



BAMBOO JOURNAL

IBRA ONLINE NEWSLETTER



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ITALIAN BAMBOO RODMAKERS ASSOCIATION

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**Bamboo Journal n. 18 - July 2018**

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Front cover :	Franco Ferrari, Walter Rumi, Marco Boretti, Marzio Giglio. The master of bamboo rodmaking in Italy
Photo on page 2:	detail of Brunner's bamboo rod
Photo on page xx:	Our Silvano Sanna at the SIM Festival 2017

Finally, after a long time, here is the Bamboo Journal number 18. It's been more than a year since the last issue, for many reasons beyond the goodwill of those who make the appearance of the IBRA newsletter on the web possible. This time it has been more difficult than usual to put the magazine together while still keeping the technical quality and the interest of the readers at the level they have been used to since 2008.



At the beginning of this adventure there was a heap of experience gained in years and years of work by the many rod makers "hidden" and spread all over Italy and abroad; all they needed was this exceptional tool of communication and sharing to fill numerous articles of great technical interest.

Of course today it seems more difficult to find topics that match elements of objective interest and potential innovative value, but I refuse to believe there is nothing more to say about bamboo rodmaking. Proof of this is the great participation and interest shown by the attendees at the 2018 IBRA gathering. We discussed some new technical aspects and there was the participation of important guests: Bob (Robert W.) Summers, famous rod maker from Michigan, heir of a historical rodmaking tradition and Laurent Sainsot, president of the famous and prestigious Fario Club of Paris, founded by Charles Ritz in 1956 and includes some very famous European and American names among its members, including showbiz names... There is a report on the gathering in this issue with many pictures I hope you will find interesting and stimulating for an even greater participation to the 2019 IBRA gathering!

The gathering included the election of the new board and new president! Some new names and some old ones in the "path of tradition": IBRA is alive and well and has proven to be an international point of reference in bamboo rodmaking. The old and new names, together with some news in the article about the gathering as well as in the outgoing president, Alberto Poratelli's comment.

A word on the technical and narrative contributions to this issue. A little healthy theory on the action of rods and on the balance between rod and reel by Daniel Le Breton. Giovanni Nese describes a useful machine for splitting the strips and makes us smile (and reflect) with an amusing fishing story, but from the trout's point of view. Alberto Mussati returns to the BJ with one of his real-life stories and Giorgio Grondona with another of his famous "reflections", between technical aspects and the history of rodmaking. At the end the report on the November 2016 rodmaking course (the last one held in Sansepolcro) by Daniele Baldini. In the winter of 2017 we chose to hold a workshop on the various advanced techniques instead of the course and it drew a lot of interest and participation.

Then there is an article by Moreno Borriero, who was Bob Summer's official chaperon during his stay at the gathering and he tells us about his "close encounter" with the great rod maker.

At this point I can only wish all our Italian and foreign readers a good read and, as usual, the invitation to contact me with any suggestion or constructive critique. And, above all, to propose some articles. Contact me at: editor@rodmakers.it.

See you for the Bamboo Journal #19!

THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2018/2022

The general meeting of the IBRA members held on 12 May 2018 elected a new board of directors.

After four years Gabriele Gori returns as President and it will be an honour for me to work with him in managing our association.

The welcome confirmation of Silvano Sanna, our ambassador from Valli di Lanzo and herald of news with the inclusion of two thoroughbred horses: Mauro Moretti and Luca Marzi, worthy representatives of the 2014 course who will surely bring many new ideas to continue the IBRA "mission".

Thank you to Massimo Giuliani, Moreno Borriero and Davide Fiorani for their work on the outgoing board and good luck to the new board.

Alberto Poratelli



GABRIELE GORI

PRESIDENT

ALBERTO PORATELLI

VICE PRESIDENT



SILVANO SANNA

BOARD MEMBER



LUCA MARZI

BOARD MEMBER



MAURO MORETTI

BOARD MEMBER

in this issue we host the works of ...

Evangelista Felici in art ... Cico

Cancer, ascendant Cancer, moon in Cancer.

It is with these credentials that the artist was born in 1959 in Rome, opening his eyes on one of the most beautiful squares in the eternal city: Piazza Navona.

His artistic involvement is indeed inevitable: in the shade of three magnificent fountains, in fact, drawing, painting, music, acting and anything else, seem to form a boiling magma, alive and pulsating, that attracts and captures you. His studies which become more and more specific, together with his many experiences in the creative field, will soon lead him to the two activities which will be his "lifestyle", music and painting. He likes to ironically define himself as "piano clerk" or "brush labourer".

He has abandoned the vicious, frustrating cycle of shows, of agents and art merchants and lives in the splendid countryside of Tuscany where oak trees, poplars and cypresses surround his small studio where he continues to produce with the same passion and enthusiasm.

A wide collection of his paintings is dedicated to his other strong passion that has been part of who he is for almost forty years, flyfishing to which he dedicates every minute of his spare time. His most recent collection, 'Wild 'is in fact, inspired by his time spent on the waters of the Tiber and the Tail Water Tevere, where it is not difficult to find him in the water with his flyfishing rod observing, totally absorbed, curious and enchanted, the nature around him.



Autoritratto



IBRA RADUNO 2018

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by Maurizio Cardamone
photographs by Maurizio Cardamone, Alberto Azzoni e Alberto Poratelli



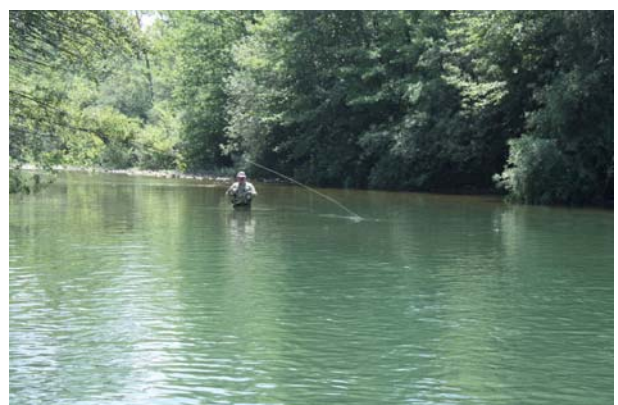
On Sunday 13 May the 14th edition of the IBRA Gathering closed. It was held in its usual location at Podere Violino, in Sansepolcro.

As usual the gathering started on the Friday, 11 May with the “bamboo only” fishing day on the wonderful Tail Water Alto Tevere, which has been hosting us for a long time. After years of drought, it rained abundantly, there was snow on the mountain, but above all, rain, lots of rain in our country, from north to south in winter and spring this year, so we were expecting high waters and not very clear water. This is what is happening to many streams in the Alps, but also in many in the Apennines.

But this part of the Tiber is a tail water and although the Montedoglio reservoir seems very full to those driving towards Sansepolcro on the E45, the flow downstream from the dam is reduced and we fish in low, clear water (careful of the severe drought of last summer).

The fishing day for everyone will surely be more generous than the ones I remember of previous years, at least listening to the tales during the “déjeuner sur l'herbe” and then at the dinner at the Podere Violino. The day ends for us with many trouts, some of decent size, but also graylings, with good activity on the surface in various parts of the river and without the disturbance of the thunderstorms which had been forecast

Some people could not join us (I will not name them for fear of forgetting someone...), but they were all mentioned and remembered because the gathering, besides being an institutional moment and one for technical comparisons, is without doubt, a chance to meet old friends at least once a year who share a great passion and to make new ones!





Our guests had a good time too. Indeed, as you probably now from the gathering invitations, this year we had two very interesting guests. The first was Robert W. (Bob) Summers, one of the last great personalities in rodmaking, heir of the school in Michigan that saw Paul Young, (for whom Summers worked for many years since a very young age) and Lyle Dickerson (a friend for many years) among the most famous.

And Laurent Sainsot, president of the International Fario Club of Paris. The club of Charles Ritz and Pierre Creuzevault.









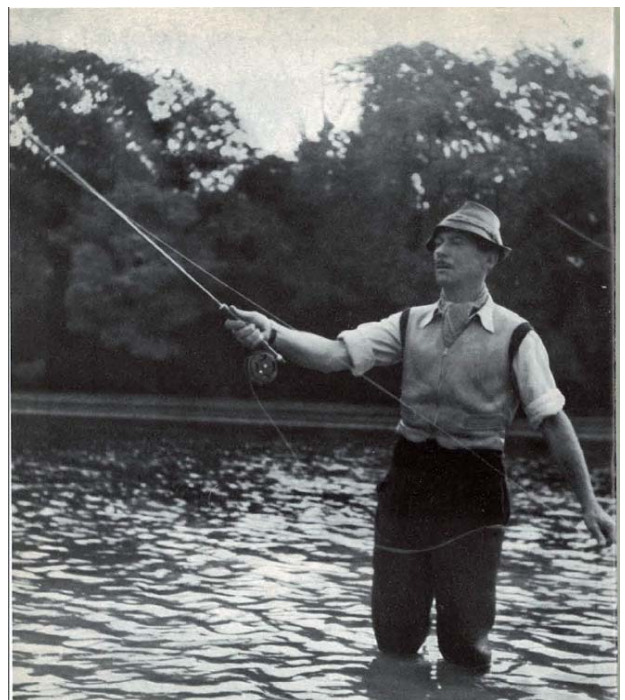
On Saturday the real “work” of the gathering started, opened by Alberto Poratelli, who officially introduced the guests. Both Summers and Sainsot were brought to the gathering thanks to a quick “triangulation” between MOG (who never ceases to surprise us with his knowledge of the history of bamboo rodmaking), Angelo Droetto (how far can this man go?) and Alberto Poratelli. The guests always represent a very important element to the success of the gathering and this year they were perfect. Bob (I consider him a friend now) is a friendly, humble man with an enviable vigour.

