

Avon - a Classic Float for Classic Waters

Peter Drennan

There are few more traditional float patterns than the Avon. They are named after one of our classic English rivers and most anglers are familiar with their distinctive shape. They are designed to cope with flowing water and strong currents so they are built with a thick, buoyant tip section and have a large, bulbous body toward the top end. In this position the buoyant body helps the float to ride on the surface and prevents it being sunk by turbulence. The long stem underneath this body acts like the keel of a boat, providing lots of stability and helping to keep the float sitting up straight and riding true.

Avons are always attached top and bottom and are used for trotting a bait through the whole length of a swim. They provide good tackle control and line management at long range, even at distances of 40 or 50 metres downstream.

The typical set up would be a 13ft Match rod with reel lines from about 2lb 0.12mm to 3lb 0.14mm Trotting short range 10metres to 15metres plus with the smaller Avons, you would

probably be alright with 2lb reel line, but on the larger models you do not really want to go below 2.6lb and can still get good line management and therefore bait presentation on 3lb 0.14mm diameter.

Feeding is the key

The trotting or long trotting method in flowing water is inseparable from regular, repetitive loose feeding of small particle baits: Mag-



All the interesting fish-holding places are across on the far side of the river so a big crystal avon is being used to manage the tackle and keep as much line as possible in the air and off of the turbulent fast water between the angler and the fish.

Mending the line and repositioning it nice and straight behind the float is not really an option when you are fishing diagonally across the river in this type of swim. The tendency is always to pull the float back toward you and away from the fish-holding places on the far bank. In this particular swim, if you put the float through close to the raft of rubbish and the sunken fence, you can catch ten or fifteen kilos, but if you are more than half a metre out you will only catch two or three kilos ! This is why you have to use a seriously big float that carries plenty of shot and holds its position against the weight of line.

got, Caster, Hemp, Liquidised Bread etc. If you don't loose feed little and often, "you just ain't doing it right !"

These free offerings of bait must be falling down through the swim, carried with the flow and either coming to rest on the bottom or rolling along the bottom towards the fish. If you buy a couple of pints of maggot to attack a big, flowing swim, 95% of them can be used purely as loose feed because you only need a small amount for actual hook baits. This type of regular particle feeding can get the fish queuing up to take the bait, particularly in fast water.

The right Avons

Avons were traditionally made with a balsa body built onto a cane dowel. This dowel went right through the balsa, providing the tip at one end and the stem at the other. The problem was the cane did not really provide a material sufficiently buoyant for the tip or sufficiently heavy for the stem. For these reasons we began to use a different mix of materials in order to produce a better Avon.

The only way to do the job properly was to use soft balsa to get maximum buoyancy in the float body and joint in a

small section of hard grade balsa to get more buoyancy in the fluorescent tip, while retaining enough strength to take a big float rubber and withstand the force of the strike.

When these two grades of balsa are married to a much heavier wire stem, you get the perfect strong, buoyant tip, ultra light buoyant body that carries lots of shot and keel-like balance from the stem. The resulting Wire Avons fish much better than the old style balsa on cane models and will help you catch lots more fish !

EARLY BALSAM AND CANE AVON

IN MANY CASES THERE IS NOT QUITE ENOUGH BUOYANCY IN THE THIN CANE TIP AND IT IS SLIGHTLY OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE LARGE BULBOUS BODY

A STREAMLINED SHOULDER CAUSES MUCH LESS DISTURBANCE ON THE STRIKE BUT HAS A GREATER TENDENCY TO RIDE UP OUT OF THE WATER WHEN HOLDING BACK HARD

THE CANE STEM IS BUOYANT IN ITS OWN RIGHT AND DOES NOT PROVIDE THE SAME STABILITY AS WIRE OR HEAVY PLASTIC

LINE CAN BE THREADED THROUGH THE BOTTOM EYE BUT I PREFER TO USE AN ADDITIONAL FLOAT RUBBER THIS ALLOWS YOU TO CHANGE FLOAT SIZES EASIER AND OF COURSE TWO HOLD THE FLOAT IN PLACE BETTER THAN ONE

MODERN WIRE AVON

SHORTER THICKER TIP MADE FROM HARD GRADE BALSAM IS MORE BUOYANT THAN CANE BUT STILL STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE A LARGE FLOAT RUBBER WITHOUT DAMAGE

