

# “Ripples”

The Official publication of the Southland Fly Fishing Club. The club was founded in 1974

May 2020



[www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz](http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz)



# Southland Fly Fishing Club



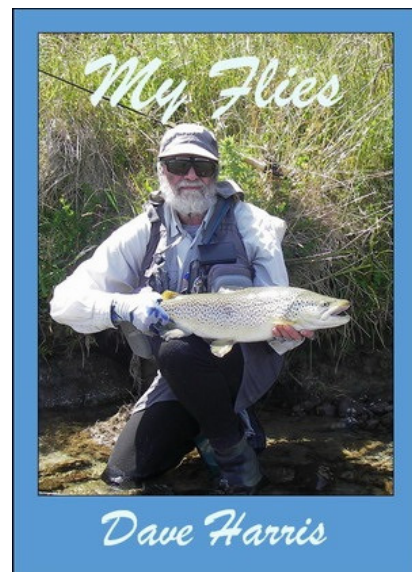
## President's Report by Dave

Well with the down grading of the covid-19 alert level to level 2 the Club will be up and running again. We will have a May monthly meeting as scheduled. The mid-week trip on May 27<sup>th</sup>, the end of season Lodge Trip and the June Fly Tying Day are all go. However, the Club Dinner scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup> has been postponed until after the August Fly Tying Day on August 1<sup>st</sup>. At this stage the moving of the dinner is the only change to the calendar from here on. I look forward to seeing you all at the coming events.

With the greater freedom we now have, I managed a few trips out but have found fish a bit hard to find. I have landed a few but not as many as I would have liked. On the bright side I have had some lovely days on the river in nice autumn weather.

We only have a few days left before the high country rivers and the Mataura from Gore to Gorge Road close, leaving us with just the lower reaches of the rivers to fish so you need to get out there now and catch a few fish.

During the lock down I went through the fly tying recipes I had on my computer (and added a couple more) and put these into a publication called "My Flies". There are 14 flies that I have detailed. I have posted this on the Club website in a new section called fly tying. Follow the link below the picture. I hope you find it useful.



<http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz/index.php/fly-tying-2>

## End of Season Lodge Trip by Dave

The end of season Lodge Trip is scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>. We will head up to the Lodge on Friday night (if we are not already there) ready to head away fishing first thing Saturday morning. At this stage we are expecting to be able to get Saturday dinner at the Mossburn Hotel but this has yet to be confirmed. If this is not possible someone will need to cook the meal at the Lodge but I am sure we can manage this. Sunday will be another days fishing before heading back to the Lodge and closing it down for the winter. If you are keen to go on this trip let me know (Dave 0272016722). Don't leave it until the last minute as it is possible a couple of us will be heading up a few of days early to get in a bit more late season fishing.

We have several rivers available to fish, the Upukerora, Eglinton, Waiau, Von and the top of the Whitestone as well as the Mavora Lakes (and all the other lakes for that matter).

## Competitions by Dave

### **Fish Competition.**

Bring your fish cards along to the May meeting or get them to me before the meeting. We will have two draws on the cards at the May meeting for Hunting & Fishing gift vouchers. I will still accept cards for the competition until the June meeting.

### **Fly Tying Competition.**

The fly for May is the deer hair emerger detailed in last month's Ripples and these will be judged in the normal manner at the May meeting. The June competition fly is Simon's flash back pheasant tail nymph detailed on page 4 of this Ripples.

### **Photo Competition**

The photo competition will be held at the June Monthly meeting. There are four categories: trophy, action, scenic and general. You can enter up to three prints in each category. These must be 7" x 5" and must be from the current season. Time to start sorting through your photos to pick out your entries. Winner of each section will get a Hunting & Fishing gift voucher. While you are sorting through your photos put a whole lot on a memory stick to show us all at the June meeting.

## Fly Tying Day—June 6th

We will hold a Fly Tying Day at Fish & Game, 17 Eye Street on June 6<sup>th</sup>. We will be there from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Come along and have a go at fly tying. You don't need to be there all day, just when it suits you.

## Menzies College Fly Fishing by Tim

Menzies College Fly Fishing Team has completed another successful term, with some first catches for some students and some excellent skills being picked up including a few tying sessions run on site by Dave Harris. He must know his stuff, as the first hare and copper nymph I tied was taken by a decent 3lb Mataura brown on the first pass!

