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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.
Organisation No. A0024750J
C/- The Kelvin Club, Melbourne Place, Melbourne 3000

APRIL 2009

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**NEXT MEETING – GUEST SPEAKER: JULIAN NEWTON-BROWN – BONE FISHING IN MEXICO,
AT THE KELVIN CLUB, 8:00PM, THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2009**

ASSOCIATED CLUBS: ALPINE (BRIGHT) • WANGARATTA • BAIRNSDALE • WARRNAMBOOL • LATROBE VALLEY

JOHN PHILBRICK: THE SAN, THE TEST AND THE FLYFISHERS CLUB

Poland is a long way for an Australian to go to catch a fish. But go to Poland to catch a fish I did last August. I flew to Copenhagen, where I was joined by my daughter Penny and her Swedish boyfriend Linus. We then took a flight to Warsaw, which is still recovering from successive invasions by the Germans and the Russians and decades of communist rule. The most striking thing about Warsaw is the absence of old buildings. Most of them were destroyed during the Second World War. We then flew to Rzeszow, where we were met by one of our friendly drivers, and a couple of hours later we were at our lodgings on the banks of the San.

The San River is located in south-eastern Poland, near the border with Ukraine. The section of the San we were fishing is adjacent to the Bieszczady mountains, part of which is a dedicated national park. Wolves, bison, lynxes and bears are still to be found in these mountains. Although we saw none of these, one evening when we were driving back to our lodgings we saw some deer, which caused the Belgian sitting alongside me sipping a bottle of beer to shout excitedly “Chevre, Chevre”. Otters and beavers still live in the San. Although we saw neither we did find some branches of wood which had been eaten through by beavers.



John Philbrick fishes the San

We fished different beats on a six kilometre catch and release stretch of the San below a power station. Although this was a tail-race water, the river levels were relatively stable. The San is a big river, and the current is strong. Chest waders are essential. It is not unknown for the unwary angler to be swept off his feet. Indeed, one day an elderly English angler fishing near me tumbled over into the river with an almighty splash. He managed to regain his footing and get back in to shore, but was soaked through and his mobile phone was ruined. Why he was carrying a mobile phone is a mystery to me.

The catch and release section of the San is teeming with grayling. Unfortunately, about three weeks before our arrival the biggest flood in the past 30 years had swept down the river. The San is noted for its “blizzard” hatches of small mayflies, during which catches of up to 50 fish are not uncommon, but the flood had dramatically reduced the hatch. Nonetheless the fish did rise, if not in their usual numbers, and we were fortunate indeed that our two weeks fishing did not coincide with the flood. I soon learned about the characteristics of grayling. They do not rise from mid water or near the surface – they rise from the bottom and return to the bottom. They tend to loosely school, and it is possible to approach quite close without alarming them. Finally, there are times when the grayling of the San will only be tempted by minute flies fished on a 7X tippet. I have always been sceptical about the need to fish down to size 24 dry flies. However, time and time again fish that were consistently refusing my size



Another fine grayling from the San

18 and 20 offerings took a size 24 fly first cast. Not just any size 24 dry, but an extremely sparse CDC Emerger.

The San also has trout. There had been an excellent spawning the year or so before, and we caught hundreds of very small trout. There are bigger trout but the locals usually fish for them with streamers. There are also Huchen, otherwise known as Taimen. These fish have been introduced to the San some years ago. They grow to over a metre in length.

You have to specifically target the

Huchen and have a bit of luck to get one. They are known as “the fish of a thousand casts”. Nonetheless, on one occasion a Frenchman landed one not far from where I was fishing.

And so the days rolled by. It was a pleasant routine. First, a hearty breakfast such as slices of ham and cheese, pate and perhaps scrambled eggs, all washed down with good coffee, followed by a pleasant short drive to the stream. We had hearty lunches – one day a pizza being delivered to me at the river. We would fish until dusk if the fish were rising, and then repair to the comfortable lodge where we would enjoy a few Polish beers (very good), a hearty meal and a few Bulgarian reds (very ordinary). Our host would retrieve our bottle of Ukrainian vodka from the freezer, and a couple of night caps later we would retire exhausted to enjoy a sound night’s sleep.

One of the highlights of the trip was targeting some coarse fish, which our guide Richard had found in a sluggish stretch of the river. One day I landed a dace, English Perch (aka Redfin), a Silver Bream and a Chub on a Sawyer’s Killer Bug in the one pool. When I was playing the Silver Bream a pike was attracted by the disturbance and took up a position within easy casting distance. Richard knew that there were a couple of pike living in the pool and had brought a heavy rod and a large pike fly. Unfortunately the rod was not set up, and the pike disappeared. It returned later and I ran the fly past its jaws a couple of times, but it was not having any. Richard said it probably would have taken if I had got the fly in front of it the first time. I later landed some trout and grayling, and so ended up with six different species of fish out of the one pool.



English trout streams are not all out in the wilds

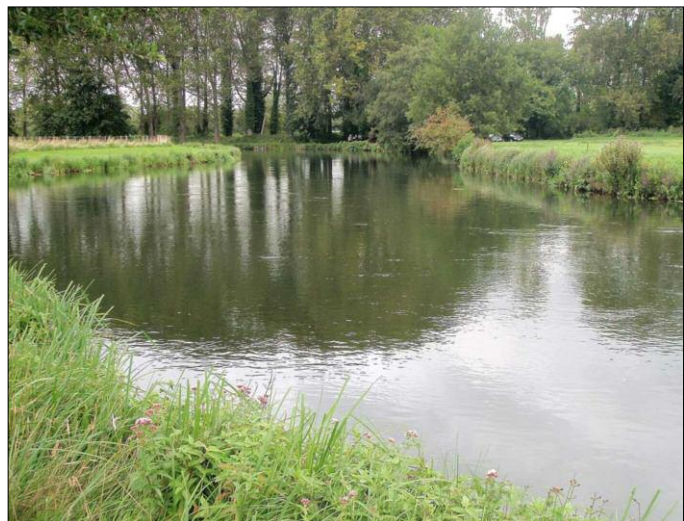


John in good company

All good things come to an end, and so it was that I found myself on a plane headed for the dreaded Heathrow airport. This time my luggage and I connected and I was soon on my way to tread the hallowed banks of the Test. There were unfortunately some complications which disrupted the early part of my itinerary, but eventually, having finally left these mishaps behind, I was on the way to fish the Parsonage beat on the middle Test.

I was a little shocked when I discovered that the Parsonage is a shared beat, and that it was “single bank” fishing. There were three other anglers on my side of the river and about eight on the other bank. To say that I found this disconcerting is an understatement. Ultimately it did not matter much, as the fishing was extremely slow. The river, which is usually clear, was a little murky and it was not possible to polaroid. Very few fish rose through the day and those that did were “oncers”. The Parsonage is a flat, wide, featureless stretch of water and it was difficult to work out where the fish were lying. I landed a small grayling and hooked a large brown trout on a Kite’s Imperial. A telescopic net is essential equipment on the Test, due the width of the bankside sedge grasses. As I didn’t have a net I could not land the fish and it eventually broke off.

My day on beat number four on the Dever River at Bullington Manor was far more enjoyable. For a start, I had the beat to myself. The Dever is a tributary of the Test, and is about the size of the upper King Parrot Creek. The water is exceptionally clear. Although the sky was overcast, the trout, which averaged around three pounds in weight, could be easily spotted against the white chalk bottom. Very few fish were rising, but I found that a Sawyer’s Pheasant Tail was deadly. I don’t know how many fish were stocked in this section of river but they were numerous. Often when I hooked a trout, one or two others would swim by whilst I was playing it. I would recommend the Dever to any of our members who intend to fish the Test or its tributaries.