I quote the words prepared by Marco Orlando Giardina (MOG, who is also responsible for the interview I will mention shortly ...)for his introduction: *“Robert W. (Bob) Summers is one of the great living rodmakers. Like Carpenter his roots originated many years ago. Bob was the protégé of the legendary makers from Michigan, Paul Young and Lyle Dickerson. He worked in Young’s shop for eighteen years, moving from the one in Detroit to Traverse City in 1970 and he absorbed Young’s style and technique. His friendship with Lyle Dickerson was also useful. He would often visit him in his shop in Bellaire. Dickerson was not only a friend, but mostly a teacher and a stimulus to keep improving and Dickerson’s professionalism had a profound effect on Summers’ work. In time Summers became autonomous and started thinking about his own shop and his own mill. He started working on the design and construction of a mill, but then, was forced to buy the machine made by Morris Kushner. This was the start of a new path. Summers has produced a wide range of rods, all impeccable, with an average yearly production of about 50 rods. From the 5’6” to the 11’ rods, from #4 to #9 lines. His rods embrace the aesthetic suggestions of Young and Dickerson harmoniously and yet, rigorously. Bob Summers’ work is a real noble example for anyone wishing to embark in rodmaking”.*





Laurent Sainsot gave us a very interesting presentation of the history of his club and above all on Charles Ritz, who was the soul of the club for many years.





With his usual excitement and inspiration, Marzio Giglio told us about the latest developments he has been dedicated to in the last years: the Former Beam building technique.

He specifically mentioned the simplification of old techniques, but mostly about how this evolution has brought precision to a thousandth of an inch (his old obsession).

Davide Fiorani very professionally presented the bamboo ferrules based on the “Morse cone” that results in a finer profile of the rod at the ferrule.



Bernard Rigal presented the initiative that with some friends he is working on to create a school on rodmaking and a gathering which will be held for the first time this year in Bugeat, near Limoges, on 29 and 30 July.

The hall in Podere Violino has the usual exposition of rods and various equipment shown by the members present. Among these, there is a Summers rod from MOG's collection, to testify the building precision of this Master.

Bernard Rigal demonstrates how he makes his ferrules in carbon fibre and above all how he glues them to the bamboo in perfect alignment with the rod.

The day continues with pleasant discussions and casting: this year the weather was on our side and apart from an occasional cloud (and a few drops of rain) we were able to have fun outside on the lawn, in contrast to the previous years.



Saverio Pandolfi exhibit the milling at numerical control.

Is this a prototype, but will this be the future of rodmaking?



In the late afternoon we held the members' meeting at "closed doors", there was the election of the new board. There is a will to renovate and so some members withdrew (a big thanks to them for their work in the last four years) and so some new names are on the board. The elected are: Alberto Poratelli, Gabriele Gori, Silvano Sanna, Luca Marzi, Mauro Moretti. Gabriele Gori is voted president.

We wish the new board and president the best of luck.

The "gala" dinner is held in the spacious veranda.



During the dinner there is a long interview by MOG to Bob Summers. “Telegraphic” because at the last minute Marco can be there personally and so he was “virtually” present with an interview he had prepared for our guest.

Thanks to this Bob was able to tell us about his long and adventurous life as a rodmaker. Just think that he starting working in Paul Young’s shop afterschool at 14!!



The friendly discussions and testing of old and new rods continued on Sunday morning and Bob also participated with enthusiasm to the casting and he had many good words for everyone.

Many of the participants had to leave the gathering before the end, some even on the Saturday afternoon and so the group photos is missing a few people but you will recognise some of them in the photos of the previous days with even some well-known names that are often at our gatherings: apart from the aforementioned Bernard Rigal, you will see Philipp Sicher and Rolf Baginski (impossible to miss for his stature!!)

There is great anticipation for the drawing of the raffle tickets: this year the first prize was a beautiful rod made by two participants of the 2016 rodmaking class – Luca Marzi and Mauro Moretti. I didn't win it this year either! There were really lots of prizes and at the end we will all bring home fond memories of the 2018 IBRA Gathering. The fondest memory, and I am sure that everyone can agree, is the extraordinary friendship between people that have been meeting every year to share a common passion for 13 years!!

See you in 2019!





*Tail Water Tevere
"Gorgabuia"*

A Rodmaker and Gentleman of yesteryear



by Borriero Moreno

Every year at the IBRA gathering we have the pleasure to invite an important guest. A person who is significant in the world of Rodmaking. While talking to Gabriele Gori, Marco (MOG) Giardina thought of one of the last great rodmakers and it was Robert W. Summers – Bob!

It was January and during one of our Skype meetings, the IBRA President, Alberto Poratelli, informed us that our member and friend, Angelo Droetto, collector and expert of bamboo rods, would invite Bob as he had asked Bob to make him two rods and thus had his contact details, so he was the best person to convey the invitation to the 2018 gathering.

Angelo wrote the first email with the formal IBRA invitation explaining that I would take over for the practical details like dates, flights and “bureaucratic issues”. Bob answered enthusiastically after 48 hours that he was happy to attend and asked where and when!

For those who may not know him, Bob Summers was and still is a legend in Rodmaking. He has been making rods since 1957 when he started an after-school job in Paul H Young’s shop. At first, not with the intention of becoming a rodmaker but to get material for tying flies. Young and his wife, Martha Marie had what Americans call a Sport Shop, a shop that sold articles for sports. In the back they treated and tanned deer hides and Bob went there to buy material. One day he noticed a strange smell coming from the backroom – a smell of toffee and chocolate. Bob asked what it was and they took him to see the heat treatment of bamboo. He then started going to the shop after school and began with small jobs and having noticed his passion, they employed him as an apprentice when he finished school and then he became a fully-fledged Rodmaker.

But this is another story. I apologise for my digression. I would rather talk about my day spent with Bob and Marzio Giglio during the Bamboo Day.

At first, the idea was that Angelo would be his guide during the Bamboo Day, but due to a series of unfortunate circumstances Angelo could not be present. So I had the honour to guide him and Marzio Giglio asked if he could join us. During the correspondence I asked Bob if he wished to fish with us to know his wader and boot sizes. He answered and asked for an 8' or 8' 6" rod for a 5 line. I asked my colleagues and we found a solution. The morning of the Bamboo Day in the excitement of the organisation, with Marzio disappearing and Bob running away, I ended up guiding him with my rods. I had a 7' 6" for a 3/4 line, but aware of the generosity of bamboo I mounted a weight forward 5 line, considering it's the line that is the most used in the USA. Finally, Marzio arrived and we changed into our fishing clothes. We were the last ones on the river and in fact, my favourite spot was occupied. I then chose an easy spot, even from a physical point of view. Marzio asked for a spot easy to wade in and I chose the pool at Pole 14.

When we arrived, two small trouts were rising. I told Bob to try and it was then that I realised he is an excellent angler. He handled and cast the rod like a professional. I was a little worried that my light rod would be difficult for him, but having a parabolic action he immediately adapted it to make precise and delicate casts. In the meantime, Marzio was taking photographs and Bernard was trying to direct him downstream.

Unfortunately, there was not much action for the rest of the morning and Bob does not like fishing with a nymph unless necessary. We tried unsuccessfully. Between casts he told me his story, from his first experiences with Young and Martha Marie and how, with Paul's death, he had the whole company, or at least the rodmaking part, on his shoulders. How it was he who started to take care of the aesthetics because Young was more interested in the action. I asked him what he thought of the rodmakers at the gathering and he answered that he was really surprised by the technical and aesthetic quality. He was amazed by Alberto Poratelli's bamboo ferrules. He had never seen anything like them and he studied them carefully and photographed them. During those hours spent together on the river, I must say I discovered a gentleman like no other. His gentle and calm manner of talking introduced me to a serene man who has lived a full life without regrets.



I never heard him curse as we flyfishermen do when we execute a wrong cast or catch a fly in the trees. Between casts we spoke about rodmaking, technique, gluing ferrules, using the lathe, the fact that he doesn't use a computer or programmes for his designs and much more. I was afraid that such a great fisherman would criticize the action of my rod or its finishings, but all he had were words of praise. I was delighted.

In the meantime, the trouts had started rising and Marzio, who was 15 metres behind us would shout now and again: here's another one!! Bob too had caught and released some. At one o'clock we all met for the now famous picnic in the parking of Briglia Due where IBRA had prepared a snack with finocchiona, prosciutto, pecorino cheese, bread, wine and the unmissable Vin Santo and Cantucci. A moment to chat about our morning. In the afternoon Marzio left us to prepare his presentation for the next day. With Alberto he had to choose the photos to use among the thousands he has on his mobile phone! Marzio is precious and unique!! Among other things he is a great fisherman and very cultured. He even explained to us why the mountains in the distance are blue!

Despite the threat of rain, I took Bob to the high part of the TWT where luckily I found a magnificent spot! The water was crystal clear and we could see the grayling rising. Bob settled into the best position to catch his first grayling of the afternoon. He was as excited as a little boy with a new toy. I gave him space and fished downstream and took photos. Bob caught two or three nice ones. All in all, I think he had a whale of a time. Even the weather was merciful with us!

At about 5pm, tired but satisfied we went back to Podere Violino to rest. Bob was a little confused and couldn't tell which day it was after travelling for almost 70 hours without sleep. Absolutely understandable! I must say though that he is in excellent shape. When I was crossing the river, I grabbed his arm. He has the muscles of a young man. He told me he does a lot of work on his land, cutting trees and maintaining it. A dream place on the banks of a river!



I think all the participants to the Gathering enjoyed his presence. A humble man, without delusions of grandeur and extremely kind. A very welcome guest. It was an honour for me to spend an entire day on the river with this gentleman of yesteryear.





*Tail Water Tevere
"Palo 14"*



The life of a trout ...

by Giovanni Nese

Are thoughts formed in the head of a trout?
Thoughts are tied to a choice, I make a choice
and execute an action. I eat the fly or refuse it.
Why do I refuse the fly? Because of the condi-
tions in which it is presented to me, they are
different from those I have already seen, which I
know and now they are telling me there is
danger. If one of the conditions is different from
usual must I escape? Refuse, hide, freeze?



