



NEWSLETTER February 2020

Chairman: John New (039 681 3459) **Treasurer:** Stephen Brand (082 551 9010) **Liaison:** Pieter vd Merwe (083 543 7005)
Secretary and Records Clerk: Sean Tharratt (079 434 6168) **Scribe:** Arthur Cary (039 681 3274) **Member:** Neil Scott (083 265 6608)

Preparing to cast.

We have our normal Events Calendar as well as a number of reports on our recent outings and monthly meeting, so no space for too much blurb. Enjoy. Arthur

Events Calendar

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Venue</u> | <u>Time</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 10 th February | Committee meeting | Shelly Beach Ski Boat Club | 18h00 |
| 11 th February | Fly tying Workshop | Steve's home | 18h15 for 18h30 |
| 23 rd February | Salt outing | Trafalgar | 06h00 |
| 27 th February | Monthly meeting | Shelly Beach Ski Boat Club | 18h00 for 18h30 |
| 4 th March | Committee meeting | John's home | 18h00 |

Coming Events.

At last month's committee meeting, the calendar up to the beginning of April was sorted, as were the flies for the coming 12 months and these were sent out to members of SCFA during January.

The **committee meeting on the 10th is purely to sort out the prize winners for the year.** The club's competitive year runs from the beginning of February to the end of January, so make sure that your catches up to the end of January have been entered in the record books. Fish caught in February 2020 qualify for the 2020 - 2021 year.

The **fly tying workshop is being held at Steve's home on Tuesday 11th February (18h15 for 18h30)** to give the boys from the southern suburbs a chance to participate. We will be tying a freestyle Merkin Crab (colour of your choice) and a Bunze Hex Dun. (Without Neil's guidance, this one will be a challenge!) Members should have received the respective recipes by the time that you read this.

Hopefully the **saltwater outing to Trafalgar on the 23rd February** will entice more anglers and produce more fish than our last trip to this pristine area.

The **monthly meeting on 27th February will be at the Shelly Beach Ski Boat Club. As usual, the meeting will be followed by a braai and a natter. Be there and be part of the action.**

The **last committee meeting of the current year will be held at John's home on Wednesday 4th March.**

Past Events.

Outing to Houtson's Dam. Sunday 12th January. by Pieter vd Merwe.

All participants met at the Shell garage in Marburg at five in the morning and the convoy set off as planned to Houtson's dam in Nqabeni. Its about 60km to the dam and close to Harding.

On arriving Liam was the first one to cast a fly and within minutes the first Bass was hooked and released. Everyone else was setting up kickboats and tackle, when Piet got his first fish off the bank.

Due to space constraints in the vehicle Piet did not take up a kickboat and opted to fish from the bank, but only managed four little ones.

It was hot with very little wind, and if you had something that looked like Ballie John's "Go-To" fly you were in the catch register. *(This fly is on the list for the monthly competition. Ed)*

Every one scattered over the dam and there was plenty of space to fish, so no one had to get closer than five rod lengths from his fellow angler.



Catch records:

Ken 19 using a Red Setter, Hamill's Killer and David's Demon.

David was using Red Setter and Davids Demon catching 9 fish.

Stan using various Poppers got 6 and Sakkie 3 also on Popper.

Mitch who arrived at his own time hopped on Stan's kickboat and got himself 3 fish on a Foam dragon.

Arthur using a Flipper, Red Setter and John's "Go To" fly accounted for 14 fish.

Liam caught about 30 using a DDD and Papa Roach.

Liam, being Liam hopped into his wet suit after fishing and went to explore the dam by diving all along the bank.

There were lots of baby bass and he saw and captured on video a Carp of about 6kg.

Rob like the others also caught a load of fish. Somehow I failed to record the figure and fly.

John did the best using his "Go To" fly, a Nomad and a Flipper as well as Poppers. He stopped counting when he ran out of numbers.

There is a lovely braai / lapa at the dam and we made full use of it and discussed fishing stories and flies. We once again thank our farmers for letting us fish in their dams.

Salt outing to 'Tweni. Sunday 26th January. By Arthur Cary.

An early start by John and Arthur saw their lines in the water before 06h00, with Neil, Mitch and Steve arriving somewhat later. John and Neil fished the Grannies pool from the rocks while Arthur, Steve and Mitch felt more stable with solid sand beneath their feet.