The magnificent Test River

The highlight of my trip, other than reuniting with Penny and Linus, was visiting the Flyfishers Club of London, which is located in The Saville Club building, in Brook Street, London. The lounge room at the Flyfishers Club contains a number of priceless angling

treasures, including Isaac Walton’s creel and GEM Skues WBR (“World’s Best Rod”). As I was looking around this Aladdin’s Cave of angling memorabilia, I saw that there were a number of angling periodicals displayed on a table - including our humble little newsletter. I had a most enjoyable lunch with Dr Rodney Foale, who is also a member of both the Flyfishers Club and the VFFA, and Christopher Knowles, who is the author of *The Orange Otter* (published by Medlar Press). The chef of the Saville Club formerly worked in a Michelin one star rated restaurant, and the Roast grouse washed down by a good Chablis was superb.



Penny barbecuing the lunch

And so my trip ended. I must confess that there is nothing to compare with the freedom we have to fish the streams of our choice in Australia. But there is also a great appeal to fish the English chalkstreams where Halford and Skues developed their theories. So it is that, as much as I love to watch my red tag bob down a sparkling run on my favourite Tasmanian streams on a sunny day, I will go back to Hampshire, perhaps even this year.

VFFA Meetings & Activities

APRIL

- 16 **General Meeting** - Speaker:
Julian Newton-Brown
(Bone Fishing in Mexico)
- 22 Council Meeting

MAY

- 17 End of Season Mystery Tour
- 21 **General Meeting** – Speaker:
Jim Allen (‘Shark Fishing’ on
the Great Lake)
- 27 Council Meeting



JUNE

- 7 Sunday Casting
- 11 Partners’ Dinner
- 14 Cane Day
- 18 **General Meeting** – Speaker:
Chris Wisniewski (‘Eradication of
Carp from Tasmanian Waters)
- 21 Sunday Casting
- 24 Council Meeting
- 28 Sunday Casting

JULY

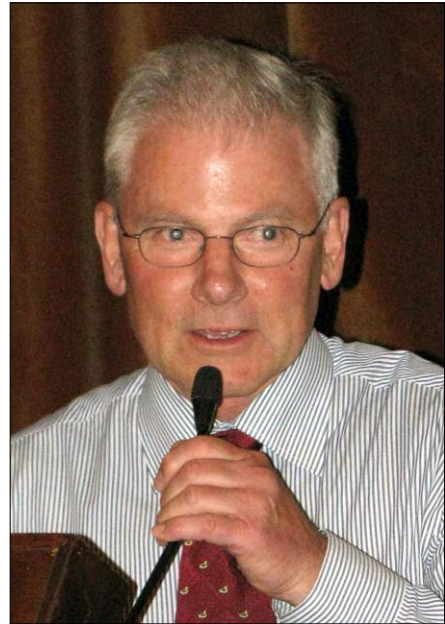
- 5 Sunday Casting
- 11 Warrnambool Annual Dinner
- 12 Sunday Casting
- 16 **General Meeting** – Auction
- 19 Sunday Casting
- 22 Council Meeting
- 26 Sunday Casting

President's Message

I am writing this report on the last Sunday in March, with all the noise of the Grand Prix at Albert Park in the very near background. I have this day returned from Lord Howe Island, and find the situation incongruous compared with the quietness and tranquility of where I have been for the previous week.

Whilst on Lord Howe, I caught up with Liam Morgan-Payler. He has been there since September, diving for his keep, and doing lots of fishing in his spare time. He is returning home in late May.

At the last General Meeting, I caught up with members who had recently returned from the "Hayes on Brumby's" Tassie trip, and from all accounts it was thoroughly enjoyed by all, with everyone having success. There is a trip report elsewhere in the newsletter. Hamish Hughes has already booked for the same time next year.



There is a very busy program coming up over the next few months. Please read the "V.F.F.A. Meetings and Activities" entry in the newsletter, and make a note in your diary.

The June General Meeting "Auction" has been moved out to July. The relevant dates for submission of lots, etc, have been changed in this month's newsletter notice.

It is some time since there has been mention of the projected history. I can report Tony Brothers has finished his manuscript, and Ric Keam is editing it with a view, hopefully, of being able to publish in the not too distant future. I will keep members informed as to its progress. We are all of the same mind that whilst timing is not of the essence, a good outcome certainly is. Nevertheless, we do want to keep moving on it.

Many members are also members of the Australian Trout Foundation. A frequently voiced complaint is the non-existent communication from the ATF. We do offer the ATF space in our newsletter, so please read the articles if you wish to know more about its activities.

Vern de Prada from Wangaratta, a forty-one year member, passed away recently, and a valediction appears in this newsletter.

Julian Newton-Brown is our speaker at the next General Meeting, and I encourage as many as possible to come along, and if possible, join the increasing numbers coming early (6.30pm) for dinner at the Kelvin prior to the meeting.

Peter Boag

Vale Vern de Prada

It is very sad to report that another of our long-time members has passed away. Vern Deprada passed away some months ago, but we have just recently become aware of this news. Vern lived in Wangaratta and had been a member of the VFFA for 41 years. He was 85 years old at the time of his passing, and had been ill for some years, suffering from prostate cancer. As well as being a long-standing VFFA member, he was also a very committed and hard-working member of the Wangaratta Fly Fishing Club.

For most of his life Vern had worked in the textile industry. He met his wife, Doreen, at Daylesford when they were both working in a textile business there. They were married in 1945, and after some years living in Maitland (NSW), Daylesford and Ararat, Vern gained a much sought-after position in Wangaratta, with the well-known Bruck Mills textile company, where he held a number of senior management positions. Vern and Doreen settled in Wangaratta and raised their three sons there. Following his retirement in the late 1970s Vern worked for many years as a volunteer with the local St Vincent de Paul charity. Living in Wangaratta gave Vern access to the rivers that he got to know so well and fished so frequently – the King, the Ovens and the Buckland. He also loved to visit the Khancoban area, where the Geehi River became another of his favourite haunts.

His wife Doreen reports that Vern loved his fishing and loved his outings with his fishing mates. At times he was under a lot of stress at work and his fly fishing was his release and his escape. It was his passion, and he fished right up until a few months before his illness took its toll.

April General Meeting – Guest Speaker Julian Newton-Brown

Julian has a wealth of fly fishing experience in a host of exotic locations, including some Bone Fishing in Mexico. He has dusted off his photos and rifled through his fishing diaries and notes, and is all set to entertain us with tales of his exploits fly casting to Bone Fish in the tropical flats of Mexico.

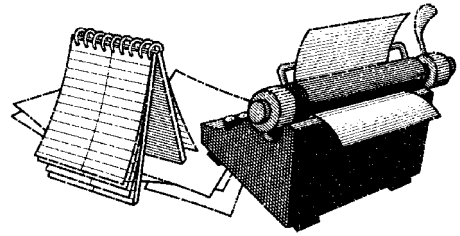
This is a style of fly fishing that many of us will not have tried, so it will be informative and interesting to hear how one of our members found it. Is there an evening rise? Do they take a nymph under a dry fly indicator? Come along and find out, on what should be another engaging and fascinating presentation.

New Zealand and Tasmanian Trips

Members are reminded that our two major annual trips – the trip to the South Island of New Zealand and the trip to Tasmania – are again being planned and organised. While dates are still to be finalised, the New Zealand trip will take place in the last week of November and the first week of December later this year, and the Tasmanian will take place in the last week of February next year.