*When I was small, I'm a male, no one has ever
explained it to me but I know I'm a male, I was
not taught to be a male, I was born like this, the
only thing I did was run away to hide, to escape.
If I am still alive it means it has always worked. I
have always used this strategy. Even now that I
am an adult and I feel strange stimuli in my
stomach and crazy ideas are born in my head.*

*These are things I don't understand but they tell
me to eat a lot, to be more daring than usual to
eat. I must take risks. I don't understand the
reason; I must eat everything that passes in front
of me. I do it continuously. I grow. I feel that the
space has become smaller and the pool is smaller.
The other fish also look grown and they seem to
occupy more space, my space. I have chased all
the ones around me, I got rid of siblings and
friends "you steal my space and my food!" Now
the pool is all mine. I have identified my spots: the
resting spot, the eating spot, the sleeping spot,
the spot of the angry water.*

They are all in the pool, it took me a while to recognise them, now I find them every time and I know what position to take: if I rest and the river water is clear I must stay the space of two mouths from the bottom, the tip of the tail half a tail from the bottom, no effort is needed, I let the water flow passed by sides and then I move the tip of my tail when I feel the flow pushing against it. I open my mouth and push outwards with my slightly opened gills, the water must go upwards. I can stay in full light, or light and dark in this position, without effort, without feeling breathless, without my heart telling enough, stop, change place. But I get hungry. I get more and more hungry and in this place there is nothing to eat. Something passes but it's too little. The good place to eat is near the rock, where the water runs fast there is a lot of food. Good food. But the water runs and it's difficult to say there. I can stay a little while, the time to fill my stomach and then I go back to resting. When I was small I couldn't stay there, the water was too fast, it would take me away and I had to stay on the bottom to avoid the stones. Now I can stay there, but it's difficult.

I have seen angry waters twice this year. I was hungry the first time, I was afraid and I stayed under the rock for two lights. Sand and pebbles were falling everywhere, it had started well, it was easy to feed, there was food all over, no one was running away or hiding, then the water came from above. I had seen it already but this time it lasted a long time. The water became dark, black, sand and stones started falling. But there was no food. I stayed there in the dark. The next day hunger kept me company. It was not a long and bad hunger but even when the water became clear again I could not find food for many lights. The second time I was less afraid and I went round to the places in the shallow water, where I used to go when I was small, but now I don't go there because the water is too clear, my back sticks out of the water. Everything was dark but I was hungry and there was a lot of food. To rest I would go back to the rock where the sand wasn't falling.

«It gets worse and worse here. » The road seems longer and I don't understand why. Time slows down and roads get longer, it must be a reason similar to relativity, the faster you try to go and less the "c" limit is reachable. It looks like Achilles following the tortoise. Perhaps it's because there are more roads with a 50kmh speed limit and I have no money to invest in fines, it means no fishing.

«I must stop distorting the fact that I am aging with classical culture». Next time I must remember to leave half an hour earlier. To tell the truth, I must also stop wearing all these ornaments, I look like a medieval knight, all I need is a horse, but with all this weight I feel like a donkey carrying it around. "Squire! Free me from this load". When I was young, I used to go fishing in shorts and trainers and I was in the water until night and then go home. If I did that now my knees would disarticulate before getting wet and then it would take a pontoon to get me out of the river.

«I'm ready, let's go! » The temperature has decreased, there should be the hatches and emergers in movement. As soon as I get to the water I decide what to mount. The Cellere emerger to start with and then one of mine once I see what is flying. If nothing is moving I will mount a big ant. Perhaps a bee. A four-wheel drive Bee. Do they still make them? I haven't seen one for a long time. I can't see any bees either. I don't know if fish still eat them. But if a fish eats a live bee does it get stung?



Phew ... I've arrived.

Slowly, the first pool is a good one. I can see it from here. So ... level? Normal, the rock is half out. I must cast a fatwa against all those who move my little stone men that I use to compare the levels of the water. Those idiots could use them too instead of using them to study ballistics. Fortunately, my memory is still good and I remember the levels otherwise I would need to send a ghillie to measure it with a tape measure...

«so, if this is the level the trout is either hunting here or it is there ».

It is there! It is still in the resting position. What do I do? Do I wait for it to move to the dining room or do I cast an attractor fly?

Fly it is!

I attach a big black bug, not too big because it's not the time for cockroaches and black beetles but a medium-sized brown grasshopper will do.

Grasshopper, grasshopper, here it is!

It's an impressionistic grasshopper but I don't have any others, perhaps this winter I will make some to exhibit, but then I know I will leave them in the boxes, if they are too pretty I don't use them, if they have been given to me, I don't use them, I am full of flies that have never been used.

5 metre leader and ... 16/100 tip! Always the same one.

«Damn knots! But has no one come up with an intelligent way of resolving this problem? »

«Yes, the "noble English"! » says my Alverman.

«You're kidding, aren't you? »

«No! They make the ghillies tie their knots! »

«I knew you were kidding, only a "noble Englishman" would make a subordinate tie his knots. »

«Lowly manual work to be done by the alcoholic and ignorant suburbans »

I wonder who scratches the "noble Englishman's" less noble itches. I do not ask the Alverman this question, he would answer with another silly comment. I leave him there in the middle of the trees, but I now he will find me soon, I have never been able to lose him.

I have tied the knot!

I go towards the water and dart behind a large rock. I look like a leper full of bells around my ankles while I descend with 5 or 6 trinkets that knock against each other and make a noise. I must stay low or it will see me and hide. I know where it hides. It went there the last time. The noise is not a big problem; the flowing water covers it.

One, two, three, five metres of line out.

«I must remember to tell Alberto that only a "noble Englishman", in hiding, would let his reel croak while he pulls the line out. »

«the "noble Englishmen" are not hidden. They love an open challenge with the fish, face to face. »

It's he again, but hadn't I left him among the trees?

«The "English trout" must be a particular species, just like my mother-in-law. »

I had never compared my mother-in-law to a trout. What sentence will they give me if a hit her on the head with a priest? I could make a deal with her husband and he could testify that I did it out of the catch and release area. Then we'd go fishing together.

I let the line follow the current, with the leader we're almost at 10 metres. I keep an eye on the grasshopper, it would not be the first time a small trout eats the fly and I cast it into the pool upstream.

I snap the line to detach it from the surface and I cast! The grasshopper takes off and then touches the water with a splash ... on the right of the trout, a little back and near the bank; in a grasshopper position but a little stupid. It has taken me three years of work to fish with this technique and the casts in the first half hour should be filmed. Then I fish like a boy. With less reasoning and more heart. But I'm happy all the same.

I'm getting hungry. I've been hungry for at least half a light and there is no food in sight, I know this is not the place and I can't see any in the current either, where it should be, it's early, it's hot and the mayflies are not moving from the bottom. A little while longer and then I move and start hunting.

Splash!

Food in the right ventral fin direction. An earthling that took a wrong measurement.

«Got it! »

«Got it! »

«Shit! shit! shit! What's happening? Panic! No panic, panic!

Let me run away quickly. It hurts, shit, pool, rock, protection, danger, escape, paaanic. Effort, I can't breathe, my heart is bursting. Escape, run away!

I can't take it anymore! I'm dying! Fear, panic, fear, blood! »

It's a brookie! They must have eaten the trout that was there before. Come here little one, I'll free you. Slowly, slowly or you'll get hurt. There you go! You are free again, thank you!

We have started well: first cast, first fish caught, first fish free. It shouldn't have suffered much. It swam away very quickly and he too took shelter in the trout's pool under the rock. When I return I'm sure I'll find him in the small current eating.

What the hell happened? I ate a grasshopper and almost died of fear, that animal was about to drag me out but then he did not eat me. It wasn't a heron, I recognise them and they do not hunt in my area. If they do come, I see them and hide in the deep water. It was pulling me from my mouth, the grasshopper had a thorn and I couldn't spit it out. I must be careful when I eat grasshoppers, I must make sure they don't have thorns. The animal looks like those who pass here sometimes but they make a noise and as soon as I see them I escape to the deep water, then I see them throw me food but it is strange food that makes a noise, that moves in a strange way, I have never trusted it; I tried once but got a tear. I was scared and I never tasted it again. Now when I hear them I escape to the pool until everything goes back to being quiet. I did not hear this one and he did not use strange food. The grasshopper fell there and I caught it, where did I go wrong?



Ok Giovanni move from here. Let's go see if they've eaten the old one under the bridge. This brookie must have had some thoughts to put in order and he will be more careful when he looks at grasshoppers before eating them.



"Martin Pescatore"



di Giovanni Nese

STRIP SPLITTER

Just a few lines to describe the photos.

The wooden base is optional. I have one because I didn't know where to put the unusable piece of wood: too hard and too heavy. What is needed is a good vice to anchor the equipment to the table.



All this was made with a “ratatouille”, pieces of iron recovered around the workshop.

Make sure the iron has a thin ogive shaped cut, it is a copy of Garrison’s screwdriver, and that it fits in a cut of the anvil. There is no reason to determine an exact diameter, more than 4mm are enough; it is worth it to use good steel, because it works under the point load and it could bend if it is too thin.

A sharp anvil facilitates the penetration and reduces the possibility of lateral spreading of the crack.

The lever arm must be long enough to apply good pressure without effort.

Make an eyelet in the supporting point of the splitter shaft with the lever arms.

The device with the spring is to split measured strips. The shape is tied to the necessity to put a loaded spring, you do not need a large spring, but if it is the support is more stable.



This is not a particularly useful tool.

The measurements are “as you wish” I took the photos with a tape measure as reference.

Then in the construction let your fantasy loose, a liberty splitter or a Rococo one would be interesting... the attention in the working of the strip is the same as the attention given to the traditional splitting: tempered strip for a few days. If you use the Hayashida tempering method, you will have maximum efficiency in the splitting.

It’s called Silvano!





"Brown Trout"



Daniel Le Breton

Daniel Le Breton is a retired mechanical engineer. He has been in touch with Scott fly rods since 1981 (friend of its past founder, Harry Wilson, discussing from time to time with Scott's current President and Chief rod designer, Jim Bartschi). This relationship turned on his passion for the physics of the fly cast and rod design. He lives in the west suburbs of Paris today, and he used to fish in Jura near the Swiss frontier and in Normandy when he was living there. Today he fish mostly in Alsace. He has already contributed to the Bamboo Journal, in 20015 and 2012.

