

NATAL FLY DRESSERS SOCIETY

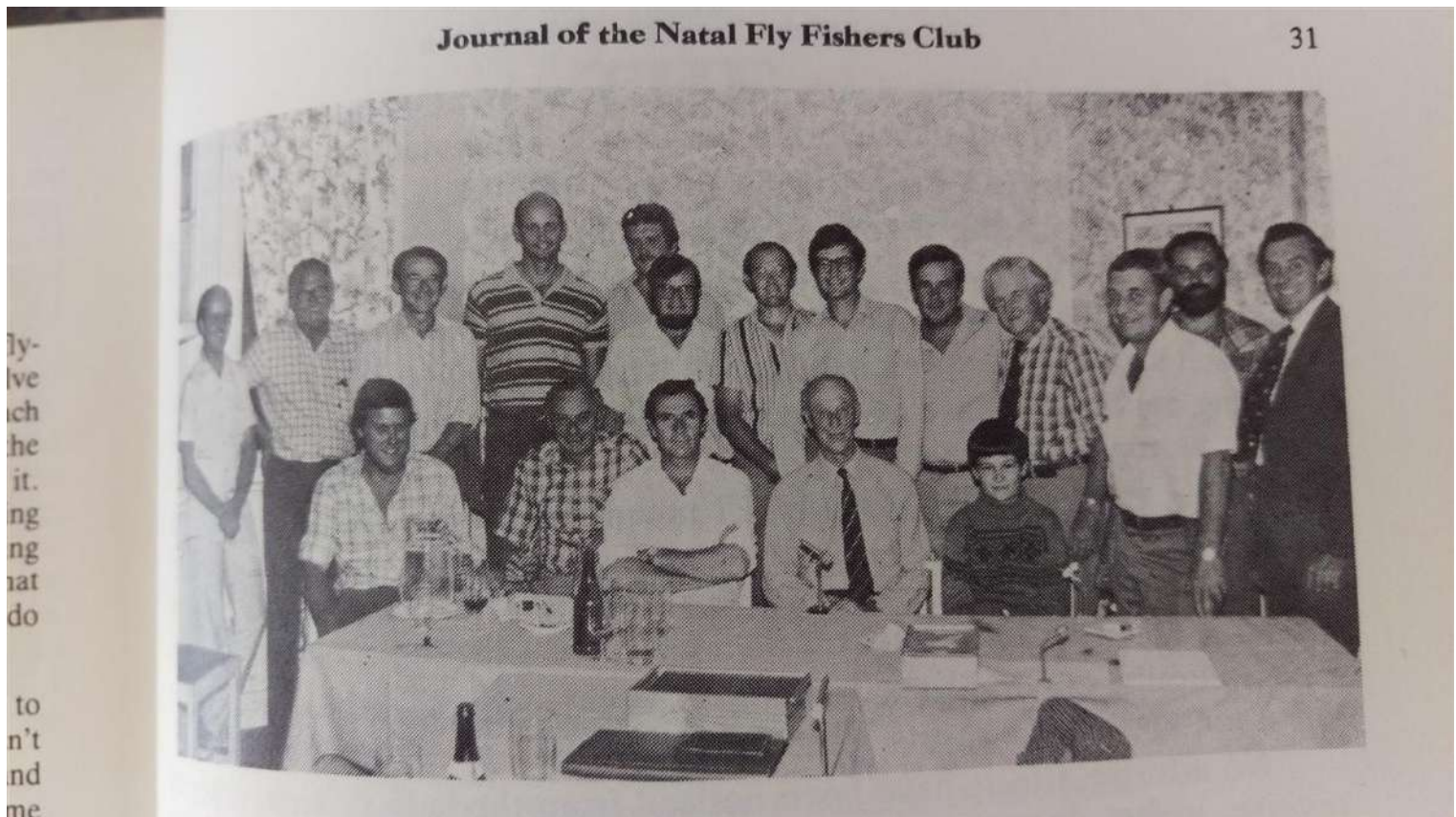
JAN KORRÛBEL

"...a series of fly tying classes presented in the early eighties at the Imperial Hotel in 'Maritzburg. These were the heydays of fly fishing. Africa's first, and at that stage, only, fly-shop had just opened in town, and there was a buzz. Classes were put together first in 1981 under the banner of the Natal Fly Fishers Club (founded 1972) and then in 1982 under the banner of the Natal Fly Dressers Society. "

(Andrew Fowler; <https://truttablog.com/2013/03/24/the-fmd/>.)

The inaugural meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Fly Dressers Society was held at the Imperial Hotel, Pietermaritzburg, on Wednesday 23rd September, 1981, at 6pm. In the Welcome address by Sean Larkan, mention was made that the idea for the Society had originated from Jack Blackman about a year previously, and that idea had resulted in the evening's meeting.

