

FLY LINES



APRIL 2015

Neil is Program Leader for Fish Production, Fisheries Victoria, and is based at Snobs Creek Hatchery. His talk will focus on his work at the hatchery.

Neil started with Fisheries in research in 2004 and became manager of fish production in 2005. His role at the Snobs Creek Hatchery is to manage the production and liberation of fish.

The main purpose of the Hatchery now is the stocking of fish for recreational fishing. It produces some two million fish a year.

Snobs Creek Hatchery plays a major role in our state's trout fishery, and Neil's presentation will undoubtedly provide a wealth of information on the fish we target. Mark it in your diary - Thursday April 16.

April Meeting
With Neil Hyatt

Thursday, April 16,
8:00pm, at the
Celtic Club

The Meeting will be preceded by Dinner at the Celtic Club, commencing at 6:00 pm. All members are invited to attend the Dinner, but PLEASE make a Dinner booking by 12 noon on Thursday, April 16 by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message.



THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Advance Notice - May Meeting – Auction of Fishing Tackle.



Our May general meeting will be an auction of fishing equipment and some books from the estate of Ross Jordan. A catalogue is now being prepared and will be distributed with the May issue of Fly Lines. However we can reveal that there are some very attractive items to be sold, including a number of Sage rods in 'mint condition', some Hardy reels that again are in very good condition, several expensive fly boxes filled with flies, and a number of books including several highly sort after titles that have drawn considerable interest in previous auctions.

This will be a great night with no doubt some very competitive bidding. Auctions are always great entertainment, and you may well leave at the end of the night with a rod or book you will treasure. Mark it in your diary – Thursday, May 21.

April Meeting – with Neil Hyatt

Neil is Program Leader for Fish Production, Fisheries Victoria, and is based at Snobs Creek Hatchery.

He assures us he is looking forward to the April meeting and catching up with some familiar faces. His talk will focus on his work at the hatchery.

Neil has been involved in fish and fishing from a young age, when he lived just metres from the Goulburn River near Eildon. His grandparents were avid anglers and his grandmother tied flies for fly fishers from the 1930's to the 1970's.

When Neil left school he worked at the Goulburn River Trout Farm from 1978 to 1994. He then had a 'sea change' and managed a marine hatchery at Phillip Island for 10 years.

He started with Fisheries in research in 2004 and became manager of fish production in 2005. His role at the Snobs Creek Hatchery is to manage the site and the production and liberation team (of nine staff).

The last 10 years have been very challenging for the hatchery, with terrible

droughts and fires, and there will no doubt be plenty of challenges ahead.

The main purpose of Snobs Creek Hatchery now is the stocking of fish for recreational fishing. In the past it had largely been a research centre, and it has had many changes since its origins in the late 1940's. The site was originally chosen because of the excellent creek water quality and good gravity flow, and trout were the only species reared until the 1960's when Chinook Salmon were introduced. In the mid 1980's Murray Cod ponds were built and the liberation of Murray Cod began. The hatchery now releases around 500,000 Cod each season.

The hatchery now produces some two million fish a year, with 90% of those for recreational purposes and the other 10%, being Macquarie Perch and Trout Cod, are for conservation stocking.

Snobs Creek Hatchery plays a major role in our state's trout fishery, and Neil's presentation will undoubtedly provide a wealth of information on the fish we target. Mark it in your diary - Thursday April 16.

Simon Gawesworth's Visit to Melbourne

Simon Gawesworth and Peter Morse were our special guests at the dinner on Friday, March 20. This proved to be a highly successful event, with nearly 50 members and guests in attendance. The meal was excellent, the atmosphere most convivial, and our two guests spoke and gave informative and entertaining contributions.

Peter spoke briefly about a favourite subject of his – over-lining rods. He told

us that his favourite rod for trout these days is a 9 foot 4-weight Sage Method, through which he runs a 5-weight line. The Method is quite a stiff rod and will comfortably cast a 4-weight line long distances. However it will also easily handle the slightly heavier 5-weight line, which makes the rod flex a little more deeply into the butt and also makes casting a short line easier (and after all, most fish are caught on casts shorter than 10 – 12 metres). Peter went on to affirm



Simon Gawesworth

that this strategy can be used on most other rods, many of which can be over-lined with lines two or three weights higher than the nominal rod weight without causing any grief to the rod.

Simon spoke for just on an hour on his favourite topic: the construction and selection of fly lines. He commenced by passing around some different materials used for the core of fly lines, and explained that braided multifilament cores are limp and produce a supple line, while single strand monofilament cores are stiff and result in a stiffer fly line (such as the lines designed for use in the tropics). Monofilament cores are also used for making clear fly lines.