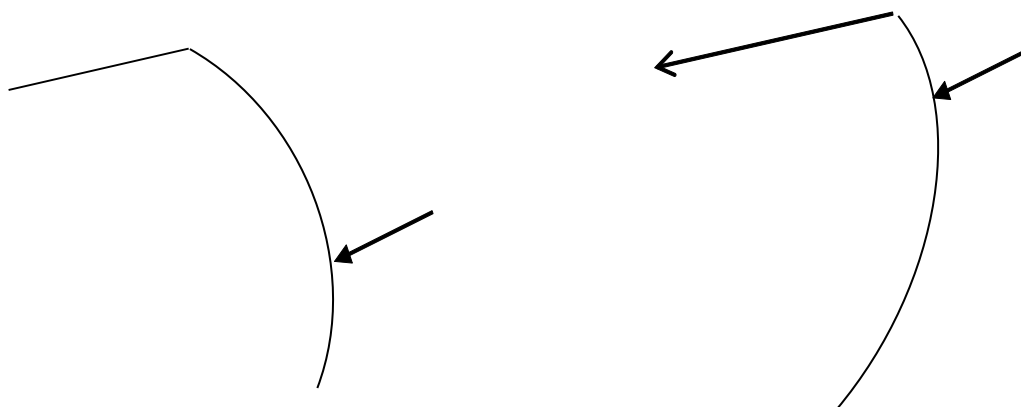
WAVE LINEAR ACTION

by Daniel Le Breton

Those who have read Garrison's book noticed a small chapter devoted to rod action, where there is a mention about a whip analogy with a fly rod. Along Garrison quotation, the action of a whip was seen as a cornerstone for understanding waves in fly rods. Mention is made about a "constant speed" of energy as it goes from the handgrasp to the tip, to be considered as an expression of "wave linear action".

It is possible to make a bridge between a beam and a string, but it means that both medium have close mechanical characteristics, which is not the case for a rod and a line. There are some shortcuts in this approach, like the "constant speed" of a flexural wave as it travels along the rod shaft. In fact, the speed of a flexural wave depends on the dimension of the section it travels across, so as the wave progresses towards the tip, its velocity decreases since the rod becomes thinner. Second important point, in a solid beam there is a "dispersion" of waves: they spread over and do not keep their original shape, as what you can see in a string under tension.

However people can perceive waves during a cast, due to the shape of the rod. It can come from a point of local maximum bending in a rod which has been nearly shocked by a strong and short impulse from the caster, or by the pull angle of the line on the tip.



Generally speaking you can get both, it all depends on you casting (the way you translate and rotate the rod). The “shock” wave climbs along the shaft and it spreads over due to dispersion, the other one can move from tip to butt to tip during the cast, it is more visible if the bending is significant and comes from the relative pull angle and the amount of force applied by the line to the rod.

Flexural waves velocity depend on the input (a rotation in a given time), on material characteristics (speed of sound), and on the geometry of section. Waves go up and down along the shaft and describe typical bendforms depending on the match between the input and the natural frequencies of the rod. The specificity of the section is described by:

$$\text{Radius of giration} = \sqrt{(a d^4) / (c d^2))}$$

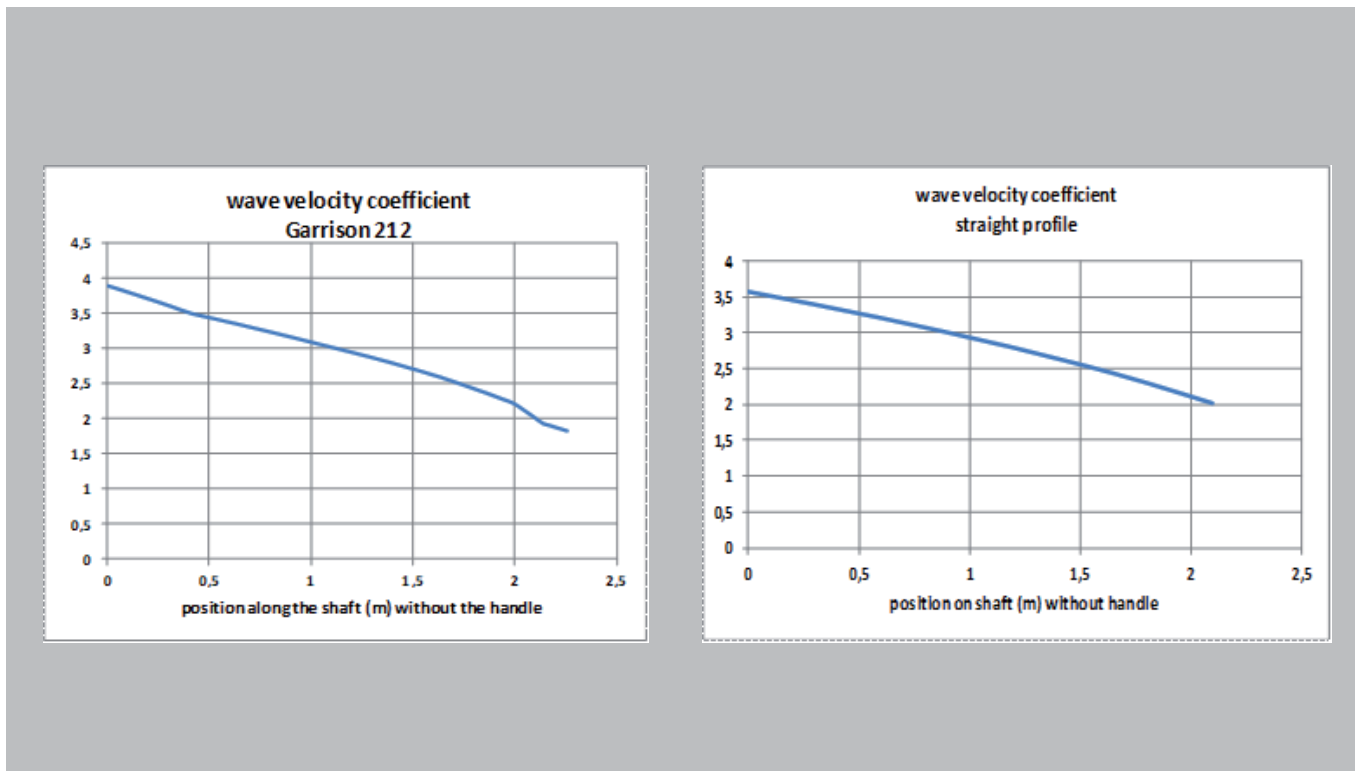
In this formula for the section of a solid rod, $a = 5/48\sqrt{3}$ and $c = 3/2\sqrt{3}$, and d is the dimension in between flats (hexagonal section). The ratio is the one of the section stiffness with the area of the section. When you simplify the expression, you find:

$$\text{Radius of giration} = d * \sqrt{(a) / (c))}$$

What is important to know is that the wave velocity depends on square root of the radius of gyration. A constant velocity along the shaft means that the shaft is a simple beam of uniform section. If you imagine that the velocity decreases linearly along the shaft, it means that the profile of the beam is a quadratic polynomial, in other words, the rod profile is a parabola (see Powell rods). The question is: is this an expression of a wave linear action? Garrison was linking the word parabola to the stress curve of a uniform beam (for which wave speed remains constant). In summary:

- Parabolic stress curve = uniform beam (stick) = constant wave speed
- Wave speed decreases linearly along the shaft = parabolic profile for a solid rod (see Powell rods)

You may be amazed to know that most modern rods exhibit the same type of linear decreasing of the wave speed along the shaft, and their stress curve are rather untypical, same for their profile, to which you cannot give a particular name. Garrison spoke of a “progressive” action for his rods, so let’s have a look at the wave speed profile (left graphic). Well, quite linear but nothing making it easy to characterize.



The graphic on the right corresponds to a cane rod of straight taper, and in this case the velocity curve is a section of parabola. To get a perfectly straight line one needs a parabolic taper (not a parabolic stress curve). Incidentally, you can get a perfectly straight velocity profile with a hollow rod of straight profile (consider synthetic rods). At the end of the day we can ask ourselves if all this stuff is so much important for design. I do not have a clear answer for that question.



"Wild Trout"

ROD & REEL BALANCE

di Daniel Le Breton

This could be a bit of red herring but let's have a look at the issue. This topic has already been discussed during the early years of rod building, and different points of view existed for both single-handed and double-handed rods. Today, it appears that the subject is a consideration for competition: SH accuracy and DH distance events. For fishing, there would appear to be limited interest, if none at all, but might be of interest for some people.

Single hand (SH) rods: I could not find any explanation of why there must be a precise balance pattern in literature; it is merely for "good feeling".

- The best reel is the lightest. Amongst advocates, we find fishermen like V. Marinaro, C. Ritz, and F. M. Halford.
- The rule of the thumb is to take a reel having one to one and a half times the weight of the rod. I could not find the name of the original author of this rule. I do not know when it appeared in a book but it comes from the cane era.
- There is an "ideal" balance point with the reel in place, which should be above the top of the handle by a few inches. There are a handful of aficionados which can be identified in literature, some using math to explain their view (at least two). There is no unanimity about the number of inches, but comparison show that this is not far from Letcher Lambuth rule (past cane rod maker, author of "The angler's workshop"): the "zone of comfort" of the handle is halfway between the balance point (reel attached) and the reel axis. Again, this was related to cane rods (1940).

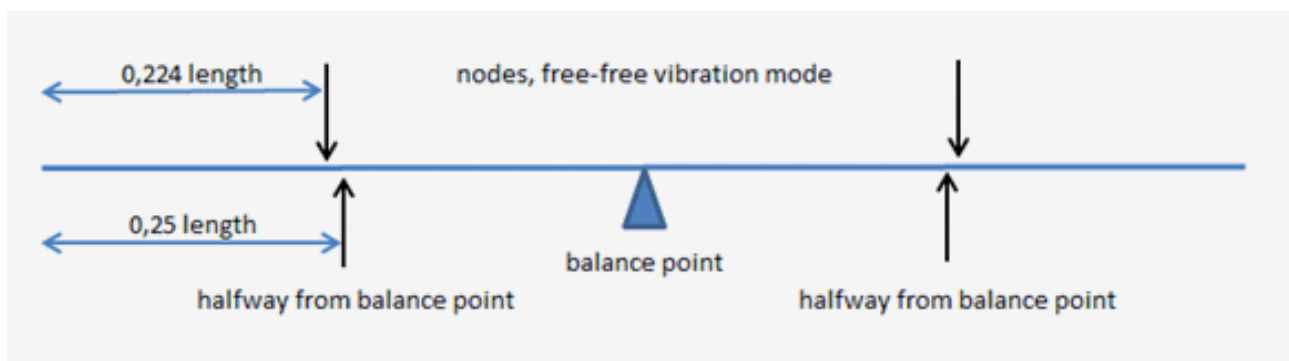
- There is a modern version of this concept on the web (<http://flyfishohio.com>), with an article from J.D. Cornwall. The balance point should be located at the forefinger level for a thumb on the top grip. The author mentions some disadvantages for a lack of balance, like wrist fatigue, lack of precision and distance due to bad casting tempo. If the balance point is higher, then you feel the rod as being “tip heavy”, and “butt heavy” if the balance point is too low. The tuning method involves using lead core trolling line in the backing.