Rick Dugina will again be arranging the New Zealand trip, and Hamish Hughes will organise the Tasmanian trip. Future newsletters will contain more information as it comes to hand.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



In the ideal fly fisher's world we would be able to hop into the car at any time we chose, drive to a nearby stream or lake that was well-stocked with quality trout, and enjoy some delightful fishing – all provided by a benevolent and supportive government that was well-disposed towards our interests. Sadly the real world just isn't like this, and it would seem that trout fishers the world over have to fight to preserve whatever fishing they have. If the angling publications from the US and the UK are any indication, habitat degradation and increasing competition for use of the water are common challenges. Our friends in New Zealand face some issues too. It would seem the sheep farms of the South Island are being steadily replaced by dairy farming on a massive scale, with a consequent fouling of rivers and streams with the resulting effluent. (If recent letters to the editor published in some of their magazines are any indication, many New Zealand anglers are also concerned about the pressures on their trout fishery created by visiting anglers from overseas. They love our tourist dollars, but aren't so keen on us hassling their fish – perhaps we should just post them a cheque and stay at home.)

Here in Australia trout anglers in New South Wales have recently won the fight to retain their Gaden Trout Hatchery, and Tasmanian anglers are rallying to oppose plans to take water from Arthurs Lake, a move that would threaten the viability of one of the state's renowned fisheries.

In Victoria we are fully aware of our ongoing battle with those who would have trout removed from our streams, and with government departments that seem so reluctant to foster and promote our trout fishery. Thus we put up with the pitifully low stocking rates in our public stillwaters, and our rivers are mostly left to look after themselves.

Whether we like it or not, we will inevitably find ourselves involved in trout politics if we want to preserve a viable and worthwhile trout fishery for our children and grand-children. There are a number of groups and organisations that claim to represent our interests, but the organisation that is closest to our stated aims is the Australian Trout Foundation. Many VFFA members are already members of the ATF, and the ATF President, Mick Hall, is a long-standing VFFA member. Mick has recently re-accepted the presidency and has tackled the task of protecting and promoting our trout fishery with enthusiasm and energy. A number of the ATF's successful campaigns and projects have been detailed in recent issues of this newsletter.

There has been criticism of the ATF in recent times, mainly because of a perceived lack of communication with members, and because members haven't been notified when memberships fall due. Mick, with his small but hard-working ATF committee, is working hard to overcome these difficulties. A determined effort has been made in recent months to obtain email addresses for all ATF members, so that media releases and ATF reports can be emailed out. Mick also assures us that the ATF website is now updated at least every fortnight, and carries current information on ATF activities. The address for the website is <http://www.atfonline.com.au>, and is worth a regular check. For VFFA members who would like to join the ATF or renew their membership, an ATF membership form is included in this

newsletter as an insert. The annual subscription is a mere \$10, and is an excellent investment in the future of our trout fishery.

Another venture we should consider supporting is the inaugural Cane Makers' Day, on Saturday, June 13, at Northern Fly Fishers' Pool in Yarrambat. David Grisold has been heavily involved in the organisation of this day, where some of our best-known cane rod builders will be demonstrating their skills and wares. A notice with all relevant details is given in this newsletter.

Finally, the plan to establish a VFFA website was again discussed at the recent Council Meeting, and a small sub-committee was set up to register the name of our proposed website and to begin the preliminaries. The Association's senior vice-president, Rick Dugina, has experience in this area, and is the convenor of the sub-committee. He is looking for members of our Association who also have expertise in setting up websites who may be able to offer advice, so anyone who can help is strongly encouraged to call Rick on 0401 963 601.

THE JULY AUCTION

The July general meeting, to be held on Thursday, July 16, will be an auction of equipment and books. Tony Brothers has again accepted responsibility for the organisation, and has indicated that members wishing to sell equipment or books will need to contact him with all relevant details of vendor lots by Wednesday June 24 at the latest, to allow for cataloguing and advertising in the July newsletter. None will be accepted after this date.

Descriptions of items must be provided in writing to Tony Brothers at 1/113 Thomas Street, East Brighton 3187, or via email – tonyjazzman@gmail.com, so that lots can be appropriately listed in the catalogue. The full list of lots to be auctioned will be forwarded to the Editor for inclusion in the July newsletter on Wednesday July 1.

Items for auction will need to be delivered to Tony's home address in the week from Wednesday July 1 to Wednesday July 8. (Members should note that for health reasons second-hand waders are not sold at VFFA auctions).

No reserves will be permitted on items under \$200, a 15% commission will be deducted from the proceeds of sales, and purchasers will need to pay by cash or cheque on the night.

Tony has indicated that these conditions will be strictly adhered to.

CLOSING WEEKEND



****Magical Mystery Tour****

Sunday 17 May

Fishing Day and BBQ
Meet at the Gordon Pub, Gordon
9.30am

Please bring own BBQ food and drink

Call Kossie: on 0430 091 300

Numbers will be strictly limited

VFFA DINNER WITH PARTNERS

KELVIN CLUB
THURSDAY JUNE 11th
@ 7.00 PM FOR 7.30 PM

\$38.00 PER PERSON

Drinks: On consumption paid by individuals

3 Course Dinner

SOUP



Lamb Shank and Vegetable

MAIN COURSE (CHOICE)

Lamb Saag Curry with Jasmine Rice, Naan and Raita

or

Chicken Breast with Salmon Mousse and Roasted Tomato Sauce

or



Roast Beef with Mushroom Sauce

DESSERT

Kelvin Sticky Date Pudding

Coffee and Chocolatier Chocolates



RSVP: COLIN MORRISON - 9375 2298 or 0412107326

THE INAUGURAL CANE MAKERS' DAY

**Saturday, June 13, 2009
9:00am to 3:30pm**

**Northern Pool, Yarrambat Park,
Yarrambat (Melways reference 184 F5)**

The Makers' Day is all about experienced cane rod makers passing on their knowledge through discussion and demonstration.

They will have tools on hand to show most processes involved in Cane Rod building.

Makers on hand are Nick Taransky and Peter McKean.

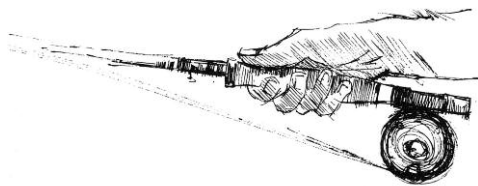
Bring along your current project or problem processes.

"IT'S ALL ABOUT LEARNING"

Northern Pool is an all weather venue, bring along a raincoat in case the weather turns.

For further information contact:
Andrew Connell on
bamboo@netcall.com.au
0418 530 073

or
David Grisold on
david.grisold@chocolatier.com.au
0419 558 462.



VFFA CANE DAY 2009



**Sunday, June 14
9:00am to 3:30pm**

**Red Tag Pool
Yarrabend Park,
Fairfield
(Melway's reference 2D H2)**

VFFA will provide BBQ lunch and refreshments.

Rod Makers in attendance:
Peter McKean, Nick Taransky,
Brad Waggener and a cast of thousands.
Compare (cast and look at) the new with
gems of the past;

Meet the Turvilles, the Sharps,
the Hardy's and others.
Unwrap your dear old friend and bring it
along to meet the new boys on the block.

"IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CANE"

Red Tag Pool is an all weather venue,
bring along a raincoat in case the
weather turns.

Please Contact:
David Grisold on 0419 558 462 or
david.grisold@chocolatier.com.au

TASSIE 2009 – “THIS IS WHAT IT’S ABOUT”

DUGINA



The group of ten prepare to descend on the “Apple Isle” to participate in the annual ritual of economic fund re-distribution. Some took to the air but the smart ones took the sea route to unwind.

Gadget and the Professor also made it. A very pleasant dinner, then tactics were discussed.



We all met at “Hayes on Brumbys” to plan the week. Weather report: “Warm and mild, high 20’s”



Rick on the Macquarie River. A pair of browns were feeding at the head of the sandy patch. First fish for the week – a nice 2lbs. It was a great pity that the willows were removed in such a wholesale fashion - typical of non-fisher people. This forced the fish to hide in the weed beds for cover. I must say this is the same as what they've done to the Goulburn River in Victoria.