Lines are made from liquid PVC, which is added to the core, then cured by heating. Powdered tungsten is added to make sinking lines, and micro spheres (hollow glass balls full of air) are added to make floaters. Silicon is also added to make lines slicker.

An important measure used with fly lines is their 'durometer value'. This is a number used to indicate the stiffness of a fly line. Softer, supple lines have lower



Peter Morse

values than stiffer lines. Lower durometer lines unroll more slowly and provide softer presentations.

The coating on fly lines is very thin near the ends of the lines. The core has a constant diameter but the overall line diameter decreases toward the tip, so the coating necessarily become very thin. Hence the tips of fly lines are prone to sink. To overcome this RIO now produces some lines with different material at the tip to ensure they will float.

In the process of line manufacture huge drums of core material feed the core into a machine with a 'variable orifice'. The PVC and other chemicals are added to the core which then passes through the variable orifice which will very accurately control the overall profile of the line. Modern techniques allow a multitude of carefully designed and controlled tapers for a variety of casting requirements.

The AFTM method of rating fly lines was set up in the 1960s. It measures the weight of the first 30 feet of a fly line in 'grains', where 15 grains weighs one gram. In this system the first 30 foot of all

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President Hamish Hughes welcomed the guests

5 weight lines weighs 140 grains. For 6 weight lines this weight is 160 grains, for 7 weight lines 185 grains, and so on. From this we can see that the difference in weight between the first 30 feet of a 5 weight line and a 6 weight line is only 20 grains, which is really small. If you are casting 35 foot of a 5 weight line the weight of line carried by the rod in the air is close to 160 grains, due to the weight of the extra 5 feet of line being aerialized. So from the rod's perspective the line is effectively a 6-weight. If you cast 40 foot of line then from the rod's perspective it is a 7 weight line as the total line aerialized then weighs close to 180 grains. If you aerialize 70 feet of a double taper line this is equivalent to casting a 12 weight line on your 5 weight rod. Conversely if you are trying to cast short distances and have, say, just 10 foot of fly line out of the rings then this is equivalent to casting a 1 weight line on your 5 weight rod. So the point is there is no need to become besotted with only casting a 5 weight line on your 5 weight

rod, because rods are designed to cope with a range of equivalent line weights, and the weight of line carried by your rod changes every time you shorten or lengthen line in you cast.

How long should a fly line last? According to RIO it should last at least 400 hours of actual fishing time. For an average fly fisher fishing 10 days a year with five hours of actual fishing on each outing this totals just 50 hours, and thus this angler should get eight good years out of his line. The factors wearing a line out and causing deterioration are the flexing that happens in casting, bug screen and sunscreen and other chemicals the line comes into contact with, and particularly UV rays from the sun.

There are three simple steps anglers can take to make their fly lines last longer. After every second or third trip a line should be wiped with a soft cloth dipped in warm water with some mild soap added. Then every so often the line should also be wiped with a RIO Wonder Cloth Fly Line Cleaner, which is a micro abrasive fly line cleaning pad that strips the deep-lying dirt and algae from the line. Finally, every 10 or 12 uses the line should be dressed with some type of fly line dressing which will renew the plasticisers needed to keep the line soft and flexible. If the line dries out then cracks develop in it.

The RIO company makes 40 different fly lines. When the different sizes and colours are added in there are over 250 different freshwater fly lines available to anglers.

It is important to know the anatomy and profile of a fly line so that you can determine what the line is designed to be used for. A weight forward line has a front taper, then a belly section, then a rear taper which is followed by a length



Certainly a most convivial occasion



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The raffle - and somehow Simon managed to draw his own name



Our guest speaker discussing fly lines with President Hamish

of running line. A double taper line has just a front taper, a belly, and then a rear taper. RIO catalogues were placed on all the tables and these catalogues give a comprehensive description of each of the RIO lines. A line with a short front taper, for example, has the weight of the line at the front and is ideal for casting short distances. However another line with a longer front taper, say 7 – 12 foot, won't load on short casts and will be much less suitable for short casts. However the line with a long front taper turns over gently and gives a soft presentation. Such a line would be ideal for spring creeks or chalk streams. It would also be ideal for casting small flies, while the line with a short front taper would land hard and spook fish. If, on the other hand, you're intending to cast big air resistant flies then you need a line with weight at the front end. Lines with a long fine delicate front tapers won't cast those big heavy flies.

