. This is sealed with UV cement and new tie in of black thread was used to tie down the rear of the zonker.



Tie in new lot of tying thread near the eye of the hook and secure the zonker strip tightly. Whip finish and snip off the thread.



DM

Fly Tying on the WWW

There are many other flies that use Glue sticks and here I must acknowledge the brilliance of The Feather Bender (Barry Ord Clarke) who has produced some fantastic books and YouTube clips on how to tie a range of ants, scud, beetles and much more. His books are amazing quality - he is a professional photographer as well as a superb tier - and he describes each fly brilliantly. There are also QR codes for each fly that take you directly to a video on how to tie them. Try them out!



More Melt Glue Flies from The Feather Bender for you to enjoy!



DM