Dr. Neil Hodges was nominated, and duly elected, as Chairman of the first Committee; with other committee members Dr Tom Sutcliffe (President), Barry Lewitt (Secretary), Kevin Culverwell (Treasurer), Neil Maxwell (Editor), and Win Whitear, Hugh Huntley, John Robinson, Sean Larkan, Hamish Gerrard, Jack Blackman, Bill Duckworth and Chris Bateman filling General Committee Member positions.



**Natal Fly Dressers Society -
Inaugural Meeting, 23 September 1981**

(2)

PIETERMARITZBURG FLY DRESSERS SOCIETY

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I am interested in the art of fly dressing and wish to apply for membership of the Pietermaritzburg Fly Dressers Society. If my application is successful, I undertake to abide by the rules of the Society and decisions made by the elected Committee.

FULL NAME:.....THOMAS JAMES SUTCLIFFE.....
(Capital letters)

A Constitution had been drafted by Sean Larkan, and after lengthy discussion, the name of the Society (proposed by Dr. Sutcliffe) was changed to the NATAL FLY DRESSERS SOCIETY, and duly accepted by the meeting. After a further brief discussion, it was proposed that the membership fee (for the first year) would be R10-00 (p.a.) – accepted as cash, postal order or cheque! It was also decided at this meeting that membership of the Society be open to all race groups.

Eleven applications for membership were received on the night (fly dressing experience as requested) : Hugh Bailey Huntley (35 years), Thomas James Sutcliffe (20 years), Neil Hodges (5 years), William Calvert Duckworth (3 years), Sean Hector Wallace Larkan (9 months), Christopher John Hadley-Grave (1 year), Robert Mark Henderson Wilson (15 years), Winston Edward Whitear (1 year), Neil Edgar Maxwell (2 years), Hamish Innes Gerrard (12 years), and Philip Digby Braithwaite (3 years).

The following few years saw the membership ranks swell, some of whom are still members to this day, with a number of South African fly fishing and fly tying cognoscenti passing through the ranks at

some time or another.

Jack Blackman (30 years - 13/10/81)
H.A. (Tony) Biggs (various – 22/10/81)
Bill Sonnenberg (3 years – 02/11/81)
Roger Baert (10 years – 22/01/82)
James (Jim) Read (10 months – 10/11/82)
Barry Leonard Kent (20 years – 07/12/81)
Mark Glen Yelland (26/09/88)
Ilan Lax (4 months – 05/02/90)
Jeremy Paul Rochester (nil – 15/04/91)
Dean Riphagen (13 years – 02/06/92)
Terry Andrews (1 year – 02/06/92)
Shaun Jon Futter (nil – 08/02/93)

Pre-dating the inception of the Natal Fly Dressers Society, there was only sporadic mention of flies and fly tying in "The Creel", the official publication of the Natal Fly Fishers Club.

There were articles of a scientific nature; for example, describing the life cycle of insects that trout live on. "The Artificial Nymph (Part I)" in issue #7 of Summer 1973/1974, followed by Part II in issue #8 of Autumn 1974, had Tom Sutcliffe singing the praises of nymphing (as opposed to the old-school approach of large matukastyle flies on a fast-sinking line fished downstream ... oh the horror!)

Of interest, is Bill Duckworth's article "Dry Fly in The Dargle" of Autumn 1979 (vol.5, issue #5) – no points for guessing which fly he was writing about ... yes, the "Dry Dargle Deerhair" ... never heard of it? ... neither have I, but it was of course the now (in)famous D.D.D. that Tom Sutcliffe had tied for Bill using klipspringer hair, and later renamed as "Duckworth's Dargle Delight".