Now consider the back taper behind the belly on weight forward lines. Most lines have back tapers that are fairly long. The shorter the back taper the quicker the line will fly when it is cast. A line that shoots fast needs a short back taper because a long back taper adds more drag and friction, thus reducing distance when it is

cast. On the other hand a line with a long back taper is ideal for mending.

Where do double taper lines fit into all this? In Australia the percentage of double taper lines sold is about 10% of the market, whereas in the USA it is only 4%. 96% of lines sold in the USA are weight forward fly lines. What advantages are there in using a double taper line? Imagine making a cast of, say, 60 feet with a weight forward line that has a 40 foot head and thus has 20 foot of running line out past the tip of the rod. For your next cast you first need to pull all of this 20 feet of running line in. The advantage of a double taper line is that you can cast it with any amount of line out. If you cast your weight forward line a distance of 80 feet then you have 40 feet of running line floating around your feet and tangled in the bushes or running loose in the current when you retrieve it.

In Montana the rivers are heavily fished and so long casts, often up to 70 feet, are needed to reach these educated and spooky fish. If you get your fly to a fish which doesn't take your fly then with a double taper you can immediately recast, whereas with a weight forward line you are forever pulling in heaps of line before you can start false casting to reach out to



Treasurer Tony Mitchem with David Maltby



John Permewan sold a lot of raffle tickets

that fish again. So a double taper line is technically gifted and you can cast any length of it. It's also good for mending, whereas with a weight forward line you can't mend the running line.

The main advantage of weight forward lines is that the running line enables you to make longer casts, which is useful on lakes and big rivers. However if you're fishing small streams that are 20 feet wide with a weight forward line having a 40 foot head then you might as well use a double taper line. Because of their structure double taper lines are good for roll casting and good for presentation. Most double taper lines have a long front taper section and this gives a gentle presentation.

These days most weight forward lines now have what is called a 'compound taper' where the head has two different sections with different diameters. In other words they have two fat parts. Some of these lines have the rear part of the belly loaded, and you would choose one of these if you're doing a lot of roll casting. The weight is at the back of the head and this is where you need it for roll casting to load the rod. If the compound taper has the extra weight at the front then such a line is difficult to roll cast but loads well at short range and

is easy to cast. 75% to 80% of weight forward lines made these days are compound taper lines.

Front loaded lines are very popular because they are excellent for normal overhead casting. From the very first false cast the line will load the rod and make casting easy. For this reason the most popular line sold by RIO is the RIO Gold fly line, billed as "a revolutionary taper design that allows tremendous loop stability at distance and a unique weight distribution that loads a rod at close range for easy casting."

Another similar line is the RIO GRAND, designed for modern, fast-action fly rods. This line is a full line size heavier than the industry standard, and features more weight distributed towards the front of the line to easily load faster action fly rods.

Finally, where gentle presentation is vital, then the choice might be the TROUT LT (LIGHT TOUCH) WF, for dry flies, emergers and subtle presentations. This line features a long, fine front taper for the lightest of presentations and is built with weight distributed towards the back of the line to aid in easy roll and single handed Spey casts.



Notice of Major Event (NOE): VFFA Closing Weekend, April 1, 2015

VFFA Major Event: Closing Weekend trip to Goulburn River and surrounds.

Event Co-ordinator (EC): Richard Kos phone 9744 2375 (h), 0430091300 (mob)

Email: kossy1@bigpond.com

Event date: Saturday May 30 and Sunday May 31.

Richard will be at the park on Friday May 29 if anyone else wants to make it a long weekend. Please advise ASAP as cabins are limited.

Come for the weekend or just the Sunday at Dobson's.

Cost/s: Cabin occupants to organise payment between themselves.

Event location & address: Friday and Saturday - Alexandra Tourist Park, 5016 Maroondah Hwy, Alexandra.

Sunday - Dobson's Property, 251 Acheron Road, Alexandra. Look for the VFFA flag.

Transport requirements: Four wheel drive vehicle not necessary.

Accommodation: Deluxe and Standard Cabins. Bring sleeping bag, pillow & torch.

Catering/food and drink requirements: Self-catering for breakfasts, lunch and dinner Friday night.

Bring own food for BBQ on Sunday. Bring Esky for food, drinks. Saturday night dinner at Hotel (TBA)

Travel insurance: NA

Description of fishing areas: Fishing on the Sunday will be on the Goulburn River as it winds its way through the Dobson's property. Friday and Saturday - your choice – Goulburn or other local streams.

Mobile phone coverage: Should be OK

How physically challenging: Varies from location to location - from easy to difficult.

Fishing license required: Victorian inland fishing licence required.