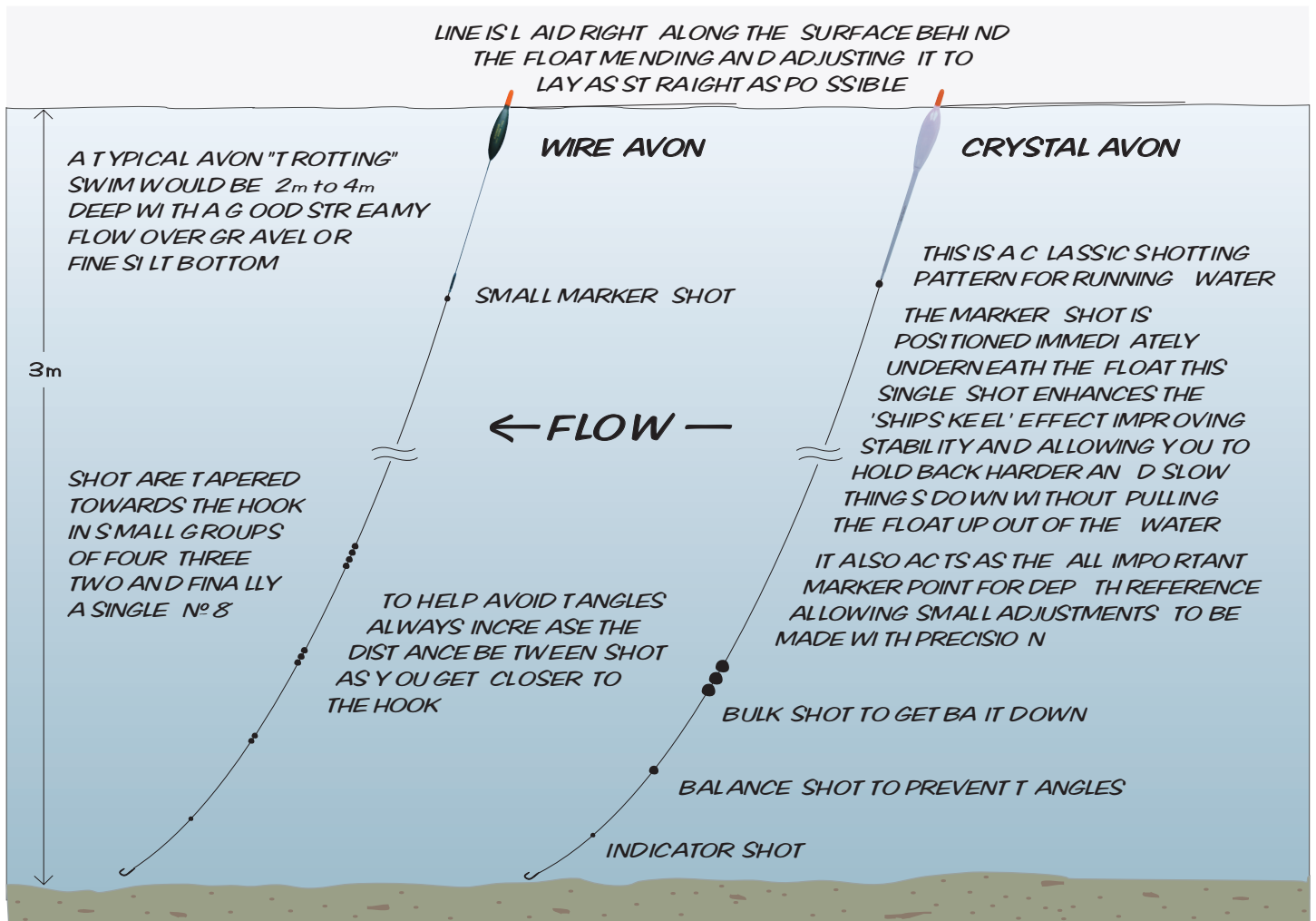
SOFT GRADE BALSAM BODY FOR MAXIMUM BUOYANCY

WIRE STEM TO ACT AS A KEEL AND PROVIDE EXTRA STABILITY THIS HELPS TO REDUCE THE TENDENCY FOR THE STREAMLINED SHOULDER TO RIDE UP

HOLLOW PLASTIC AVON

THE BLOW MOULDED BODY HAS SEVERAL ADVANTAGES IT IS AS LIGHT AND BUOYANT AS SOFT GRADE BALSAM BUT MUCH TOUGHER CANNOT BE CUT BY LINE AND WILL NOT DAMAGE ON ROCKS ETC

THE CLEAR SOLID STEM IS HEAVIER THAN WATER WITH AN S.G. (SPECIFIC GRAVITY) OF 1.2 AGAIN THIS ACTS LIKE A SHIP'S KEEL TO IMPROVE STABILITY



Crystal Avons

In recent years the development of crystal clear blow moulded floats has allowed us to produce thin walled plastic bodies for a new generation of Crystal Avons. These bodies are as light and buoyant as light grade Balsa but much tougher and more durable. One of the big advantages is that monofilament does not cut into the plastic tip or shoulder in the same way as it can into Balsa.

Like the stem on a stick float, the clear plastic stem on Crystal Avons is slightly heavier than water with a specific gravity of 1.2. Again, these non-buoyant stems provide the all important 'keel' effect which improves float stability and allows you to hold back hard

and slow the float's progress through the swim.

Whether you are trotting a float 30 or 40 metres downstream or fishing across to the far bank and trying to hold line off the water, the improved line control and tackle management which these Crystal Avons provide can make a big difference to the distances at which you can fish and the quality of your bait presentation.

