

Lee Hooper fly tying - February 2023



The February meeting featured Lee Hooper from the Fly Dressing Guild where he is the competitions organiser. He comes from Warminster, which he described as near Stonehenge, which I suppose it is compared with 170 miles to Cambridge! I noted from his Facebook page that although he fished many of the prestigious Wessex lakes and rivers with some mighty fish to his net, he also visits the Midland reservoirs and hence well versed in many techniques.

The first thing I noticed was that he was using a modest vice. Then there was a lack of UV resin: he had a preference for a thin varnish, Brush Coat, from Veniards and Head Cement from Benecchi. Something I did not recognise were a pair of hackle pliers which featured a large finger loop. I think these were of American origin and made by Tyflyz and seem to get rave reviews (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br5OgOGseHo). He had several hook charts featuring different (although some unavailable) patterns of Grip hooks which extended well beyond those normally employed for trout flies but nevertheless food for thought (<https://griphooks.co.uk>). He did not seem keen on barbless hooks.



His philosophy was to construct simple effective flies which did not cause too much grief in the event of loss.

He started out with a simple pattern, unnamed, but which I thought bore a strong resemblance to a Carrot fly. I think all of his flies, on the night, were tied using UTC 70 denier flat thread. This particular pattern was tied on a size 12 Kamazan hook.

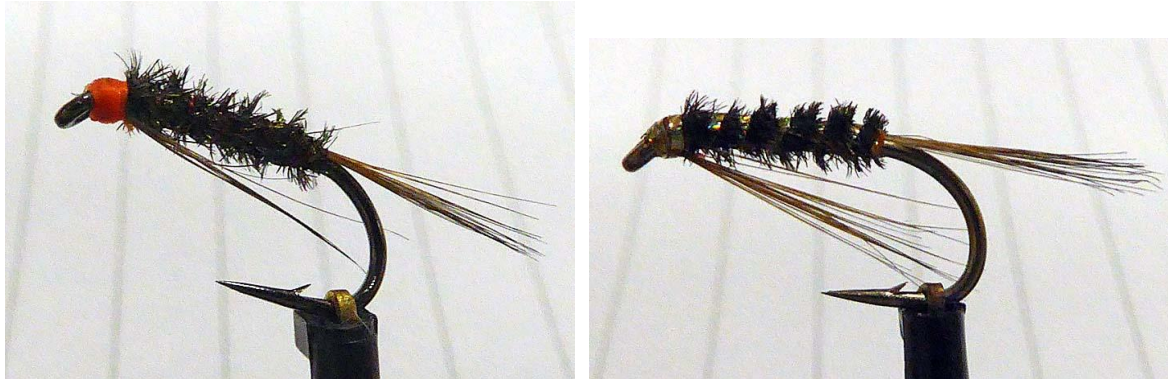


The rib was 1/40 Uni clear mylar lightly stretched to improve its strength. The body was composed of seals fur, 50% each of red/fiery brown, dubbed onto a single lightly waxed thread. I liked the way he achieved a perfect cone of fibres which allowed the build up of a tapered body with an inbuilt thorax. The fly was finished at the head with the aid of a whipping tool and soaking the end of the thread in cement thus avoiding the resin seeping into the seals fur.

Finally, the body was teased out using a strip of Velcro glued to a lolly stick (?) and the underbody trimmed to ensure that the fly sits in the surface film. I think Lee said that he soaked these flies in Gink prior to use to enhance and prolong floatability.

The next fly was a black version of a Diawl Bach. This was tied on a heavyweight size 12 hook. The materials employed were red silk, feather fibres from an Indian hen cape, red wire and a couple of strands of peacock herl. The tail was tied in first with an overall length comparable to that of the hook shank. The bib was then tied in but initially on top of the hook shank. The two stands of herl were then tied in together followed by the red rib. The bib was then bent back under the shank and tied off. A significant red head was then built up with thread pre-soaked in resin. A fly for sunny weather according to Lee.

The 3rd fly was essentially the same construction as above with the rib replaced with holographic tinsel but lacking the pronounced head.



The Cruncher, incorporating a silver head, was tied on a Grip wet fly 12 using black thread. The tail was constructed from black cock fibres. The body was made from very fine soft dubbing – I cannot recall the type but it resembled fine rabbit fur – creating a narrow body and a bulky thorax. A strip of silver Uni tinsel was drawn over both sides of the thorax and a couple of turns of hen hackle finished the fly. The head featured several turns of the silver tinsel. This fly was said to be excellent at Farmoor but I suppose it depends on the season. I do not think it would be effective at the moment reading reservoir reports on the www (February).

The Black and Peacock size 10. The body featured a fat Beetle-like body of 3 front hackle was made from a of the neck from a peacock. I these feathers have a blue surface is presented towards



pattern was tied on a wide gape short silver tinsel tag behind a twisted peacock herls. The feather removed from the back think, that unlike the photo, hue. Make sure that the shiny the front of the fly.

The Midas fly was invented so named because of a gold The body was a subject of stuff Lee was using was fiery brown, 20% orange the help of 3lb b.s clear was a B170 and the tying this fly is the presence of 3 set at either side of the “legs” are tied in point



of turns of orange dubbing at the hackle at the front but the main feature was a ring of gold Lite Brite dubbing. The body was Velcro'd and trimmed under the body to ensure it sat low in water. His technique of fishing the Midas was to fan cast leaving the fly on the water for no longer than 4 seconds before recasting.

by Paul Davison and was fibre dubbing at the head. some controversy but the allegedly composed of 60% and 20% red, secured with nylon ribbing. The hook silk was red. A feature of legs of pheasant tail fibres body. Note that these first. There were a couple

Finally, we had a demo of tying a Shuttlecock. The hook was a Kamazan 405 size 12. 4 or 5 CdC plumes were and tied in with just a few the tips of the fibres to hook shank. A smiggen of behind the CdC and the stripped peacock quill. He stripping the herl himself rubber in the belief that shop bought versions. He greasing the CdC but pockets trapped in the requires a stock of fresh which are, hopefully,



selected and folded in half turns. I think he trimmed match the length of the dubbing was tied in body finished with had a preference for with the aid of a pencil they are less brittle than was not an advocate for relied on the micro air herl. This approach flies to replace those taken.

I am obviously out of touch with some aspects of fly tying. I have been tying some back to front, always starting at the head whereas it is now clear I should start some patterns from the bend! I have never seen or heard of Tyflyz hackle pliers: likewise, the Midas fly was completely new to me. He used seals fur blended from 2 or 3 colours whereas one of our successful match anglers would use just one, even black!

If you attend a meeting and even learn just one thing, I think that is a bonus. I did rather well thanks to Lee!

Davey Jones 2023