Our guide for the day, Peter Hayes, took us to Lake Fergus.

WHAT A DAY.

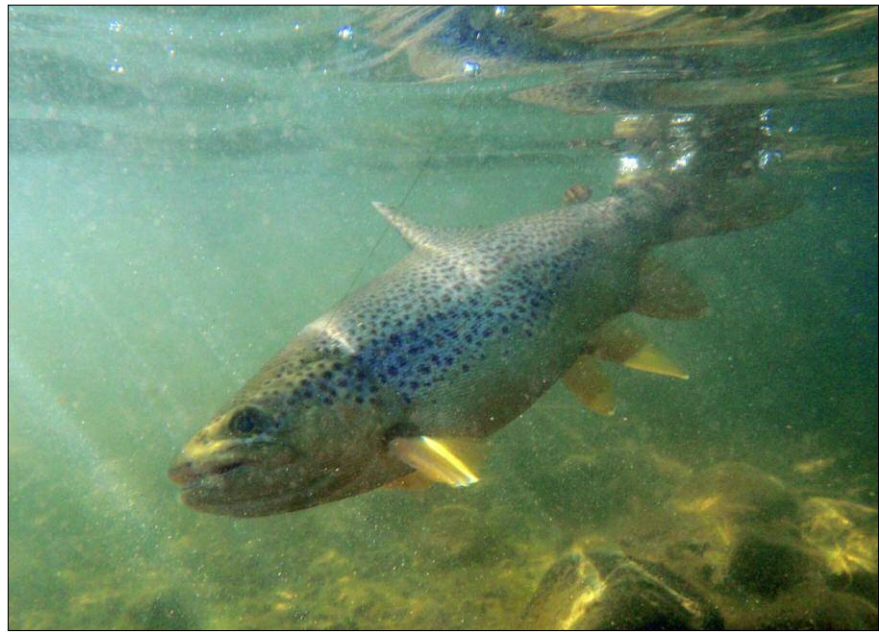


Hamish hooks a beauty – 3½ lb Fergus brown.



And another - thanks to the dun hatch Hamish and I were both into good fish. A “Double hook-up” on good fish. Peter decided to swing past a glassy area on the way back to the ramp just to round off the day, and we did not let him down as we both hooked nice browns (and played them with “soft hands” until we reached shore and could photograph them being landed).

This photo shows what was going on under the lake surface.



If I remember correctly, this fish was closer to 4 lbs. Caught by Rick but Hamish did OK too.

A magnificent trout from the Lake River



Another fine trout from the Lake River

I redeemed myself in Peter's eyes after some wise counsel on casting (confidence) into a tangle of twigs and logs ahead. I managed to extract two superb fish from a miniscule run. Their size and quality were mind boggling to say the least.



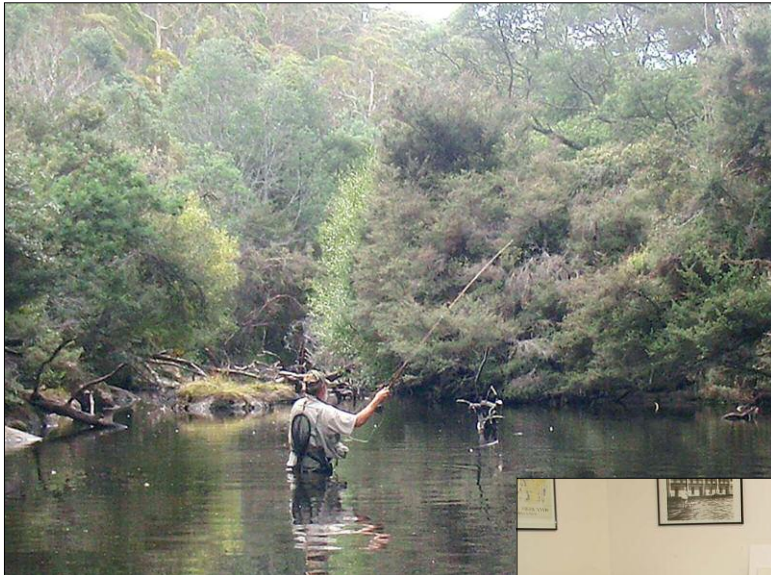


First capture on my new cane rod - a present from my wife on my 60th birthday. My thanks to Brad Waggoner of Sydney, who made the rod in record time. It is a 6'6" four-weight rod which performed brilliantly, landing eight fish on this particular day. All were caught on the one fly - one of Peter's Grasshopper patterns.

Rick Williams rather enjoyed the Western Lakes too



And the Professor was another who found the Lake River both challenging and productive.



The fabulous St Pats River. I could not wade any deeper and could not pass the log jam at the end of this section, so it was time to turn back. On my next trip I will invest in a pair of chest high waders with the zippered front.

Dinner with the Tasmanian brigade



Jon Kenfield with some fancy transport

Kossie having a rest from rowing the Macquarie River on Gadget's (Jon Kenfield's) float boat. The fishing was extremely difficult, with many takes but few landed.



A Hamish Hughes reflection:

Ever since I started fly fishing it seemed that I just had to get used to living with snakes. I don't have to think very hard to remember just about every one I have encountered over the last 12 years or so. Firstly with Mark Weigall and his dog at Millbrook Lakes, then with Dash Laver and others on the Swampy, Rick Dugina time and time again in Tassie, and with Terry Rogers at the Bairnsdale Lodge are some that come



to mind. I have also met one face to face on Lake Ada, and another in a river on the Donger weekend. In Australia I now wear waders and usually carry a staff to beat long grass where snakes may be. And I try to be careful wherever I go.

However on our 2009 Tassie trip, when Peter Hayes pointed out a beautiful five pounder behind some bushes on the narrow Lake River, all care flew out the window. I was concentrating carefully on my third bow and arrow cast (after failing with the first two) when Peter said: "Don't stand on that snake in front of you". I looked down to see a very large black tiger snake lying in and covered by grass just nine inches from my toes. Peter added, "Now concentrate on your cast; you won't get many chances to catch a fish like this in such a small stream". So I did. I forgot about the snake. The third cast worked, and up came the trout with mouth open as wide as a tennis ball. It took some time before I had him under control, and when I looked down again the snake had silently slithered off and left us to our fun. (HH.)

In conclusion, Rick says, the weather was with us. We had sunny skies and gentle breezes for the whole week. Kossie holds the record for the most fish taken from Haysie's pond. Pity they were all redfin.

It was really great to meet up with some of the Tassie members of the VFFA, and we tried hard to entice them to come over to our annual dinner and perhaps to join us for a fish.

We met some of the local farmers who were very obliging and let us on to their properties. The timing coincided with the opening of the deer season, and this created a little angst as shots could be heard nearby, particularly on the South Esk river. However it did not deter us from enjoying ourselves.

My thanks to the members who organised the trip and the meals. Hamish co-ordinated the trip magnificently and it ran like clockwork. Hugh Maltby did a great job on the dinner, creating chaos in the kitchen and pulling off a fantastic roast. The rest of the group pitched in whenever things had to be done.

Haysie did a marvellous job improving our casting and line management skills, although he was often seen wandering the halls and muttering under his breath. As far as I can recall he only handed out a few "yellow cards" and refrained from ordering anyone off the property. We must have done all right.

Isn't it amazing what you can do when you have a great guide who instils confidence and helps you focus on the job at hand. Thank you to all who made this trip what it was.....
Tight Loops. *Rick Dugina*

FISHING IN THE NORTH EAST

Our correspondent in Khancoban, Andy Zarro, reports that the Swampy Plains River is now fishing better, as temperatures have dropped a little. Since about the middle of January there has been a significant infestation of willow grubs attacking the willows along the river, which are now stripped of leaves. Not pretty for the willows, but the fish along the river have been feasting on the willow grubs and the adult saw flies. The challenge for the local anglers has been to find a pattern that the trout will take. Andy reports that he and other locals have been busy at their fly-tying vices, assembling a variety of replicas, all of which have proved only marginally successful. The best he could come up with got the attention of only about one in every three or four fish.