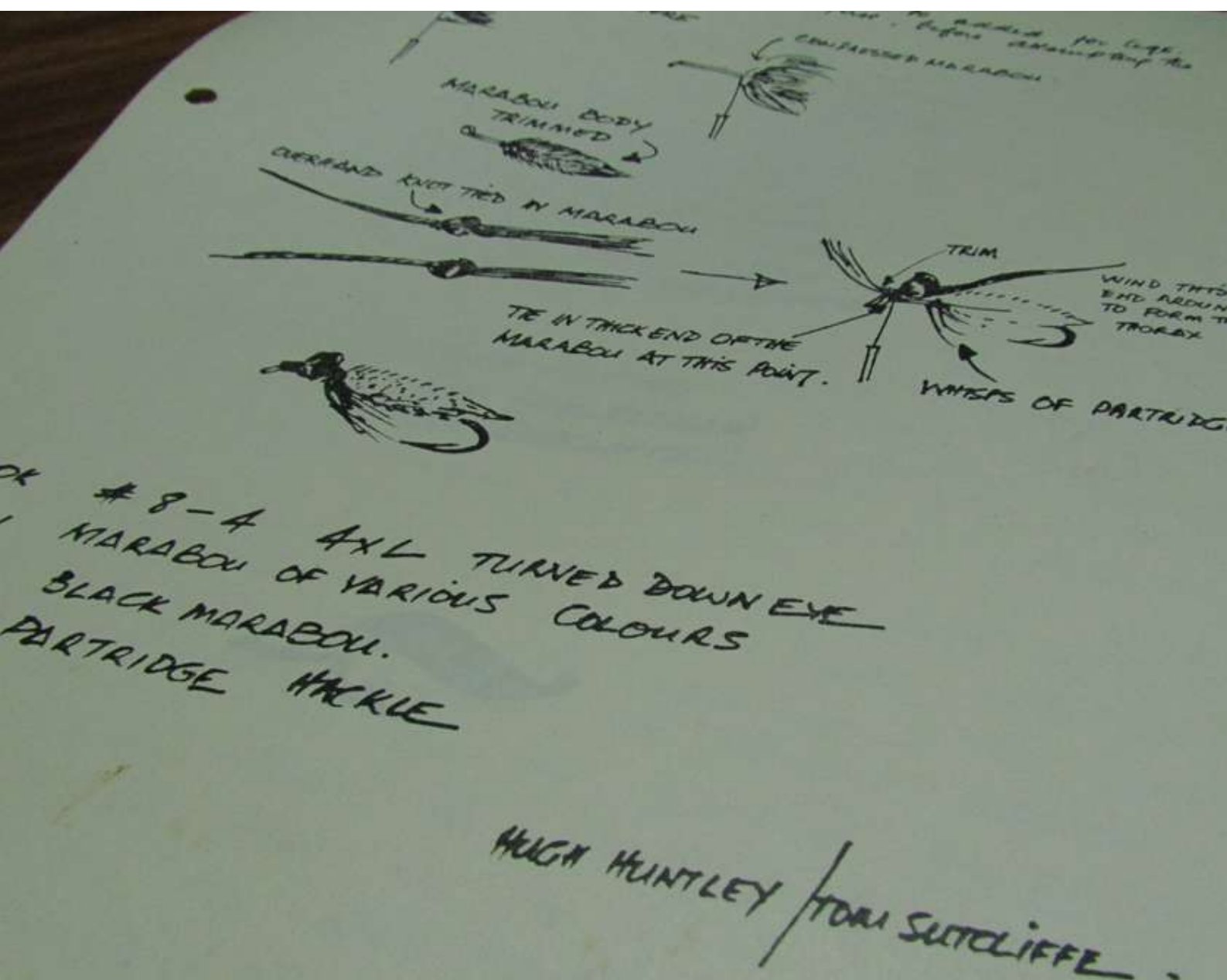
"Flytying is more than a hobby. It is an experience. So put R10,00 in your pocket, and come and join us at the Imp!"

- Tom Sutcliffe

Tom Sutcliffe's article "FlyTying and You" (Vol.5 #8, November 1982) makes

mention of the early fly tying lessons given by Hugh Huntly and himself helped by Don Bradshaw, which were held under the banner of the NFFC, and goes on to introduce the new body NFDS as taking over as the patron of the course.

Based in Pietermaritzburg, Society members came from around the greater Midlands, but also from Pinetown, Hillcrest and Durban, prompting the development of a Durban Branch of the NFDS. The minutes of the Committee meeting of April 1983 record Jack Blackman as standing down from the Committee because of the distance that he had to travel to attend the monthly meetings. From this, the seed for the Durban Branch of the NFDS was born, the inaugural meeting of which was held on 24 November 1983.





At a Committee meeting of the NFDS on 21 July 1993, it was proposed by the committee of the Durban Chapter that the Durban Branch run as an independent club.

Members were sent a form letter on 23 July 1993 on which they could indicate which club they wished to be a member of. By year end, the Durban Fly Tyers (DFT), as we know it today, was formalised with Kevin Cole as Chairman.

In summary, the NFDS is a group of like-minded enthusiasts with a passion for fly tying (and of course flyfishing).

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at the Victoria Country Club in Pietermaritzburg, and we invite anyone with even so much as a passing interest in fly tying to attend, regardless of skill level or experience.

Junior members, the very future of our sport, are especially welcome. Guest tyers are invited to showcase their specialist patterns (Peter Brigg is a well-known face on

the agenda), which run the range of salt water to fresh, small streams to dams, and everything else in between!

The monthly fly tying meets are generally tuned to the fishing season, with prevalent fly / flies for that period.

Each month the demonstration fly / flies will be notified to members, along with the recipe(s) so that members can prepare for the meeting. On the day, it's a case of bring your own vice, tools and thread, and materials where possible ... harder to find materials are either provided by the Club or shared from other members.

For more information, please contact NFDS Chair, Jan Korrubel

anglerfish.ffs@gmail.com

083 99 33 870

Direct Message via the NFDS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/nataflydressers/>