We started the term as we always do with plenty of enthusiasm and a bunch of keen year 7's who are new to the school and looking to join a club or two. Each Wednesday we manage to take a group of 6 or 8 out on the local rivers. It can be pretty tough going getting them a fish as you can imagine, with a big bunch of people thrashing the water, but they seem to have a blast regardless.

Dave once again joined us for a fish one particular week when we had a newcomer to the team. We soon had him rigged up with a single hare and copper nymph and showed him the basics. The recent floods had created a new riffle at the Coal Pit Road access, so we set him going in there in shin deep water. Not more than 5 minutes later he was in to it! He did well to get it to the net eventually and it was as easy as that! First time fly fishing and a fish on the board within minutes. I'm pretty sure it wasn't that easy for the rest of us!

Dave's tying lessons really inspired one of our year 11 students, Harm Davers. He's got himself a kit and has been busy tying plenty of things to try. He's now a competent fly fisherman and absolutely loves it.

A few weeks before lockdown, Harm and I thought we'd try our luck on a small local stream. With about two hours of daylight left, we launched into it and ran a small parachute adams with a dropper nymph underneath. I managed to hook two, and lose two. With only a few metres from bank to bank, I was eventually snapped off on one and popped the hook on the other. I sent Harm around the corner to fish the next little run where I'd hooked a fish a few weeks prior.

Sure enough, a bit of excitement soon was heard, with Harm hooked up on a nice specimen. I arrived in time to see him play the fish out, and netted it for him. The fish turned out to be a solid 3 1/2 pounder with a really striking pattern to it. After a few snaps, it was gently returned to the waters.

It's extremely rewarding to see these young ones finally experience success. Many of us can remember battling away for our first fish and the excitement that was had when a fish finally took our dry.

It's great having an excuse to "have" to go fishing each Wednesday with the team, but by far the best part has to be seeing students build up their skill level enough to start having success on the fly rod in their own time on the weekend.

Menzies College Fly Fishing Team coaches are Tim Landreth, David Lewis and Kit Hustler.



Harm Davers with his 3 1/2 lb brown



# June Competition Fly by Simon

## Flash Back Pheasant Tail

### Materials:

- Size 14 Grub Hook
- 3mm Gold Bead
- .015 Lead Wire (optional)
- Brown Thread
- Fine Gold Wire
- Peacock Uni-Mylar
- Pheasant Tail
- Peacock Herl

### Instructions:

Crimp the barb, insert bead and wrap the lead around hook (5 Turns),

Thread hook to the bend, Tie in the wire, Tie in the tail (Pheasant Tail), Tie in the Uni-Mylar

Wrap the hook 2/3 with Peasant Tail left tied in from the tail,

Pull up and tie in the Uni-Mylar, Wrap the wire around the opposite way and tie in at 2/3 also,

Tie in Pheasant Tail tips over the head/bead and tie back to the existing material,

Tie in the Peacock Herl and wrap to the bead, Pull forward the Pheasant Tail as a wing case and tie in, Pull forward the Uni-Mylar over the wing case and tie in.

Pull back the Pheasant Tail tips from over the bead spreading even to both sides of fly and tie in place. Whip Finish and done.



## The Mystery of Fly Fishing – A beginner's Odyssey by Keith Wright

In my teens I lived close to the Mataura River and was a regular visitor to its edge. I was a spin fisherman with a low catch rate and by the time I was 20 I had more or less stopped fishing. Work and study, then family life, intervened, and any river trips were for the benefit of our children, who, from time to time, were bitten by the fishing bug. Our catch rate didn't improve with time and, as a result, neither did our enthusiasm for the sport.

My father had been a keen and competent dry fly fisherman. A summer evening trip to the river with him when I was 16 has stayed with me. As the light faded, he fished to the evening rise after nearly 2 hours of waiting for the mayfly hatch to start. His approach was precise. Three casts, three fish to the net. It was nearly dark by then so we packed up and headed home. I remember being completely taken aback by the apparent ease with which my father had caught 3 rising trout in about 15 minutes. I also remember how daunted I was when I considered all of the components of the process he followed to catch those fish; the patient wait, the time taken to conceal himself and observe, the careful movement towards the river as fish started to rise, the apparently instinctive knowledge of what it was they were feeding on, the skill of the cast, the flawless presentation of line and fly, the timing of the strike, the playing of the fish. All of this done with a cane rod, drag-less reel, a level line that required grease to keep it floating, and a home tied leader of ever decreasing line diameter out to the tip. No graphite, weight forward floating, large arbor, poly leader techno-speak in those days. And, oh, the mystery of it all. As intriguing and unfathomable as the workings of an All Black tight 5 at scrum time. All darkness and precision and timing and science. I wanted to know what went on in there, how it was done, where I could learn it.