Dry flies and nymphs have taken a few fish, but it has been hard going. An autopsy on one fish that managed to get itself caught revealed a stomach that was full of willow grubs and saw flies. Fish have been rising, but most flies are ignored. The magic willow grub super fly is still to be produced.

The Khancoban Pondage is now producing a few trout, with one of 4½ lb being taken a few weeks ago, but is generally now seen by locals as a redbfin fishery. It is full of redbfin – to 4 lb – and locals fishing for them have caught large bags.

Andy has not personally fished the Nariel or the Eucumbene areas recently, but locals inform him that both are still fishing well.

EILDON REPORT

Mick Hall tells us that at the beginning of April the Goulburn dropped back to an ideal 2000 Megalitres per day, and the fishing improved with this reduced flow. His contacts are reporting that gold beadhead nymphs are catching fish, and the autumn hatches will continue to produce some excellent fishing.

The Acheron had a flush of very dirty water following recent rains, but is now clearing and fishing well. A 2 lb brown was taken from the Glendale Lane area, and the autopsy revealed a stomach full of all manner of bugs, so it would seem that the fish there are feeding strongly. The Rubicon is running clear and looks in excellent nick.

The Pondage recently produced two monster browns – one of 10 lb and the other of 8 lb. It has also been stocked with 100 trout of around 2 lb, with the promise of lots more going in for the Easter influx of visitors. Mick assures us that after Easter the fishing will be good. The Pondage always fishes better in the winter, as the irrigation season closes in early May and then the level in the Pondage drops to a point where it is wadeable, thus giving access to some very fishy areas.

For those who like fishing for natives, a 21 lb yellowbelly and another of 14 lb were taken from the Delatite area. Yellowbellies from 3 lb to 5 lb are in good numbers around the Big River bridge, and Mick suggests that a large black Woolly Bugger pulled through the water on a sinking line would likely be a profitable exercise.

Australian Trout Foundation

Buxton Trout Farm Working Bee

Members will recall that our March newsletter included an invitation for volunteers to help with the rebuilding of the Buxton trout farm. It is pleasing to report that some 33 people attended the working bee which was organised by the ATF, and they represented the following organisations: Australian Trout Foundation, Yarra Valley Fly Fishers, Australian Deer Association, Southern Fly Fishers, Futurefish Foundation, Fisheries Victoria, Mansfield and District Fly Fishers, Victorian Fly Fishers Association, and a number of private individuals.

A vast number of jobs were undertaken, including sand bagging and building retaining walls to keep flood waters out of ponds; cutting, splitting and stacking enough firewood to supply the trout smokers for two years; felling unsafe trees; general gardening and grounds tidy up; preparation, clearing and leveling of the site for the hatchery; mowing farm grounds including family fishout areas; leveling the walking areas around the ponds; removing dead fish from ponds; and more.

Further working bees are planned to erect the hatchery shed and other out buildings; lay concrete flooring and pathways; install new plumbing and electrical connections for the hatchery; install troughs, tanks, pumps etc; remove burnt fencing and erect new fencing; upgrade the office, shop, storage and shed areas; and complete the cleanup of grounds and gardens.

Dates for these working bees will be announced either on the ATF website or through email to members.

Urgent Request

Not everyone can attend working bees, but there is opportunity to assist in another vital way. The ATF is in desperate need for assistance in the purchase, either by donation of money towards or actual supply of these items: a steel shed, concrete flooring, and equipment (troughs, pumps, tanks, etc) for the hatchery rebuild. We cannot move forward until this is received.

If anyone can help, please phone Merv McGuire on 0417 887815

A Message from Merv McGuire, ATF Vice President

Re the Buxton Trout Farm Working Bee

Dear Volunteers,

I would like to take this opportunity to offer a sincere thank you to all those who volunteered their time at the Buxton Trout Farm bushfire working bee on Saturday March 21. We had a wonderful volunteer turn out and the work achieved was truly a magnificent effort. I commend you all for the results achieved. Fantastic! You all should be proud of yourselves.

Owner Mitch Macrae was also astounded with the amount of work achieved, and said he was “sincerely grateful for the help offered and received from all those involved.”

Your efforts have saved him a lot of time and money and has put him another step closer to getting the hatchery up and running. Yes, it was truly an astounding effort and the Australian Trout Foundation is proud of your efforts.

We are planning other working bees as listed in this report, and we shall keep you and all other members and interested parties informed. We need to get the hatchery operational by June.

Once again, I offer my and the ATF's sincere thanks,

Merv McGuire.

CASTING TUITION WITH PETER HAYES



This is an early notice to let members know that we have arranged a Casting Clinic for VFFA members with Peter Hayes. Peter is respected throughout the world for his expertise in fly casting. He represented Australia at two world casting championships, and is the only Australian to win medals (two silver) in fly casting events. On one occasion he cast an amazing distance of 74.5 meters using a single-handed fly rod.

Peter has held the Australian casting 'Champion of Champions' trophy a total of nine times, and still holds seven Australian casting records. He has also established a reputation as Australia's foremost casting teacher. So come along and learn the techniques that Peter has perfected from over 20 years of competing in casting and fishing competitions.

Date: Sunday, October 18

Venue: Red Tag Casting Pool at Fairfield

Cost: (To be confirmed) About \$100.00 per member, and this will include a BBQ Lunch.

Spaces will be limited, so members keen to attend should book their spot soon by contacting Richard Salvado on 9817 5252 or 0400 752 302

The Day I Thought I'd Been Shot!

By Jon Kenfield (aka Gadget)



There is always a strong element of adventure on a VFFA expedition. If the journey, the waters, or the wildlife don't get you, there's the ever-present danger of flying fish hooks, the insidious threat of sleepless nights and the real possibility of self-inflicted alcohol poisoning. Yet we laugh in the face of these potential mortal harms and, undeterred and resolute, travel to far-flung places to enjoy good comradeship and to immerse ourselves in the manifest pleasures of our chosen sport.

It was just so when I left the family manse, one Friday afternoon last November, for a trip to the King River - little suspecting that soon, in the idyllic surroundings of Lake William Hovell, in balmy spring weather, I would think I'd been shot.

On the Saturday, for the twenty or so VFFA stalwarts who disported themselves around the lake and along the King River, fish proved exceedingly hard to find. Theories were advanced and intricate strategies developed over more than a few bottles of red in the Whitfield pub that evening. I concluded that if the experts had been frustrated by all but one small redfin - which naturally fell to "the Cormorant" - then rational campaign strategies were unlikely to suffice. Fortunately, I had a useful little gadget in the back of the car - a small float boat I'd brought up with me - just in case.

During the previous day's scouting for a fruitful fishing spot I noted that the inlet end of the Lake looked glorious in the Spring sunshine with its calm waters, steeply sloping and heavily wooded sides, and many stands of drowned timbers. I decided to explore further on Sunday, given that I couldn't be any less successful on the fish catching front than I'd been the previous day.

My float boat is a Freestyle H3 recently imported from Dave Scadden's North Fork Outdoors in America. It's a cross between a small float boat and a float tube, having a heavily rockered horseshoe shape, a comfortable seat and plenty of buoyancy. In theory, it can handle grade 2-3 white water, but I'm more comfortable using it on flat water where fins provide a reasonable level of control.