Although the tide was going out and there was initially no wind, the heavy shore break ensured that anglers did not venture too far into the surf. The water had not been too badly affected by the filthy Umzimkulu River, although there was a fair amount of seaweed and debris floating around.

John was the first to score and using an Orange Ruffy, landed a shad which, with a bit of a stretch, would have made size. Changing first to an Orange and then a white Surf Puff he caught a Mooney and a small kingfish.

Arthur opted for a white Surf Puff, tied on a # 8 hook and caught two Moonies and two kingfish. The one kingy, later identified as a Big Eye, measured close to 12 inches and gave a good account of himself before being landed on the beach. Mitch also came to the party with a Mooney, taken on a pink and white Crazy Charlie. Neil and Steve did not really thrash the water to a foam and soon retired to one of the comfortable benches and proceeded to solve the problems of the world, before being joined by the other 3. Unfortunately, the kiosk was not open, so after a well earned cup of home-brew coffee we all headed home.

Monthly meeting. Thursday 30th January. Shelly Beach Ski Boat Club.

Arthur chaired the meeting, as John was not feeling his normal cheery self.

Present: 9 members. Down on our normal number, but apologies were received from John, Dick, Ken and David.

Visitors. Warren Booth and his son Connor from Umtentweni are recent arrivals from up north. They have fished fairly extensively in the Dullstroom area, but are new to salt water and bass fishing. We hope that you will join and become part of our merry group. We don't often catch many fish, but we certainly enjoy trying!! *(An application form has been received. Welcome to the fold. We trust that you will join in the many outings that are held for members. Ed)*

Flies of the Month for April:

Judged by Sakkie.

Freshwater: Marabou and Copper: John, Arthur, Sean, Sean, Neil.

Saltwater: Orange Ruffy: Neil John, Sean Arthur.

Dick kindly donated items to the club for sale. Jaco and Sean walked away with absolute bargains of a fly fishing jacket and Bill Hansford Steele's book "Fishing Flies for Africa" respectively. A set of brand new size 10 waders is still up for grabs. If you are interested, contact Arthur or a committee member.

Jaco reported that he had gone up to Tendele and fished the FFA trials in the Mooi River. He hooked, but could not land 3 browns. *(A good start Jaco, Keep it up and good luck in the future. Ed.)*



Steve gave Warren and Connor a very comprehensive resume of SCFA's activities. (*You obviously did a good job of persuading them that we are an active club and that they will certainly get their monies worth from their membership. Ed.*)

SCFA Sterkfontein trip. 3rd to 7th February 2020. By Dick Plaistowe

Participants: Neil Scott, Arthur Cary, Dick Plaistowe from SCFA, and Tony Sharples and Mike Birkett from the last outpost of the British Empire.

First and foremost our thanks to Neil for his generous invite, as always, for us to join him at Qwantani. Neil, we had a great time at this spectacular venue, and dare I say, we look forward to joining you again. Neil had spent the weekend at Qwantani with his family, Mike and Tony arrived early Monday morning from Howick with Mike's boat, and Arthur and Dick arrived early afternoon having had a leisurely five and a half hour drive including a stop at The Windmills for petrol and a coffee.

Forgive me for waxing lyrical, but I just love Sterfontein with its spectacular Eastern Free State Drakensberg scenery, and the ever changing views when cruising in a boat. It is undeniably a world class venue for us flyfishermen, or to just chill, or cruise the lake drinking, or taking photographs, or walking- or whatever. The chalets are well appointed, clean, well serviced and well equipped for our needs.

We all hit the water mid afternoon on Monday at a great spot close to Qwantani with high hopes, if not grand expectations, having read all the articles and been given plenty of personal advice on what and how to fish- dry fly fishing only, beetles, particularly purple, but also brown/tan/black, maybe an ant dry, maybe with a nymph dropper, light tippet 6X or 7X to fool the fish- a piece of old takkie. I should mention that Neil had jumped the gun and fished earlier in the day and caught his first fish, so no problem.

Monday afternoon came and went and not a fish was caught. Plenty of fish around, cruising past our flies but no takes.

Tuesday morning saw us travel to the top end of the dam to a great spot with fish visible again, and a light to moderate wind blowing.