Fast forward 40 years. While the desire to learn something of the art of fly fishing had never left me, the right opportunity had eluded me. Family and work took priority over a seemingly solitary pursuit and the challenge presented by my perception of it as a dark art, stood in my way. A chance meeting, late last year, with a group of fly fishermen gearing up on the roadside as they prepared to fish a Southland river presented the opportunity to ask the question. "How would I go about getting started with fly fishing?" The question was answered by a member of the group, who just happened to be a former president of the Southland Fly Fishing Club. "Try the club" he said, "they run a course in the summer". I Googled the club and made the call. Yes, there were spaces available. The 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of January were the dates.

I gathered together the basic gear I had bought in anticipation and headed off late on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.

In preparation for the course I had read a number of on-line articles on the intricacies of fishing with a "fly". I shouldn't have. By the time the day arrived, my mind was filled to overflowing with confusing terms like: wet flies and nymphs, wee wets and streamers, dry flies and emergers, leaders and tippets, line memory and line mending (who would fish with a broken line?), floating and sinking (self-explanatory I thought), weight forward, double taper, shooting head, front taper, rear taper, sinking tip, sink rate, indicator, grain weight, large arbor, disc drag, sealed drag, c.n.c machined, fast action, medium/fast action, slow action, 7ft6, 9ft, 10ft, 11.5 ft, 4 wt, 5 wt, 6 wt to 10 to 12 wt. Then the cast; 10 o'clock, 2 o'clock, accelerate to a stop, accelerate to a stop again, lock the wrist, tight loop, wide loop, roll cast, back cast, forward cast, false cast, loading the rod (into the car? Straight forward enough!). Phew! give me the mystery of the scrum any day!

A small group met at the Fish and Game office on the Saturday morning. Six students and almost as many assistants. After a few formalities our tutor, Mike Weddell, was introduced. I had been a follower of his ODT fishing column for a number of years and had 2 of his books. (I carry one of them in my truck every time I fish). His fishing CV is impressive. His manner was understated. His delivery was simple, concise, knowledgeable and based on years of experience and success. We could ask questions during his presentation (and there was no such thing as a silly one). It was an informal A to Z interactive day on how to catch fish with a fly. When, where, how do we fish? Where will the fish be? What will they be feeding on? What do we use to imitate that food? The time spent on the technology of equipment was a revelation. That probably took up less than 5 minutes of the day. This is a rod, this is a reel, this is a line and this is a leader. "Hang on a minute" I thought, "what about the 6wt, fast action, weight forward, tapered, floating, matt finished, large arbor, cnc machined, laser directed light sabre I am going to need to catch said fish?!!

Later in the afternoon we learned the basics of casting a fly line and leader. Chris McDonald gave me a leader. Thanks Chris, I still have it. It has a tippet ring on it now and has seen off a 25 metre roll of 4X fluorocarbon tippet. We cast for an hour or so. No one said "you are doing that wrong". I could tell I was doing a lot wrong but useful tips brought gradual improvement. We all looked back to watch our back cast. Sometimes the forward cast looked okay. Often it didn't. Someone said "if you can't see your thumb on the back cast, your hand is going too far back". That helped a lot. So did the bit of wool on the leader, and the instruction to aim for a point on the ground during the forward cast. My shoulder was sore by the end. Oh well, there was still plenty to learn.

*(Continued on page 6)*

# The Mystery of Fly Fishing - A beginner's Odyssey (cont)

(Continued from page 5)

We met on the Mataura River on Sunday morning. It was a hot January day. After a brief introduction to the day's programme we went to the water to practise casting along a drop-off. Mike gave a short demonstration of casting and retrieval and then re-casting. Someone tied a pheasant tail nymph on for me and we waded into the river. We were all concentration. The line floated towards me. No time to think. Retrieve, back cast, forward cast, let the line shoot, onto the water, here it comes again, get out of the way of the fly, oops, it's hooked in my sock, the tippet has 2 knots in it, now its wrapped around my rod, my floating line is sinking (my new one arrived in the mail as I write this). The fish had nothing to fear from me. All the while there was helpful instruction and gradual improvement. There were 6 fish caught in the morning and this was just the casting practise! I was fishless. (Was this my destiny?)