As is my wont, I considered the standard out of the box configuration a little lacking in imagination. It also occurred to me that the lake was a hell of a big area of water that would be both slow and exhausting to cover using just fin power. So I rigged a bungee cord across the ends of the two tubes to help get my feet out of the water and pressed a kayak paddle into service to power the vessel. The plan was to gain more speed, control and range.

A quick play with this setup near my well-sheltered launching spot established that paddling worked relatively well, even if it was hard to travel in a straight line. I consoled myself with the thought that as I was unlikely to get up on the plane anyway, my wonky wake wouldn't be visible to the general public so neither I, nor the VFFA, should suffer too much embarrassment.

I rigged and loaded two rods - a six weight with a large streamer and a five with a bushy dry - and set off, with a packed lunch and a reasonable assortment of flies, cameras and other paraphernalia, in search of trout. In the interests of honesty and full disclosure, and even at risk of being blackballed from the club, I confess that my game plan included the possibility of targeting redfin

(especially if they behaved like trout!)

I paddled my way around the end of the lake for an hour or so casting streamers and wets to likely looking spots - nary a take nor rise. I enjoyed a pleasant morning's exercise, but achieved neither satisfaction nor glory. Venturing further up the lake, threading my way through the drowned timbers, I suddenly heard and then saw large glints of silver, and huge splashes, on a distant, thickly wooded shore.

I paddled towards the disturbance, as silent as an otter, growing more and more excited as I saw large porpoising shapes hurling themselves out of the water before me. Discounting the possibility of sperm whales left only one possible solution: huge carp leaping for dragonflies. I looked deep into my soul, checked that nobody was watching, and decided that any fish was better than no fish and that these monster carp should therefore become my new target for the day.

I beached my craft cautiously a good hundred metres away from the fish, which still appeared to be blissfully hurling themselves into the air. The boat was left in the shade, as the day was bright and clear if not particularly hot.

With the finely tuned senses of a natural hunter and the stealth of a stalking leopard (OK, there could be some poetic licence there) I approached the carp with great care. The airborne fish seemed to be concentrated in a relatively small area, but as I cunningly melted into the bankside foliage, making maximum use of my Columbia/Simms/Fishpond combination camouflage kit and Spotters polarized glasses, I saw many more huge gliding shapes moving around in packs of ten to twenty fish.

It has been said by some unreliable doubters that, occasionally, some fishermen are prone to mild exaggeration. Whatever, there is no doubt that all of these fish were at least as long as my leg. In fact, they were all as long as either of my legs! Despite my distant Pommy background I have never been a carp fisherman, yet I can't believe that any of them weighed less than ten pounds, and I suspect that many would have gone closer to twenty. They were, simply, breathtakingly huge.

I had my six-weight Winston and my fly boxes. I considered my options for carp fishing, and rapidly realised that I had not the slightest idea of the sort of flies one should use for carp. I knew they like bread baits and pellets ... but flies?

I tried some large rubber legged creations that had received some interest from the trout at Ray Butterworth's Flowerdale emporium some weeks earlier. They had also been chasing aerial dragonflies. I noted the pack's beat and laid a trap by casting well ahead of them and then giving my fly little twitches as they came close. It was masterfully done, if I do say so myself. However the fish remained unimpressed with my perfect simulation of nature, and they ignored my offering.

I proceeded to flay the waters of that cove with a veritable battery of large and small dries, stick caddis, weighted and unweighted nymphs, wets and streamers, and just about anything else I thought might work. I then tried some flies that I thought had no chance, out of sheer perversity. Nothing I did generated the slightest interest, or response. I was conscious that most of these flies wouldn't have enough hook strength to hold any of these fish for more than a moment, but the thrill of the chase was what it was all about, so I carried on regardless.

After about an hour or so of being unbearably clever, oh-so-stealthy and totally unsuccessful I came to the conclusion that: (a) I had run out of ideas; (b) that I actually hated carp and (c) that it would

be more of an embarrassment than a victory to catch one. Thus fortified in mind and spirit it was much easier to turn my back on these pods of enormous, environment destroying marauders in order to have lunch, return to the car and prepare for the long drive home.

With substantially less stealth than I'd used during the approach I waded the foreshore back to my willing little craft. I replaced my gear in the stowage pockets and loaded the rods so they'd be ready for instant use if I did manage to find some trout on the way back to the launching place. I lowered myself gently and gratefully into the seat, but had not even pushed off from shore before I heard an almighty bang and felt a powerful thump in my side - as though I had just been side swiped by a raging hippopotamus.

Many years ago, while diving on the oil rigs of the Java Sea, I had a similar sensation. The waters there were thick and murky and we believed there were great white sharks and others of that ilk in the waters round the rigs. I was hanging on to a shot rope, performing a decompression stop after a long dive to the bottom of the rig in some 40 odd metres of water, where I'd been attempting to photograph the debris around the rig's legs.

While hanging onto the rope, minding my own business and doing nothing in particular, I felt a karate chop to the arm. The world slowed down. Without panic, feeling like I was in a dream and moving in slow motion, I turned to look at my arm - fully expecting to find it ripped in half with a grinning great white waiting to come back for dessert. Imagine my relief to see a large, myopic and rather apologetic-looking turtle hesitating at my side before giving a couple of quick flicks of its fins and disappearing into the gloom.

So it was again. With thoughts of 'Deliverance' running through my mind I scanned the hillsides, fully expecting to see a flash of fire and the roar of another shot. I thought I'd been hit. I turned to survey the damage in slow motion, fully expecting to see a pool of blood running down my side and pooling in the bottom of the boat.

To my vast relief I found nothing more sinister than a rather rude looking white vinyl tube bursting the confines of the boat's heavy nylon outer skin. The inner tube must have strained when my (some would say "not inconsiderable") bulk was lowered into the seat and the resulting stress on the stitching of the zip that holds everything in place couldn't cope.

I took this in at a glance. I was grateful, no two ways about it, that I wasn't about to bleed to death. I stopped searching the slopes for hillbillies with a grudge and began wondering how the hell I was going to get back to the car - given that there was no conceivable way of climbing out of the lake, the other side was several hundred metres away across deep water, the car was about a kilometre away and, not only did I have expensive fly fishing gear with me, I also had a rather extravagant digital SLR camera that I needed to get back safely.

It's at times like this, and usually in hindsight, that we reflect smugly on the reasons why mankind rules the earth. The brain began to click in. Taking stock of the situation I realised that I hadn't actually lost any floatation (the boat has two separate floatation compartments). But I had lost the strength of the outer casing and I'd suffered a serious invasion into what should have been my space in the middle of the vessel.

I took stock of the resources at my disposal and rapidly decided there was little chance of plaiting a coir rope from coconut fibres, as there weren't many palms in evidence. However, I was wearing

a belt, I had two long shoelaces in my wading boots and there were a number of other straps within my collection of vest, bags and other bits of gear. They allowed me to jury rig several restraining bands around the float tube, after I'd let out some air.

I gingerly tested the seaworthiness of my crippled craft and found that it would hold both me and my gear reasonably well. I loaded everything aboard and pointed myself back towards the car. It was such a long way distant I decided to cut straight across the foot of the lake to take the shortest possible route back to it.

It was a tense passage that actually passed without incident. As I re-entered the little bay from whence I had launched some hours previously, it felt like coming home. As the lake bottom shelved up into the shallows, and I knew that I was indeed safe, the tightness across my chest seemed to lift along with the weight on my shoulders. I may not have caught trout, redfin or even carp, but I had had a real adventure. I had been forced to find solutions entirely by myself, because there was nobody else around to help (and no mobile phones) ... and I had survived! To me, this made it a great day.

Back at the car I celebrated salvation with a cold beer. It's funny how beer always tastes so much better at times like this. One almost feels it's worth putting oneself in harm's way to get maximum enjoyment out of each bottle, although I'm not sure it would be politically correct to suggest that to the breweries.