Double hand (DH) rods: I could not find anything mentioned in literature. My library about salmon rods is small, but there is something on the web:

- Today, Bloke fly rods (<http://www.bloke-rods.co.uk/pdfs/trebuchet-benefits.pdf>) use a counterweight system (named trebuchet) in the lower butt of the rod, which is justified by the comfort provided when using rods of similar frequencies for various reels (weight). By comparison to SH rods, the “salmon” reels weigh about the same weight to that of the corresponding DH rod, whilst the situation is different for SH rods: reels are nearly twice (and sometimes more) as heavy as their corresponding SH rods.
- There is also an interesting article from a reel maker, Tim Pantzlaff, on his Speyco web site (<http://flyrodbalancing.blogspot.com>). The balance point is your upper hand and you tune your reel weight to achieve it, so it is caster specific, depending on where the upper hand is. Justification is fatigue again, the upper hand is the casting fulcrum and the lower weight helps with casting the rod. Backing length and size is used to match the weight of the reel.
- I could not find a recommendation to move one’s hands if the “balance fit” is not right.

We shall concentrate on SH rods there but DH ones are also fascinating in terms of casting mechanism and vibration frequencies.

The first problem to look at is the hidden mechanism lying behind these recommendations. I guess there is a vibration node issue caused by this: if you consider a beam of uniform thickness, its balance point without a reel is just in the middle of that beam. A beam of uniform thickness has a free-free vibration mode with two nodes, each of them being nearly halfway between the balance point and the nearest end of the beam (it is not 0.25 times the length of the beam, but 0.224). So talking about “halfway from the balance point” may have something to do with vibration nodes.

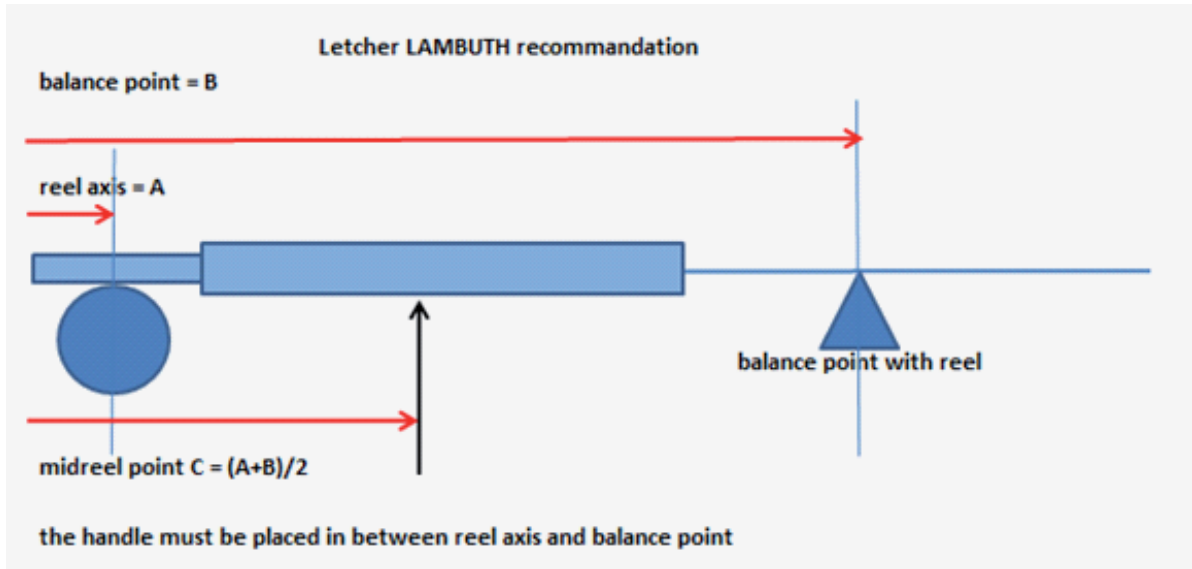


This vibration mode is the one a rod would use to unload if it was not constrained by the caster's grip on the handle, so this is typical of DH rods, which are difficult to grip as if they were clamped, but can take place for SH rods also as one relaxes his grip. This is why I asked myself if Lambuth et al. were unconsciously speaking of vibration nodes. For a SH rod it is logical to hold the rod right on the butt node; it avoids any unloading effect from the rod in the caster's hand since the rod tends to rotate around its nodes. The concept can be extended to DH rods to minimize the effect on the caster's grip, by placing the node in between the hands, but where exactly, the question remains open.



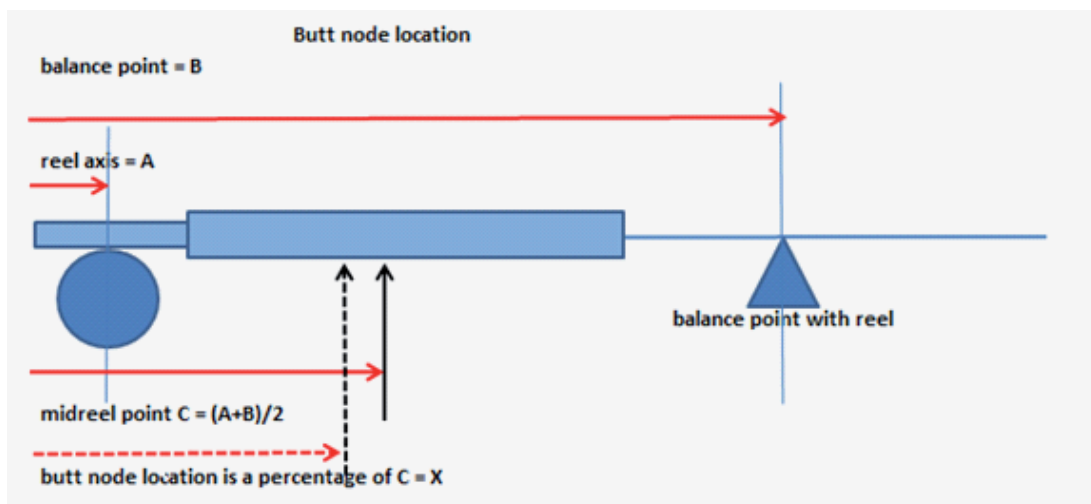
You can imagine that if the butt node was at the place illustrated above, it could unease the caster because the rod would try to rotate his casting arm. Having the node under the hand minimizes this inconvenience.

Let's start from Letcher Lambuth analysis of the problem: you have a rod, a reel with the line you expect to use wound on the reel. What you have to do (as a rod builder) is to place the handle at the right location. You then have to look for the balance point of the outfit with the reel and line, and the axis of the reel. You should place the handle just in between these two points, to a point I call the "midreel", just to avoid repeating a long expression every time:



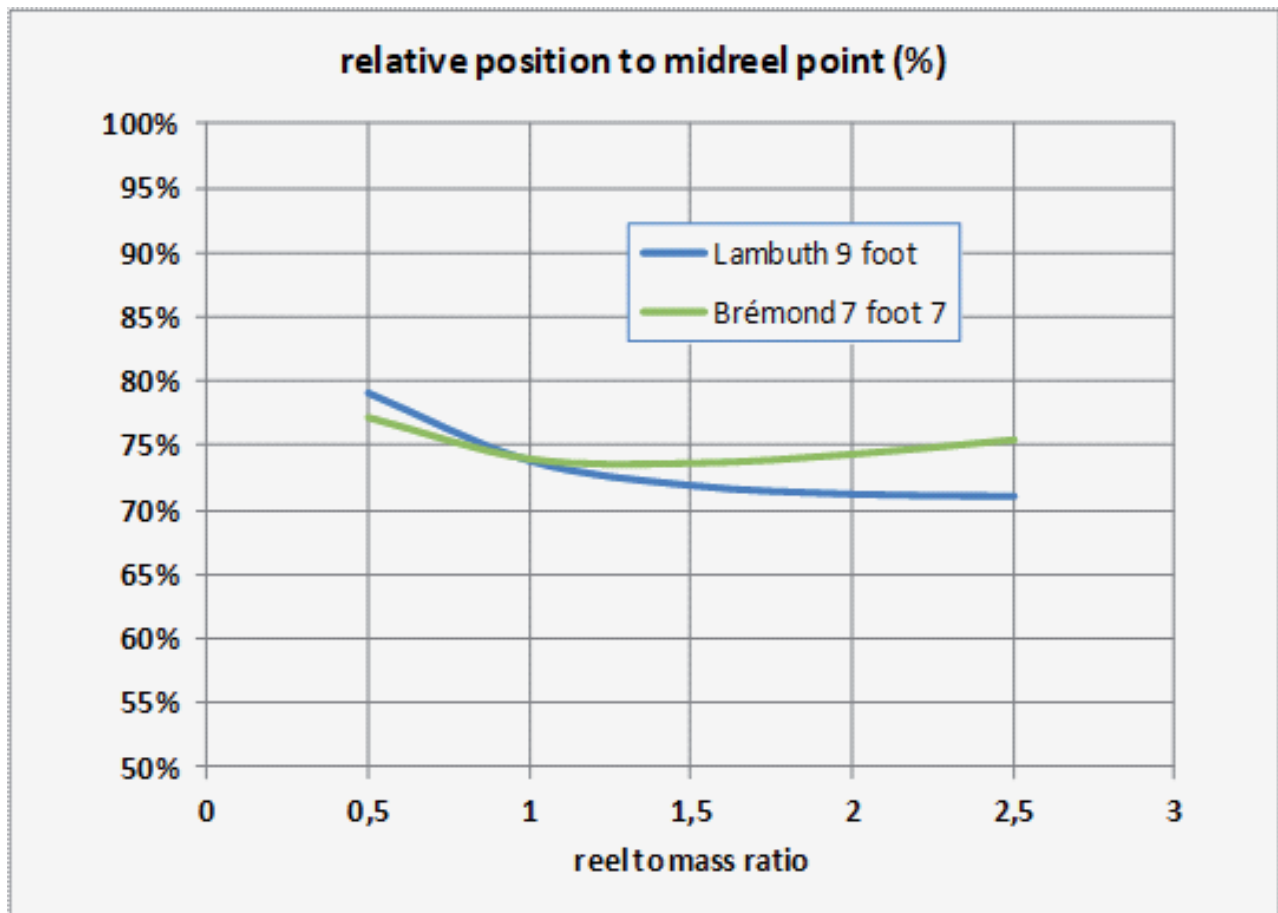
I took the data corresponding to his 9 foot rod and the point in the center of the "comfort zone", in the middle of the handle is about 20 cm from the butt end (check done with the photo he published in his book). I used a simulation program to find out where the butt node is with the reel in place (all information on reel and rod is available in the book), and I found 13.5 cm from butt end. Interestingly, the reel/rod mass ratio is 1.63, just above the usual (mysterious) recommendation.