Strongly recommended personal equipment: Waders, wading boots, wading staff, gaiters if wet wading; brimmed hat; glasses/sunglasses, sunscreen; wet weather gear, warm clothing; UHF/VHF radio; torch; water and lunch food. PLB - especially in Remote Locations.

Essential equipment for Remote Locations: Compression bandage, UHF radio, any necessary prescribed medicines.

Guiding: NA

Event Registration Form (ERF): To be completed and returned to Richard Kos by May 15.

Date of issue of this NOE: As above – April 1, 2015 (mandatory for quoting in ERF)

Event Registration closing date: May 15, 2015

[Please note – the Event Registration Form (ERF) can be downloaded from the VFFA website or obtained at the next VFFA general meeting]

President's Message



What a great time we all had at the special dinner with Simon Gawesworth last month. I never realized how much thought and technology goes into developing a fly line. Simon's presentation was both illuminating and entertaining. And what a rewarding time we had the next day at the Red Tag Pool with Simon and Peter Morse. Their casting demonstrations and lessons were a real treat to those of us who are keen to improve our skills. I appreciated the opportunity to try various lines on my rod with Peter during the morning. As a result I will buy two new RIO lines before Easter. On your behalf I again thank Pat Levy of J.M.Gillies, Sage and RIO for giving the VFFA the opportunity to host both events.

I finished the month with my first catch in Victoria this year. On Saturday I caught four trout of between 3 and 4 inches and one whopper about half a pound on the Gibbo during the Donger competition. I must thank my sporting 'guide' and competitor Mick Rosenboom, President of the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' Club, for his help. Mick caught five tiddlers himself during the fierce competition between our organisations. We returned to their lodge to find that Trevor Stow had caught a one pound two ounce trout to ensure Bairnsdale retained the trophy. However your team of Mike Jarvis, Terry Rogers and myself soon felt no pain thanks to the generous hospitality of the Bairnsdale team.

Since my Message in *Fly Lines* last month I have received a number of welcome emails from members saying it certainly is time for us to change our rules and allow females to join the VFFA. At the March Council meeting I announced that I would move a special motion to do so at the AGM in September. I was delighted that the Council gave me their unanimous support. I would welcome any comments from members for or against. I appreciate that everyone has a right to have a point of view.

I look forward to seeing a good roll up on April 16 when I know Neil Hyatt's presentation on the Snob's Creek Hatchery and its role in stocking fish for recreational anglers will be most interesting.

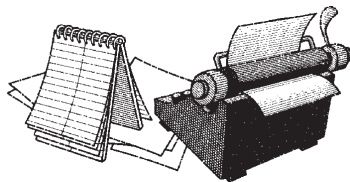
I cross my fingers that the weather continues to bless us. I hope you all enjoy the rest of the season. Tight lines.

Hamilton



Tichborne watercolour - Motueka River

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"New Zealand's trout can haunt you as no other fish do and the rivers they inhabit can come to possess a part of your imagination and memory (Charles Gaines, *The Next Valley Over*.)

"Fishing with a partner is a cooperative enterprise. I learned to say at the end of a good day: we caught a lot of fish."
(William G. Tapply, *Those Hours Spent Outdoors*.)

Bruce and Elaine are dear friends of ours in Auckland. They retired last February from leadership positions in the Salvation Army in New Zealand, and my wife and I were invited to attend their retirement service, then to stay on for a couple of weeks as their guests. We were very happy to oblige.

One consequence of this was that I wasn't around for the final editing and checking of the March issue of *Fly Lines*. Dermot O'Brien, member of Council and a journalist with years of experience working in Melbourne television, very kindly stepped into the breach. We couldn't have been in better hands. Many thanks Dermot.

In the second week with our friends in Auckland I negotiated a leave pass for a few days' fishing down at Hamilton, south of Auckland. The background to this was that I had taught in a school near Hamilton in the early 1980s, and had joined the Hamilton Anglers' Club while I was there. Peter Scott, vice president of the club at that time, spotted this lone, lost Aussie at a meeting I attended, took me under his wing, and invited me out fishing with him. Peter was a top angler who

knew his local rivers well, so I learned heaps that year and got to fish some fabulous places. We've kept in contact, and when Peter heard we were to be in Auckland he immediately invited me to stay with him for a couple of days and revisit some of those old streams.

When I arrived at Peter's place I was reminded that more than 30 years had passed since we'd last fished together. Peter was no longer the fit and agile angler of those former years. He was now in his late 70s, so when we fished together on the following two days climbing over gates, wading rocky pool tails, and prowling along banks of rivers took a bit longer than in those earlier years. But Peter's ingrained angling skills hadn't diminished at all. It was an education to watch how he read the water, cast and mended, then carefully fished out each drift with total focus and concentration.