As a postscript, when I got the boat back to Melbourne, I examined it and took it in to the equipment repair people who usually fix my hiking and camping gear. They agreed that the threads and stitching used to hold the zip in place appeared to be less robust than one might have expected. They then repaired it with much stronger thread, and double layered stitching. Perhaps one day I'll hit that grade 3 whitewater?

GADGET PS: Keep watching this space for a full review of the float boat in the upcoming "Gadget's Gear Corner".

Ballarat Fly Fishers Club Annual Dinner

President Jim Bambridge and the members of the Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club invite VFFA members to join with them for their Annual Dinner, which will be held in the clubrooms on Wendouree Parade on Saturday May 2.

Members and Guests will be assembling at 6:30 pm and Dinner will be served from 7:30 pm.

The cost is \$40.00 per head, and numbers will be limited to the first 100 applications received. Bookings may be made with Greg Armstrong, who can be contacted on 0417 383 216 or by email at Greg.armstrong@findex.com.au

The guest speaker will be Daniel Hackett, co-author of the recently published and very impressive *"In Season Tasmania"*.

The evening will feature a monster raffle with prizes to attract any flyfishing enthusiast.

Report From Out West

(Jim Blakeslee)

Now that the weather has cooled down the trout fishing has improved markedly. Two weeks ago, after the first lot of thunderstorms, I walked the upper Hopkins with Alan Richardson and found a number of fish "smelting." As an experiment, Alan used a spinning rod with a supposedly "deadly" soft plastic galaxias imitation. After a couple hour's fishing, Alan had felt a few 'short takes' but no fish were hooked. I had caught 2 browns (4lbs and 3¾ lbs) and lost 2 others using a sinking line and a green matuka. Is there a lesson in that??

I've fished the Hopkins and Mt Emu a couple times since, using a green matuka with a trailing green nymph, and have bagged 3 more fish in the 3 to 4 lb range, and lost half a dozen others in the submerged weeds and sticks.

A few days ago I put the electric motor on the old green wooden skiff, and cruised up the Merri River from the ramp at Dennington to Yangery Creek. The water was a bit murky with an algae bloom lower down, but improved the further I travelled upstream. There seemed to be plenty of minnows around dimpling the surface. Once again, a 3 pounder fell to the green matuka/nymph combo, which I cast towards the edges and allowed to sink for 5 to 10 seconds before a short strip retrieve with plenty of pauses.

We've started to get ant hatches on warm, calm, humid afternoons. So, I'll have to tie on a #16 red tag and look for trout rising to dries on Richard Goodall's favourite western district stream. For those who enjoy a bit of night fishing for bream and estuary perch, the news is a bit of both good and bad. The mouth of the Hopkins is blocked, so there is no flow in the estuary. Thus the water is very high and has flooded out into the reed beds and over the flats, which tends to disperse the fish. The high water makes it difficult to fish the Blue Hole and Danger Board areas near the mouth from the bank. So, at present, it is mainly a boat fishing proposition - searching for fish over the sea grass beds and against the cliffs upstream all the way to Tooram Stones.

I have done well Just on dark with a #6 gray nymph dropper followed by a #6 green matuka cast towards the edges and fished with a floating line and a slow twitch retrieve. The crickets are flying and landing on the water, too, so a black muddler or similar cricket pattern is worth a try.

Last Saturday, Adrian Jacobs, his two sons and I took advantage of the first duck season in several years. We got up an hour before dawn, drove to our favourite water to the north and took up positions. Within an hour we had several birds each in the bag - a start towards the main ingredient in the soup for the Annual Dinner. We will head out again tomorrow and try to add to the tally.

Cheers, Jimbo



Duck for cover

The Victorian Fly-Fisher's Association Art Exhibition

Entry form for 17th to 19th July 2009

Registration details (Please complete in BLOCK LETTERS)

Surname _____ First name _____

Nationality _____ DOB ____/____/____ (circle) Male

Female

Postal Address _____

State _____ Postcode _____ Country _____

Artists ABN if applicable _____ (Australia only)

Email _____ Fax _____

Telephone 1 _____ Telephone 2 _____

Art Work Details

1. Title _____

Medium _____

Size (cm) H _____ W _____ Dated _____

Sculpture – approx weight & preferred display requirements

Sale price of work in Aust \$

2. Title _____

Medium _____

Size (cm) H _____ W _____ Dated _____

Sculpture – approx weight & preferred display requirements

Sale price of work in Aust \$

3. If 3 or more entries, please copy form and attach tick if you have attached 2nd page

Number exhibits entered.....x AU \$10.00 fee per exhibit = total cost enclosed \$ _____

All entry fees include GST. Tax Invoice Receipt will be sent upon receipt of entry

Delivery and pickup arrangements indicate your method of delivery, and pickup if unsold

Personal(tick) OR Australia Post OR courier

or

Agent's NameAgent's ph.....

Payment details (Australian dollars only)

Chq enclosed for VFFA Art Show for \$.....(Aust only) or debit my **MasterCard / VISA** card
(circle applicable)

Card number _____ Cardholder's name _____

Card expiry ____/____ Cardholder's signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Competition declaration :I have read and understand the rules of the competition & agree to abide by them.

Signed _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Mail your entries to : OR **email to:** squires@eftel.net.au

VFFA Art Show 2009

5 Netley Rise

Doncaster 3108 Australia

Enquiries: Ph 0427.047.926 or squires@eftel.net.au

The Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Art Show

17th to 19th July 2009

Location: Victorian Artists Society Gallery
430 Albert Street, East Melbourne, Victoria Melway 2G A1

VFFA: 5 Netley Rise Doncaster 3108 Email squires@eftel.net.au ph enquiries 0427.047.926

Conditions of Entry

- 1 The Victorian Fly-Fishers' Art Show (VFFA AS) is open to the public and all art work must relate to angling.
- 2 Entry forms, photographs of artwork and entry fees of **\$10 per item** must be received by **VFFA by 31st May 2009**. Late or incorrectly completed forms will not be accepted. Artists whose work is accepted for exhibition will **be notified in writing by June 14th 2009** – no correspondence will be entered into.
- 3 Mediums of **painting, photography, mixed media and sculpture** will be considered.
- 4 All works must be new and owned by the artist. No artwork which has previously won an award at a major competition may be entered.
- 5 All works must be original and the concept of the artist. The finished work must not exceed 180cm x 180cm
- 6 In the case of photography the work must be framed and no smaller than 30cm x 30cm. Photographs may be created by conventional light exposure or with digital control. Images taken with film cameras must not be adjusted beyond a level that would be applied in conventional optical printing techniques. Digital images are only acceptable if adjustment is limited to levels, curves, colour, saturation, contrast and minor cleaning work. Sharpening and cropping is permitted.
- 7 Entry into the VFFA AS will be **by preselection**. Each entry **form must be accompanied by a photograph** of each of the items listed, to a maximum of 4 items. The submitted photograph must be labelled with the artists name, title, size and medium and price.
- 8 Any freight and freight insurance costs to and from the VFFA AS must be born by the artist
- 9 All artists will allow their artwork to be reproduced for promotional and other purposes by VFFA AS
- 10 The artist agrees that all works submitted and selected are for sale. The sale price will not be discounted.
- 11 Art works selected for exhibition must **be received at the Victorian Artist Society 430 Albert St. East Melbourne 3002 on Thurs 16th July 2009 between the hours of 10am and 3pm.**
- 12 Judges appointed by the VFF AS will choose the prize winners. The judges' decision on all competition matters will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- 13 If delivering artwork by courier or Australia Post, prepaid return freight vouchers and return address label must accompany the work. If your artwork is sold the freight voucher will be returned to you. Unsold returning artworks will be packed back in your original packaging.
- 14 The VFFA will retain a **commission of 20% on all artworks sold**. Net sale proceeds in the form of a cheque will be forwarded to the artist within 45 days of the show.
- 15 The VFFA and VAS will exercise all responsible care in handling the work, but will not be responsible for loss or damage to any work while in their custody. Artists are advised to provide their own insurance for their work.
- 16 After the close of exhibition on Sunday 19th July all **unsold works can be collected from the VAS at 430 Albert St East Melbourne between 5 and 6.15pm**. If unable to meet this time, prior discussion with Paul Squires on 0427.047.926 may be able to offer a solution and assistance with later pick-up.
Any shipped artworks will be returned in their original packaging , therefore it's the artist responsibility to provide adequate packaging and labelling for return shipment.
If any artwork is not collected by Tuesday 21th July 2009 4.00pm the VFFA reserves the right to sell the artwork.
- 17 Submission to the VFFA AS automatically accepts the terms and condition of this entry form. The VVFA reserves the right to vary or change the conditions of entry at any time.