But if we have a rod, a reel and a line, we cannot choose the place of the handle, the only left flexibility is to try choosing a reel with a suitable weight. Now the question is to guess where the vibration node in the butt of a cane rod is, as the rod vibrates on its first mode without being constrained.

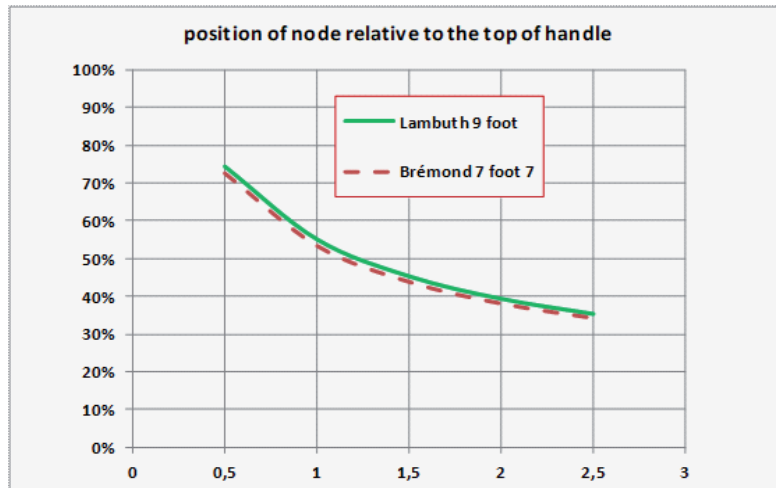


It is indeed possible to give a rule of the thumb which avoids trying to test directly where the node is. Locating the balance point with reel attached is easy, and so is the midreel point. We shall take distances from butt and consider the relative distance of the node to the midreel point (C): if we find that $X = 90\% C$, then the node is slightly below the midreel point in the above example.

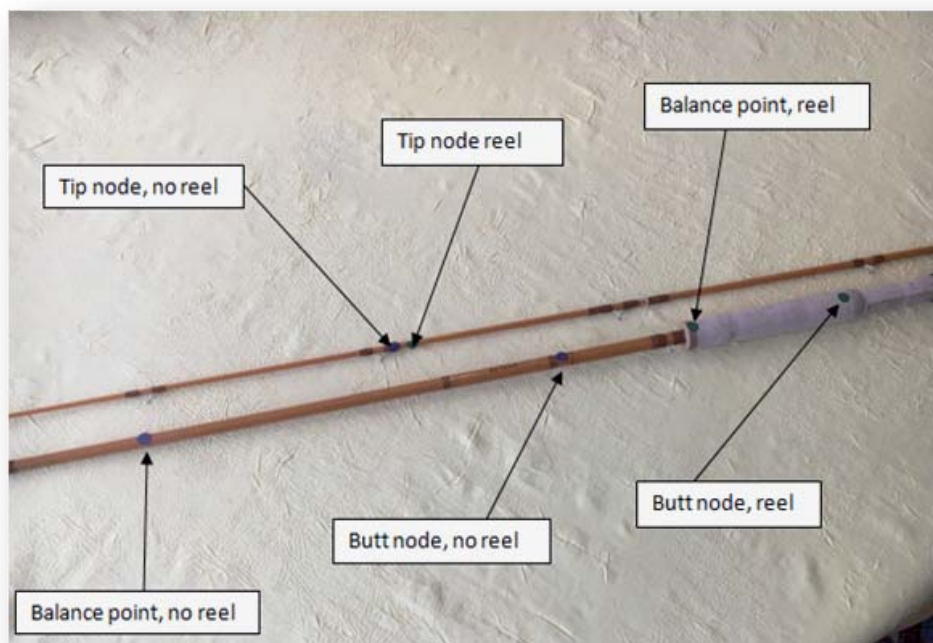
In the following graphic I compare the relative position of the butt vibration node of Letcher Lambuth's 9 foot rod with a modern rod, a 7 foot 6 hollow cane rod (Bourrasque, Daniel Brémont). They are quite different, the long Lambuth rod is pretty slow (112 cpm or 1,87 Hz), whilst the short rod from Brémont is fast (173 cpm or 2,88 Hz). The long rod is a #4 along my standards, and the short rod is a #5.



We can find the butt node at approximately 70% to 75% of the distance between the midreel point and the butt end for these cane rods. This is variable from rod to rod, and changes with material (e.g. for graphite, it is about 100%) but it helps to quickly estimate the place of the node. I found lower values for a flat solid straight design (a little bit more than 60%). This variation in percentage is likely due to the hollowing effect and the steepness of the rod profile. It is also interesting to look at the place of the node relative to the handle (which is different for rods of such a different length):



There are more than 40 years in between these rods, but it is amazing to see the similarity. With current reels and rods in the 1.5 to 2 range of mass ratio, the node is close to the reel without any line outside. When you load the rod with line, the node moves slightly upwards (a couple of inches approximately), because mass is moving from the reel to the tip top of the rod. For a SH rod, the hand is sufficiently large to cover the node displacement on the handle, which tends to be low on modern rods, as shown below (61 grams 7'1/2 glass rod fished with a 129 grams reel, line included). The nodes locations were got from a practical experiment:



If you want to test the node concept, change the position of your hand on the handle, from reel to top, and find the most comfortable one, then compare to the estimated node location (75% of midreel position from butt for a cane rod), if you can place your hand on it: it is nearly impossible for my small glass rod, I have to put my hand next to the reel, but maybe this is the position you also adopted for your small cane rod.



"Grayling"

I saw how a flyfishing bamboo rod is born

by Alberto Mussati

I am certainly running out of information on this topic while on the other hand there is an abundance of feelings which spin, multiply, they get mixed and sometimes they evaporate to reshape with more determination.

All this thanks to a friend who miraculously, I repeat miraculously, I was able to not idealise. He says the merit is his, I say the merit is mine.

We have very little in common in our vision of things and sometimes I contest him with a firmness that scares me.

He has his feet on the ground and I am a dreamer, I float on air. I detest his convictions, I consider them an "attack" on my evanescent nature, which is also imaginative, creative and abounding in wonder; I consider him a "good terrorist" when he pushes me towards reality.

I can fall in love with a dream without considering at all the prospective of it even partially coming true.

I adore a dream because it is perfect in its essence, it's complete and as William Shakespeare said "... a dream and its imaginary representation needs nothing else, because a dream IS ..."

And he brings me back to earth in a garage, his garage.

The light is dim and there is a silence as heavy as lead. The things I see are confused in soft reflections, behind discreet shadows. The objects I notice seem to want to hide their definite shapes, their contours, their nature, increasing the mystery. At first the apparent confusion makes me uneasy. I need attention and curiosity and the air is stuffy, almost suspended as if it too is waiting for an explanation, comments and words that will give no certainty.

Above my head, on a support attached to the ceiling like a hidden nook there are "a series of attempts" (that is what Giovanni calls his trials with bamboo). It's a sort of "Green Zone", a safe place that makes one reflect.

To me Giovanni's attempt to plan chaos is feeble and unsuccessful, but for him it is surely something else.



I come out of my state because his words are creating noise and his hands are waving with various objects. My shoes step on something soft, I look down and I'm stepping on sawdust. I'm proud of my intuition and quick-thinking, but truthfully, I had not guessed where that sawdust had come from (this is a weak point with dreamers: every perception is always complete and must not be analysed, for us it is not necessary).

I hazard some questions, I'm banal and childish. He manages to not make me notice.

I see things, I see different-sized jars, I notice a small plane, a tiny lathe on the workbench, clips, tweezers, elastics and some round discs, which I later discover are cork.

I look at everything suspiciously, I feel I'm disturbing just by looking and I don't understand anything. So I try to bluff to reduce my uneasiness, I show interest by I continue to understand nothing.

I light a cigarette and the light goes even dimmer. He notices my nervousness and repeats some things. I remain nervous. I always seem to be behind on such profound, new topics.

And why am I here? My whole life has been haunted by this question. Instead of answering, I preferred to follow my feelings and increase my curiosity by cultivating stubbornness, strengthening my consolidated fragility.

Soon bamboo would tickle my emotions, but I was not aware of this yet.

He places a small stone in my careful hands and calls it agate.

I already knew what an agate stone was, illuminated by a spotlight in a jeweller's window, but I could not imagine how it could have originated from there and what its purpose was in that context was still unclear.

I ask him for a break and we go outside, we enter the living room; his mother Francesca comes towards me and smiles and it is easy to capture the lightness of a mother's smile.

She offers me a coffee and I see she is curious to hear me speak. I don't hesitate, the uneasiness "in the unknown cathedral" (that is what I call Giovanni's garage) disappears and I feel well for a while. I don't want to go back in the "cathedral", at least not for now, so I carry on talking to his mother, the words defend me, protect me; he understands and leaves me be for the rest of the day. Then I look at the clock and it's time to go home, I kiss and say goodbye to his mother and I don't metabolise the feeling that I would be back countless times.

I was discovering something; "damn curiosity" I told myself and repeated it on the way home, "damn curiosity".

To understand the reason for my "love" for bamboo fishing rods, I must first explain why and how my passion for flyfishing started.

From 2004 for about 7 years I worked for a Polish company.

