

## Wendy Gibson

I suppose it is a reflection of how out of touch I am if I confess not to have heard of Wendy Gibson before! Wendy is a professional fly tying instructor from Nottingham. and has been in business since 1985. Apart from instructing and being a retail outlet for fly tying kit she also specialises in framed sets, jewellery and greetings cards all incorporating flies.

She was at our meeting to demonstrate techniques rather than patterns: nevertheless it was refreshing to hear that, in her opinion, there wasn't a right or wrong way of doing things – it was a matter of personal preference. In case anyone thought that not varnishing flies was one of her foibles, this omission was only employed for demonstrations where the audience subsequently handled the flies.

She had a variety of tools. When tying the knots in the legs of a daddy, a simple hooked dubbing needle facilitated the manipulation of the fibre. A bumble (good in Ireland) employed Antron yarn for the dubbing. This pattern also incorporated blue jay. I was amazed how iridescent it appeared when held up to the light of the projector. I liked the hackle pliers which incorporated a clip that swivelled on the end of the handle. Although these can cost well in excess of a tenner, Veniard do a budget model for £3.75. Flies were tied off with a couple of half hitches followed by a whip finish. This tool looked as though it was home made from a large safety pin and a buttonhook. Very ingenious. The thread used was almost always Sparton Microthread which was pre-waxed. Sparton yarn was also used for the cheeks of buzzers. (*see [spartonfly.dial.pipex.com](http://spartonfly.dial.pipex.com)*)\*. The preferred bobbin holder was made by Rite (*see [www.flyfield.com](http://www.flyfield.com)*). This had an open-ended spindle on which the spool was side loaded and secured with a screwed fitting: this served as a clutch for adjusting the tension of the thread. The tool featured a ceramic feed tube for the thread. Although some of the scissors cost in excess of £20, domestic Fiscar needlework models (*try Robert Sayles*) were quite adequate especially if the backs of the blades were ground down to reduce the thickness.

She had a preference for genetic hackles. Although these are an expensive initial buy, the length of the hackle was such that many flies could be tied from one plume. Hoffman feathers (now Whiting I believe) tend to have a soft stalk whereas Metz has a thicker, stiffer stalk.

Hooks used were mainly Sprite, made in the UK and also available from Steve Parton. These got reasonable reviews in the Dec. Trout Fisherman. I originally took up fly tying 40 years ago because shop bought flies were invariably tied on poorly tempered hooks. Times have changed. I have not come across a poor hook in this respect for many years.

A fly claimed to be successful in all conditions was demonstrated. A few fibres of brown marabou were tied in at the tail, followed by a couple of turns of hot orange fine cactus chenille. This was fronted by a short length brown marabou so that this initial construction covered about one half of the shank. The remainder of the shank was covered with a single layer of a strand of hot orange wool. This was then covered with a ginger hackle. A gold bead head was optional. This fly – the Ray's Red, is best fished on an intermediate line.

So there we have it. An interesting evening. Further info. from Wendy Gibson on 01773-761645 or [fliesbywendy@btinternet.com](mailto:fliesbywendy@btinternet.com).

\* in the course of reading the Steve Parton web site I found a link to [www.sexyloops.co.uk](http://www.sexyloops.co.uk) which would be of great interest to the casting fraternity.

DGJ  
24.11.05