SPECIAL OFFER

COLUMBIA SHIRTS/LOGO

\$70.00 each

POLARFLEECE JACKETS/LOGO

\$40.00 each

POLARFLEECE SLEEVELESS VEST/LOGO

\$35.00 each

To order a shirt or two contact
Hugh Maltby on Work: 9455 9000
Mobile: 0400 887 065

Hand-tied Flies

We have some superb fly tiers in the VFFA, and their skills and handiwork are justifiably admired. So there might be some interest in the following item – an extract from a letter published in the October 2008 issue of the UK magazine *'Fly-Fishing & Fly-Tying'*:

'In the late 1950s I worked for Allcocks in Redditch as a management trainee and among my many and varied duties in those days was collecting 'outwork' from the outworkers, usually skilled women working from the comfort of their own homes. Most of the tackle produced in this way consisted of furnished rods, that is, rods fitted with rings etc., but not varnished and hooks tied to gut or nylon, plus some flies.

However, I had to collect the bulk of the flies produced by the company from the fly tying factory in Bromsgrove, where 50 or 60 female fly tiers were kept occupied all day and everyday tying thousands of flies, mainly for the North American market. The fly tiers were extremely skilled, and spurned fly tying vices and other tools. The hook was held in the finger and thumb of one hand and the materials applied with the other! The speed at which they worked was simply breathtaking, the finished article growing almost by magic from a jumble of feathers and other essentials piled up on the bench in front of each worker.

Needless to say, the finished flies, like all good flies, matched one another perfectly. The quantities were absolutely staggering. A single order might consist of 40 or 50 patterns of one gross dozens per pattern. Imagine sitting down to tie that lot!'

Steve Davies,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

FLY OF THE MONTH

The Possum Emerger

(This month's fly was provided by Neil Grose. Neil, who is a VFFA member, was a prominent Tasmanian Fishing guide for some 12 years. He is also the author of two excellent books on fly-fishing, and is now the editor of the Tasmanian Sportsfisher magazine. Fishing guides have to use flies that work – their livelihood depends upon it. Neil was asked to provide details of one of his super flies – one that was really deadly and which caught a lot of trout for him. His response was to nominate his Possum Emerger).



The Possum Emerger is without doubt my favourite fly. I tie it on from September when the small stone flies start to flutter about, and fish it with confidence through the entire season, especially during mayfly hatches on the lakes and lagoons close to home at Miena.

The fly started off in the head of Andrew Scott, a very good Victorian angler. Murray 'Muz' Wilson then developed the fly into the basis of what I tie. Muz ties his on a curved hook and with a folded wing, while I tie mine with a straight hook and a twisted wing. The fly we know today as the Possum Emerger is really Muz's pattern and he openly acknowledges its heritage – something more fly tiers should do. I am not sure where the twisted wing came from – it certainly wasn't my addition, but I do prefer this application rather than the simple folded wing.

I fish it either as a point fly on a team of three dries fished 'loch' style, or as a single fly fished to trout actively feeding. The beauty and versatility of the fly means I can fish it static or give a good pull as conditions dictate.

The Pattern

(I tie mine as black as I can. If you observe nymphs on the point of hatch in the main Tasmanian mayfly waters you will notice that they turn almost black).

Thread: Black or brown – it matters not.

Tail: Strands of possum tail tied in quite short (this will look a bit fluffy – if you are like me you like a fluffy tail, or you might like to think it imitates the shuck of the emerging mayfly).

Rib: Uni-Stretch. This is an addition by Bruce Gibson, who tied these for me when I was guiding. Originally I used a rib of Kevlar thread, as this gave a nice delineation for the body segments, as well as making the fly ‘bullet proof’.

Body: Dubbed possum tail. To make the dubbing just cut a chunk of the possum tail fur (near the bum) and rub it hard in the palm of your hand with your thumb. This will give you a nice dubbing of the right grey/black hue.

Thorax: Same as the body but tied a bit fatter.

Wing: Twisted possum tail.

Method:

1. Grab a small bunch of possum tail and catch it in at the bend of the hook. You don't need much and don't worry if it looks a bit scruffy. (Some of the best fly fishers are a bit scruffy and it doesn't stop them from catching fish!)
2. Tie in the rib and then dub on lightly a body of possum tail fur. Only go about half way along the hook.
3. Wind up the rib and tie it off at the halfway point. At this point select a long slim bunch of possum tail fur and tie it in by the roots so that the points go back over the bend of the hook. To make it easy for yourself use a bunch about an inch and a half long. This must be tied in at the halfway point, because if you observe the wing position on a mayfly it is half way along the insect.
4. Now twist this bunch of fur nice and tight. Lay it forward and allow it to twist into a tight bunch and tie this in firmly a millimetre in front of where it was initially tied in. This should leave you a nice spot to dub in the thorax – which you should do now.
5. If you have a few minutes up your sleeve, pop a bit of super glue on the base of the wing before you dub in the thorax.
6. Dub in a thorax (that will be about a quarter of the hook length) and then tie off the thread in the usual way.
7. Some fly tiers pop a bit of tinsel or fluoro thread here, but I feel that the fly doesn't need any of that at all.
8. Now for the fishing.





LIBRARY NEWS

All members should remember that the Mick Martin Memorial Library is one of the most extensive collections of fly-fishing literature in Australia. It is valuable in its own right but is a great asset to members wishing to expand their knowledge or who simply enjoy sitting by the fireside and vicariously enjoying the exploits of others. In addition, the library boasts a number of videos on trout fishing. Our librarian Marty Rogers will be available prior to each general meeting to assist members wishing to borrow books or videos.

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

Part 2 Books available for reference only and not to be taken from the library.

Part 3 Books bequeathed to the Association and not to be taken from the cabinet.

OVERDUE BOOKS

Our librarian reports that a number of members have failed to return library books on time. Could all those book loving members who have failed to return books promptly do so.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "Geehi to Great Lake"	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon)	\$35.00 each
Cloth badges	\$7.00 each
Diaries	\$2.00 each
<i>The Australian Trout by Jack Ritchie</i>	\$20.00
<i>(Special offer – buy one, get one free!)</i>	
V.F.F.A. car stickers	\$2.00 each

Members wishing to purchase any of these items should contact Hugh Maltby prior to the monthly General Meeting on telephone 9455 9017.

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2008 Annual Dinner:

- Armadale Angler • Aussie Angler • Australian Fishing Network • Compleat Angler Box Hill • Compleat Fly Fisher Melbourne • Daniel Hackett, RiverFly, Tasmania • Fly Life Publications • J M Gillies • Lowes Furniture • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall www.kossiedun.com.au • Michael Steven's Publishing • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Nick Taransky - Bamboo Rod Maker • Pro Angler Fishing Tackle • Ray Brown, Onkaparinga Flies & Cane Rods