I had different tasks: maintenance control, time and method analyses of the productive cycle, the selection of qualified personnel, employee training, the control of the incoming raw materials, the technical and commercial development of the product.

The free days were Saturday afternoons and Sundays, which I dedicated to sleeping as much as I could and to discovering the historical aspects of the town where I lived, Nawojowa and then the marvellous city of Krakow.

The river that flows in that area is the Dunajec and it is a river with a large flow and rich in fish. I wasn't a trout fisherman, I would become one later and thanks to Poland. One Sunday afternoon I was walking across a large bridge which lead to the centre of the town.



On the left bank of the river a fisherman in the water to his knees had a strange rod in his hand which he moved harmoniously back and forth.

He was strange, I was curious, he was good, he was coordinated and I didn't understand. Above his head a "coloured line", bright orange, waving, shaping an embroidery in the air; later they explained that the "coloured line" was called a "fly line" and that "embroidery" in the air was called a "loop", which was caused by a back cast and a forward cast.

The next day I asked Agnese, who was my interpreter in the company, to take me to a fishing shop after work. Later I learnt that the owner was called Zibj.

He was a man in his forties, short and slim.

Short, blonde hair, small hazel eyes and a smile that took up most of his face rather shamelessly.

The shop was very small and old, old floors, old walls, old counter, old, opaque window.

The things on sale were everywhere, spread chaotically, the lighting was insufficient. Agnese tried to explain what I had seen on the river, he listened carefully and smiled.

He came round from behind the counter, went to a wooden rack and said in Polish "these are the flyfishing rods and I have some catalogues of rods that I do not keep because they are too expensive, but we can order them; if you want I can choose the right rod for you".

"Damn curiosity..."

I bought that rod, a line, a reel and Zibj chose and smiled; then I turned and on my right there was a small glass cabinet with coloured "things" I didn't know. I only noticed a small hook under these small things

Zibj said “sucha mucha...mokra mucha”.

And Agnese “they are dry flies and wet flies”.

And I “what are they for?”.

And Zibj smiled with subtle cheekiness and uttered “for catching trout”

Agnese was smiling too and I was shrinking with embarrassment.

Zibj chose the flies, like all the rest, there was no other logical alternative.

He then put them in order of colour and hook size in a small cardboard box and asked me “kawa?”

I didn't answer and Agnese: “he asked if you want a coffee”.

“Yes, please” I answered, but it was strange, I could not hear the noise of the words and my eyes were in those small boxes, looking, discovering and reflecting as much as I could.

The visit to Zibj's shop ended with his invitation while I was paying to go fishing the next Saturday.



I said yes, I went out the shop with Agnese and I tried to explain to her that I had not understood much; she just answered with a smile.

I took her home, thanked her and she said “we'll go back when you want”. I went back to the hotel, to my room and immediately open the small boxes and looked ... I looked. I was alone and perhaps because of this I felt braver.

I instantly loved this type of fishing. It was the so-called “love at first sight” or better Goethe’s “elective affinities” and it would last so long that it does not want to stop even now.

But what was missing? It’s easy, the knowledge of entomology was missing, the skill to “read the water” was missing and lastly the skill to know and understand the miracle of physics enclosed in a few grams of a fishing rod was missing.

Here Giovanni was therapeutic for me. Many people have confused me, they have sold me half-truths, creating anxiety and a tension of incompleteness in me.

But when I met him, slowly but without anxiety, I understood that I could understand beyond my age, beyond my absurd search for perfection ... beyond everything.

I started frequenting him, going often to his house and anxiety would overwhelm me during the trip there and then only his mother Francesca, with her marvellous smile, would tranquillise me.

Instead he was “kindly strict”, he has always contested my emotions because they are not three-dimensional and thus do not fit in one of his diagrams, yet he listened to me.

Today I still think that I was a strange “emotional test” for Giovanni.

He only wants impressions from me and when I hold one of his rods, he knows that after countless good or bad casts, I can give him something that cannot be traced three-dimensionally, he knows it and he accepts me because he understands that my physics and my dynamic are different from his technical elaborations.

And it is from here that I would like to start my path that is summarised with simplicity in the unconditional love that I have for flyfishing rods and to be more simple for the love that suffocates me every time I hold a bamboo rod.

I don’t accept criticisms and I don’t want praises, it’s my thing. When I speak about it with other people what strokes me is a sensation which is light, perhaps rascal, captivating, precise, almost inexistent, but pressing that I project, I don’t know how, in the eyes of the others. They say I’m a good talker, in reality what comes from the heart can only generate pieces to share.

And that is enough for me.

After the hall, in Giovanni’s house, on the left there is the kitchen and naturally, Francesca and straight ahead there is a room with the same confusion there is in the garage. Confusion is endemic in Giovanni, but fortunately it is not contagious and this is comforting news, at least for me.

One Saturday, in May, I remember, I was at Giovanni’s house and he was explaining the difference between DT lines and WF lines according to the AFTMA chart. He talked, I wrote and understood little.

Then he said “show me how you cast, I’ll get you a rod”.

He walks into that room and comes out with a not very long bamboo rod.

“It’s a 2-piece 7’, suitable for your height, then he inserts the section, gets a reel, fixes it and threads the lines through the guides.”

“It’s a DT 4, suitable for this rod”

I didn’t know what to say so I uttered the first words that rolled from my lips.

“It’s very nice, really nice”.

And he “it’s very fast, the fishing rod is only a useful tool, nothing more”.

The first ideological contrasts that continue today, first differences, first “jabs”, forgetting that he was the instructor and I was the student.

We go outside and I tell him “I don’t know how to cast”.

And he “so what did you do in the water in Poland?”

I get irritated and I don’t answer. We go towards the lawn.

It’s ridiculous but I was trembling like the first day at school.

And he says to me “I’ll do a couple of casts and you watch the line”.

He casts and that embroidery appears in the air; my eyes follow it and my heart is glued to it too. There is the memory of Poland.

The bamboo rod bent and sliced the air, the line whistled sweetly and the only uneasiness I felt was caused by the naturalness of Giovanni’s movements.

“Now you try a cast and don’t force it, it doesn’t help”.

I take it and I look at it and the black writing on the butt peak my curiosity.

He says “Come... don’t waste time”.

I cast the line forward and then my first “tragicomedy” starts, I load the line in an uncertain and not very “clean” back cast and then I try another front cast and it lacks push, progression, it lacks everything.

In that moment I was on the stage of a theatre padded by the silence of the audience, in some cough and I was about to utter the first words of the script.

But the words are stuck in my throat and my memory is elsewhere.

A minute of silence and the curtain closes like my debut.

“There is no axis, you twisted your wrist and your forearm was blocked and naturally the push moment was insufficient and lastly in the back cast you should have waited for the line to extend completely”.

“Have you forgotten something Giovanni?” I answered before wallowing in the oblivion of my ignorance.

“I’m smoking a cigarette, in the meantime you cast and I’ll watch you”.

“We must start with the axis” he told me seriously and I took the bamboo 7’ again and looking at it I smiled.

“It’s beautiful” I said.

And he “Yes, but it’s only a useful tool”.

I was not in a good mood on the way home.



The Dunajec River



"Rainbow Trout"

Reflections ... from the dunce's desk *...the future of the little orphans?*



I'm sure stubbornness is the main quality (many confuse it with a defect) universally attributed to a donkey, immediately after its difficulty to learn is emphasised, so much that when you want to underline someone's ignorance you do not hesitate to call them a donkey and for this I "thank you" on behalf of this category. Careful, I'm not thanking you out of generosity but out of ... irreverence, which will come in handy in my "reflection" in this edition of the B.J.

Horror Built !!!



by Giorgio Grondona

I wonder if the word respect can be used as the opposite of irreverence; I use it because the respect I have for all people or animals, i.e. living beings that for some reason are abandoned to themselves to face what life throws at them without the comfort of a family or the encouragement of a friend...; the cry of an abandoned child, the sad look in the eyes of a stray puppy, the chirping of a little bird that has fallen out of its nest... all of these deserve respect. Respect and perhaps a little help so that the child can grow serenely, the puppy may gain the confidence to become a good companion, the little bird may fly free in the sky.

The little orphans often have more character than those who have had it easy from the start... mmhhh character is the prerogative of living beings and for the orphans that belong to the order of things? Abandoned things also need respect, a toy forgotten by a grown boy, books, substituted by e-book readers, that lie under layers of dust, a bicycle left to rust under a portico,

the bunch of bamboo strips that we keep moving from one side of our workshop to the other: these are the orphans I care about, those strips that one after another are cast aside, one because it has a shoot bud right in the point of the node that we could not divide when splitting the culm, the other has flaking enamel that reaches the outermost fibres, other “thrown away” because they have humidity or other kinds of stains ... which (to me) is the same as not inviting a nice, attractive woman to dinner because she has freckles on her cheeks or a pimple on her ankle!!!



The reason some strips are orphaned is not important, but the way to use them has certainly sparked various “solutions”. No one, I trust, likes to waste bamboo sections and for this purpose I have given Garrison’s method of staggering the nodes my personal, very irreverent, interpretation.

I can hear Mrs Garrison coming home from church: “Everett!!! Tomorrow my friends are coming for tea, we are organising a collection for the church and we need a room where we can talk, I was thinking of using the space dedicated to your hobby, so please clean it up and above all, make all those bamboo sticks spread all over disappear!!!”.

The genius of the Master is unanimously recognised, while respecting his better half’s wishes, he was thinking how he could use those bamboo “sticks” different in length and internodal spaces, he invented the staggering he is famous for and being an engineer, it was no effort to give it a technical/scientific explanation, while more probably, he could not find a better use for those strips.

Another striking case that can be attributed to a famous name is that of Paul H. Young, who was probably reprimanded by his wife’s dirty looks caused by the untidiness of his workshop and had a brilliant idea!!!

I don’t know if it was a special occasion or just a casual moment but one day the famous rodmaker presented his wife with a rod he had just finished and these words:



P.H. Young

“My dear, I have watched you fish many times and I realized that the grace of your movements was undermined by an ordinary rod, so every time I held a strip with exceptional qualities I set it aside and when I had enough of them I shaped them into a taper that I dedicate to you and it will go in the catalogue with your name”. This is the origin of the 7'6" #5/6 “Martha Marie”.