Dick displayed bad technique by striking too hard on his 6 X tippet and lost a fish that he had delicately presented a purple beetle to, then hooked onto another fish immediately afterwards and again lost the fish by over-compensating and not maintaining sufficient tension. That was the last action for the day, as not one of us caught a fish.

Wednesday morning saw us travel to the eastern side of the dam near the secondary dam wall and fish the drop offs to the south. Same story I'm afraid, fish showing interest, but ducking off at the last moment. There was some excitement with some monster Barbel literally cavorting in the shore break- Arthur and Dick got smacked very quickly which was not surprising given the light tippets that were used. Guys, some advice, bring a 9 weight when you come here, rig it up with some 0 X tippet or stronger and a big fly, and keep it with you just in case you see a Barbel.

So, as I start writing this note on Wednesday after lunch, having had a sedating toot I might add, we have had four fishing sessions and the score is- fishermen 5, fish 1 caught by Neil before the rest of us even arrived. Every beetle variation has been tested, ants, a variety of hoppers, and droppers including GRHE's, flashback nymphs, Zaks, PTN's and similar, Damsels, Woolly Buggers- the list could go on.

At lunchtime the flytying guru's tied up some fancy black beetles which looked great, but didn't catch either.

The score at the end of Wednesday was unchanged from the previous day. Wednesday evening over a drink, we revised the tactics, basically bugger the purist dry fly approach and go for wet flies and, importantly, degrease and roughen the tippets to make sure they sink and don't spook the fish.

So, Thursday dawned and we hit the water. Much better. Tony caught a bass early on, Dick caught a yellow, and Mike caught two yellows- all on nymphs. Thursday afternoon saw Dick land a good fish on a small nymph. So the catch return was now 5 fishermen, 7 fishing sessions, 1 Bass, 5 smallmouth Yellowfish.

Neil and Arthur fished early Friday morning before we departed, to their credit, but no fish sadly.



The main learning lessons for me, and I'm no expert, were to fish long degraded and roughened tippets because the fish are definitely line shy, use 4 or 5 X tippet (Neil is going to disagree with me I think), make sure you've got a variety of beetle/hoppers varied sizes and colours from 8 to 14's, try the droppers and play around with the distance below the dry fly, and then if no luck go for wet flies, we used up to 18's.

The weather was kind to us for the most part, warm and sunny with some rain on Wednesday morning for a short while, light to moderate winds, and classic afternoon and early evening thunder storms, spectacular lightning over the mountains and water- fantastic.

Grub was great, special thanks to Arthur for the snacks, it's his job for life !!!!!

Last word is that we are blessed to have such a fabulous water relatively close to us, it's a must go to for me.

SCFA outing to Voights dam. Sunday 9th February. By Rob Nicholas.

John, Rob and Arthur were on the water by 06h30 with John's fly immediately creating some interest amongst the small bass near the overflow.

Weather was good sunny with a light SW wind which, as time passed increased to fresh.

Fish were plentiful, taking almost any fly - surface and sub-surface. Size ranged from 6 inches to 12 inches, with one pretty large one managing to evade both Rob and John i.e. Rob could not hold it with a 4 wt rod.

Mitch arrived at 09h30, blaming his lack of breakfast for the late arrival.

All caught many fish. Flies used included black and brown and orange Woolly Buggers, Chartreuse Crazy Charlie, Flipper, Woolly Worm. Popper and Red Setter were not successful.

After packing up at 11h30 we enjoyed a braai and drinks, Mitch excepted: he had to go home for lunch (*or breakfast. Ed*)

An enjoyable outing.

Fry, Fingerling and Stockie Stories.



Raffle tickets, for the draw at the prize-giving function are still available from Piet. R5.00 a throw. Make sure that you get a list, fill it and return it with the money before the end of February.



As mentioned above, we still have a pair of brand new, size 10, Snobee waders for sale. These were donated to the club by Dick and will be sold to the highest (or first) bidder.



Have you given any thought to volunteering to serve a term or two on the committee? If you have and came to a negative answer, give it another thought!!.

Last Cast.

This newsletter, thanks to all the fine contributions, is once again long enough, so it saves me from any further work. Hope to see you at fly tying, Trafalgar and the monthly meeting.

Cheers Arthur