

# IS THERE ANYONE OUT THERE..?

In the last issue - Autumn 2002 - of Flydresser this writer bemoaned the passing of some of the finer arts and craft skills involved in the 'art' of dubbing.

The finer points which cause the most grief are particularly the use of too much dub on the thread, and that being closely followed by the reluctance of tyers in general to make or mix their own dubbings, it is after all, very easy to pick up packets of very adequate mixes without any of the fuss or hassle of creating something special to one's own needs. But the sheer delight at the notion of mixing a dub and then going on to create a winning pattern should weigh heavily in favour of the creative genius in most flyfishers!

Making a new mix is too simple a

process to ignore, or share, and after a little explanation perhaps a whole new raft of dubbings will be born.....

As with most other processes to do with fly-tying there are positively no rules set in stone, a prospect which should appeal to even the remotest creative instinct in our readership.

There are no special tools required to perform this simple task, but by the same token, those of us who are already hooked into their own recipes do have one or two tricks to share. It is possible to avoid shearing pelts and all the dusty, messy implications therein, by simply taking the contents of various bought, prepared packets and stirring them around to make the creation. At one time the

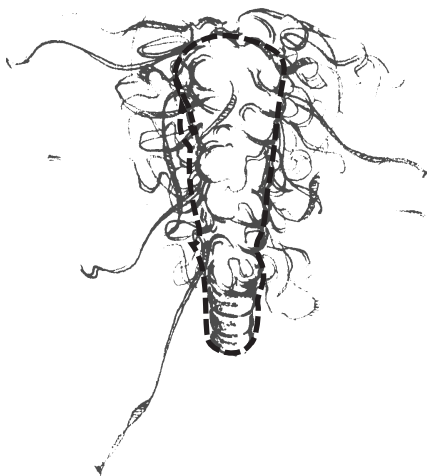
writer used to mix all dubbings dry, by tearing and pulling until a good even mix is attained. By anyone's standards it is, and was, a lengthy process to achieve an even mix, and even then after a deal of work there is no guarantee of a thorough mix, so any means to improve and speed up the process can be regarded as a benefit and ultimately a good saving in time.

Firstly then let's look at the alternative ways to mix, leaving out the aforementioned 'dry' method. In my house the current favourite is the 'pickle jar' method, and it is important to remember here that the more 'room' you give to the fur to mix, hence the pickle jar, the better that mix will end up, small quantities are not really an option, for the simple reason that it would be little short of lunacy to create the 'perfect' dub for a very particular purpose and pattern, and then run short mid season.....what could be worse.....?

So, with all the pickles duly eaten, and the consequences therein dealt with, we're ready to make a mix - start by making ready all the ingredients you wish to include, again with a 'no holds barred' policy it is possible to use several types of fur to create some very interesting colours and textures. The use of seal, rabbit, hare, and muskrat is by no means beyond

the realms of possibility.

Using a large jar - minimum capacity 1/2 litre - with a lid which can be secured, (there can be little worse than the contents spewing out across the kitchen floor,) HALF fill it with WARM water, and a tiny, even miniscule quantity of regular shampoo/conditioner - this breaks down any grease which might impair the facility of the mix. Using conditioner gives the mix a whole lot of bounce - it does what it says on the packet.



The sketch above was taken directly from an actual fly - the Tups Indispensable - tied by G E M Skues, it illustrates better than any other fly I know what it is we, as fly tyers are trying to achieve in terms of illusion and movement. The grey area fills in to no greater degree than needs to imply a fly body - the straggle of wisps on the periphery create the illusion of movement - perfick!!!