In the afternoon we split into groups and fished on. It was hot. My casting improved and I managed to avoid getting hooked by the fly. All afternoon Mike continued with his helpful instruction and encouragement. I caught nothing. We left the river about 4pm. My mind was full. I drove the 2 hours home. There were still a lot of questions to be answered. "What rod and reel should I buy?" wasn't one of them. My sunburnt legs peeled a few days later.

My first trip to my local river brought apprehension. What do I fish with? "A nymph", I thought. Will it need to be un-weighted, or bead headed, with, or without, split shot? What do I use for tippet? Oh well, "just go fishing" they had said. A few trips brought no success. One night I fished something that looked like a baby woolly bugger and something hit it as it reached the end of the swing and was gone. Was that a fish? Excitement, disappointment, despair. A short time later I fished a local still water. Nothing. I dragged my spin rod out of the truck and caught a 3.5lb trout on a spinner. "Back where I started" I thought. Days later I met a guy fishing with a fly. He told me he had caught nothing for the first 2 years, fly fishing. "Too long for me" I thought. A few more trips and still nothing.

I visited a sports shop and bought a few nymphs. Earlier, I had emailed Mike and asked about tippet. I bought some fluorocarbon 4X. On my next outing I landed a small rainbow trout. I took it home as proof of my success. I was triumphant. It had started to make sense. I kept a diary as Mike had suggested. A couple of days ago I read through it and counted up the number of trips. There are 28 since the end of January. I looked at the hook ups and catches. There are 87 fish to the net. I looked at the flies that caught the fish. Mostly nymphs on deeper feeding fish but 6 on an un-weighted hare's ear fished as an emerger; my introduction to the quest for the holy grail: a trout taking my dry off the surface. My best day is 9 fish landed (and 8 returned). Four trips in a row landed 27 fish. I was on my way.

So, there it is, the mystery revealed. I know enough now to realise I will never be able to say "I learned to fly fish in January 2020." I can say "I learned enough to catch a fish on a fly." The learning will be lifelong and I won't live long enough to learn it all. After all, who can know the mind of a trout? (I still prefer questions about the workings of an All Black tight 5 at scrum time, of which I know little!)

Recently a friend asked me how they should get started fly fishing. I didn't hesitate with my answer. Attend the SFFC fly fishing course, ask lots of questions and go fishing. He's going next year.

Thanks, SFFC and Mike Weddell. And, ..... tight lines.

## Cover Photo by Dave

A nice autumn rainbow.

## For Sale

Simms wading boots. US size 10/ UK 9 and have adjustable wire lacing. They're in good condition, with a little bit of wear on the back of one of the ankles.

Contact Sarah on 021 044 2136.





## Coming Events (MM=Monthly Meeting, CM = Committee Meeting)

26 <sup>th</sup> May	MM	
27 <sup>th</sup> May		Mid-week Trip – Dave Harris 027 201 6722
30/31 <sup>st</sup> May		Lodge Trip – End of Season run, close Lodge
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	CM	Fly Tying
6 <sup>th</sup> June		Fly Tying at Fish & Game 9:00am
30 <sup>th</sup> June	MM	Members Video & Photo night plus photo competition
7 <sup>nd</sup> July	CM	Fly tying
28 <sup>th</sup> July	AGM	Election of Officers, MVM, Prize Giving - (Supper)

## Club Contacts

- Address **Southland Fly Fishing Club, PO Box 1689, Invercargill, New Zealand**
- Website [www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz](http://www.southlandflyfishingclub.org.nz)
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- Editor Dave Harris [dcharris@southnet.co.nz](mailto:dcharris@southnet.co.nz)  
*Items for publication must be submitted to the editor, prior to the 10th of the month*
- Librarian Simon Budd
- Lodge Custodian Dave Murphy, 35 Brown Road, Invercargill [dmurphy@southnet.co.nz](mailto:dmurphy@southnet.co.nz) (03 230 4698) or (0276752324)

## Club items for sale

Metal Badges \$15 ea.



Cloth Patches \$12 ea.



## Club Meetings

The club meets at 7:30pm on the last Tuesday of each month (except December) at the Fish & Game building, 17 Eye St, West Invercargill, Invercargill 9810. [The February meeting is on the river.](#)

Executive Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month following the general meeting, except for Dec/Jan, includes fly tying, so come along and bring your gear if you want help with a fly—all members welcome.

## Club Resources

The club has an extensive library of Books and Videos, contact the Librarian

A blow up Rubber Boat and a set of five Radio's, which can be borrowed by club members, contact Chris McDonald.

## Club Sponsors



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