I'm sure you are very surprised but if you believe the story of the worker at Pezon et Michel who, while riding his bike to deliver the prototype of a rod Charles Ritz, had a bad fall causing the butt of the prototype to break and this was the birth of the fishing rod in two different pieces, my irreverent interpretation of the above stories should not alarm you and anyway making tips and butts of different measurements could also be an excellent way of using the orphans.



But we could do better or ... worse. Not everyone who makes rods has an engineering degree, those who have a wife/partner who fishes are even less, those who produce the quantity of rods that Pezon et Michel used to produce... no longer exist; but in every shop, workshop or humble garage where someone is dedicated to rodmaking there is always a bundle of orphans, some famous names have been mentioned and now I will tell you how I guarantee a “dignified” future to my orphans but before I do that, I put away in a drawer:

- 1: ETHICS, understood as the application of the principles learnt at the 2009 and subsequent IBRA courses
- 2: RESPECT, for all those who trust in my seriousness in applying point 1
- 3: SHAME, self-critical spirit

Now the drawer is closed, we will open it again for the next BJ and with cheeky optimism I put on my glasses to page through the only serious thing that was not put in the drawer and that is the Taper Notebook, well the measurements must be respected, with everything else we can take some liberties. The choice of the taper, considering that we are using "recovered" material, will be influenced by the various reasons it was not classified "prime choice", if it was due to aesthetic defects we can use a simple external flaming but "structural ones" force us to make strict choices, in other words if we have

4,5mm strips we obviously cannot make a rod that has a butt which measures 10. This said, I always carry out the operations of node treatment and straightening of the strips, as well as the tempering, the staggering, even (3 x 3) and if the internodal distances don't allow me to respect this plan ... I just overturn the strips I can't accommodate properly. I know it's not done but I'm a donkey and I'm using bamboo sections that others would have thrown in the fireplace and as I said one must take some "liberties" and anyway I will do worse things before that rod is done!!!



Now we're at the point of removing the enamel and everything is well, the "orphans" are ready for the planing, perfectly straight, which is their only virtue. The stains are more visible than before, the small mark left by an accidental knock can (perhaps) be covered with the tying, the depression in the node of a butt strip where there was a bud should have been almost entirely removed... yes almost, so? Here is the greatest wickedness, geometry helps me when I build a rod with hexagonal sections. The strips are equilateral triangles so if there is a "defective" side, I will show one of the other two. How, you say? It's not done? The external sides are rich in power fibres? You're right but if on one external side there are not only many power fibres but also a bud what can I do? Throw the strip away? Never!!!

Anyway after a clumsy staggering and a "creative" arrangement of the planed strips, the gluing and cleaning of the blanks are done smoothly. The result, understood as the respect of the taper, is good while from an aesthetic point of view more work needs to be done, I could have done the flaming before but the "strip of shame", the one with the bud, would have presented the light coloured side, like this instead with a varnish pad we can cover all the defects. Now there are no more "odd" things to do and to honour the "orphans" I will pay careful attention to the finishing.

I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you that this is the story of the rod I "gave" myself for Christmas 2015, the taper is a Hardy,

"The C.C. de France" 7'0" #4, the strips came from 5 different culms, some were stained, 3 had a bud on one of the nodes, I used 2 of them for the tip and in the planing the defect was almost completely eliminated. The third one was positioned in the butt showing an internal side and I tied the stripping guide to it, one of the ties covered a dent which had spoilt a very small area of a few millimetres.

The rod was finished in January 2016 and in Spring when the varnish had dried it was "baptised" in the water thanks to my friend Giancarlo who took it on a fishing holiday in Slovenia. In the following months it was my fishing companion in rivers and streams where chub, graylings and trout were caught like with any other rod ... of noble origins.

All this to say that those imperfect bamboo sections, instead of miserably dissolving in the smoke of the fireplace on a cold winter's day, can still warm the humble soul of a fisherman who is not too demanding, even if they are assembled horribly ... hence HORROR-BUILT.

Up there, from the rodmakers' and fishermen's paradise, Everett E. Garrison and Paul H. Young with their respective wives, together with who made Pezon et Michel's history will surely forgive me, as will all those who do not share my irreverent quotes, because as always "the bray of a donkey does not go to heaven"!!!





"Fly Fisherman"

IBRA rodmaking course 2016

by Daniele Baldini

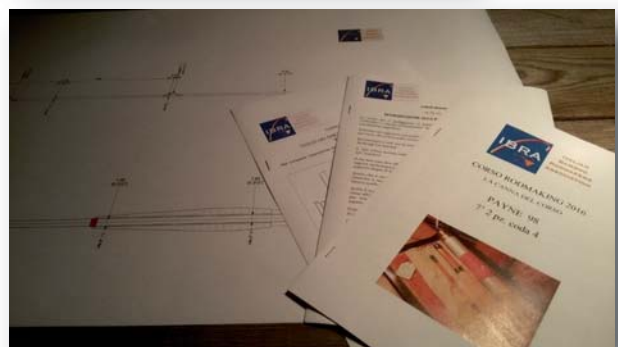
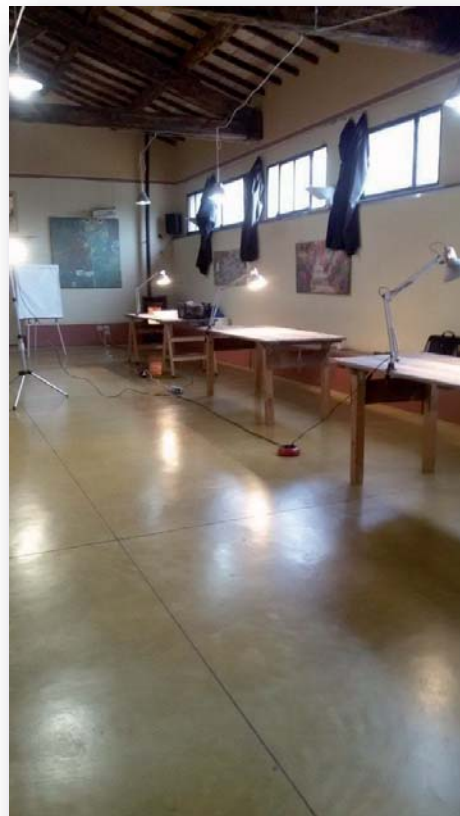
This year again on 24, 25, 26 and 27 November the rodmaking course, the tenth edition, was held by IBRA at Podere Violino near Sansepolcro, which is also its headquarters.

There were five participants: Antonio, Mario, Nicola, Umberto and Sebastiano. The instructors were Alberto Poratelli, Silvano Sanna and Moreno Borriero.

On Thursday we had lunch together and in the afternoon we got down to work with an interesting introduction to bamboo, the concept of the taper, the instruments we were going to use and safety. We then moved on to the practical phase with the splitting of the culm and making the strips.

It is already from these initial phases that we get acquainted with the material we will be working and we realise how it can be resistant and “cutting” at the same time.

This phase took the whole afternoon and after dinner we moved to the phase of crushing the nodes and straightening the strips which would become the future levels.





Although we were all tired (some participants and instructors had travelled many kilometres), the perfume of the bamboo heated by the hot air gun had inebriated us and we went to bed knowing our strips were ready for the next day. Friday was the most tiring day for all of us.

The next morning the theoretical part explained to us each phase of the construction and then finally we were able to put our hands on the planes.

We worked on the preliminary planing form, the wooden one, to create the first 60-degree angle and we proceeded to obtain levels ready for tempering. Planing can be relaxing if you are used to it, but if you have never worked with one before it is a great effort and I must compliment all the participants who made certain that before lunch we were ready for the heat treatment (also called tempering, but it's not the exact term), despite the stiffness in their muscles.

This phase caramelises the sugars in the fibres and our levels get more resistance to the stresses they have to face in the next phases.





The kiln that Gabriele Gori gave us did its job and after lunch we proceeded to the phase that would give birth to the future rod. Setting the planing form. Notes on hand, depth gauges, sharp blades and a lot of excitement to start.

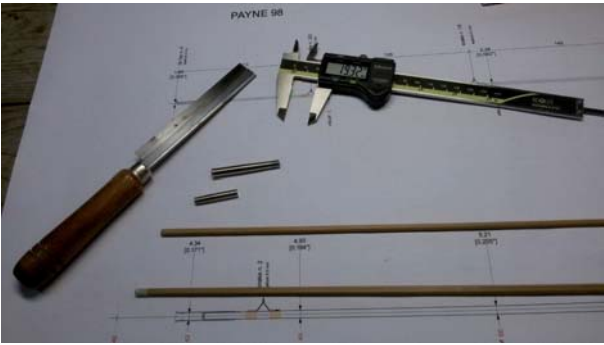
At this point I must praise Alberto Poratelli who supplied the scaled 1:1 drawings of the taper which helped tremendously in the working phases of cutting the rough piece and the fitting of the snake guides and other components.

When we finished planing the butts it was already late afternoon but the constancy of the participants allowed them to plane the tips as well and we managed to glue the rods at one in the morning. Finally, we went to bed with various aches and pains but with a special light in our eyes. The rod had taken shape and it was hanging up to dry in front of the heater, waiting for us the next day.

Saturday was a long day but far more physically relaxing for everyone.

We cleaned the glue from the unfinished rods and prepared the ferrules, rigorously gothic and I thank Moreno Borriero for revealing his secrets and we cut the rough pieces. We mounted the reel seat and the grip and we started tying. At midnight on Saturday the rods were finished and the effort of the previous days was well-rewarded.





On Sunday morning, after a sumptuous breakfast we tried the rods on the lawn with Claudio Biagi and Giampiero Bartolini, whom I thank for their contribution to what was a dream come true for the participants and one I hope they will continue in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank:

Angelo Droetto for joining us on Sunday morning.

Massimo Giuliani for coming on Sunday to explain the group purchases to the new members.

The Podere Violino for having fed us like kings

Alberto Poratelli Moreno Borriero e Silvano Sanna for having run everything so smoothly.

Last but not least Nicola, Mario, Antonio, Umberto and Sebastiano for all the effort you put into it and for joining this family, because that's what IBRA is.





"Fiume"

IBRA AT THE MUSEUM OF CASLANO - SWITZERLAND





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