Before we headed out Peter warned me that the fishing in the Waikato area wasn't quite what it had been in the 1980s. The population of the area had increased significantly, with lots more pressure on the fishing. Dairy farms were spreading into once forested areas, and this was affecting the rivers and access to them. To top it off, January and February had been two months of drought in the Waikato, so the rivers were really low, much lower than they had been for many years. "So don't expect too much."

For our first outing we drove south for a couple of hours and fished the gorgeous Awakino River. We clambered down to the first pool and quickly found a large dark

shape deep down in the crystal clear water at the top of the pool. This fish was doing some serious feeding. Peter watched with a bemused expression while I pitched nymph after nymph into the confusing tangle of currents. My first attempts received a desultory inspection; after that I was simply ignored. We moved on. Further upstream we spotted a couple from a high bank, but when I looked for somewhere to scramble down to the river edge they had disappeared. They seemed to have this knack of becoming invisible. Fortunately one of them reappeared and happily ate my Elk Hair Caddis.

Later in the day Peter drove miles up the valley to show me some water he knew well, but the blackberries had taken over and access to the river was virtually impossible without a bulldozer. We finally came to an open paddock, parked, and fished a large horseshoe-shaped bend. I tried unsuccessfully to extract a fish from a heavily shaded pool near the bottom of the bend, and Peter spooked two that he assured me were at least six or seven pound. We finished the day with twelve spotted, Peter having hooked and lost two, and I'd landed just the one – a rainbow just an ounce or two short of three pound.

The next day we spent the morning on the upper Punio, where I managed two and Peter landed three and hooked and lost another couple. After lunch we drove through a farm to a stretch on the Mangatutu. (Prior to my arrival Peter had made good use of his long friendships with local farmers to gain access to water on their properties.) We parked at a bridge and headed upstream. Peter put me onto some really attractive water that I fished ever so carefully for not even a touch. Just one heavy splash behind me in a pool I had just fished. Peter walked up ahead and missed a brown he estimated at close to 5 lb, then hooked and landed a brown

of 3½ lb. By this stage it was late afternoon so he suggested he would spot for me. He was about 30 yards upstream when he called urgently with the news that he had just seen 'a really big fish' working it's way up a narrow but fairly deep riffle. But before he let me loose on it he needed to inspect my rig. The indicator was too garish and had to be replaced with some cream wool he had earlier pulled off a barbed-wire fence. My beadhead nymph was ok, but it needed a small (size 16) unweighted hare and copper nymph dancing around a couple of feet behind it. Finally, all set to go, I started at the bottom and fished painstakingly up to where water cascaded over rocks into a deep plunge pool at the top of the riffle. First cast – nothing. I retrieved my flies and checked them. No mess, no tangles; all in order. On the next cast the indicator drifted back a few feet, then stopped and dipped. I lifted and could feel one of the flies, probably the hare and copper, scraping across the mouth of something in the depths. Then it came free. I looked at Peter. "Time to go," he said.

Yes, fishing is a cooperative venture. And the rivers of the Waikato are fabulous, with some real monsters in them. It's hard going back to places though; things are never quite the same. And, as I've discovered, fishing is chock full of 'what might have been' moments."

Tight lines, Lyndon Webb



Peter on the lower Awakino

This Month's Yarn

(... from December 1960)

"Trout are susceptible to very subtle influences, I think you'll all agree," said McTaggart, lifting his glass of lunch. Hamish and Hubert agreed. "I was over in New Zealand a few months ago," he went on (as he always did), "and the trout in the Mataurafitti, though numerous, were very shy and spooky. There was quite a bunch of top first-class anglers there too, including myself and Andrew Mossman, and none of us could even get a rise. Except, that is, for one chap, who was catching heaps of fish. He kept it to himself, I noticed, and wouldn't let anyone fish near him."

"But I was determined to find his secret. So I cultivated his acquaintance and over

a pint or three (a prudent investment) he finally confessed. He wasn't using monofilament, or even fluorocarbon, but a tippet made from a single strand of horse hair."

"That seems a bit odd," Hamish cautiously commented. "You'd think that horse hair would be a lot more visible to the trout than even those stronger tippets Philip Weigall was recommending."

"Ah, well that's where the subtlety came in", said McTaggart. "Those strands of horse hair he was using came from the tail of a very well-known racehorse – Rising Fast was his name!"

Web Fish

Cast regularly at vffa.org.au

About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings, trips, ...updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format that can be read and saved on iPads and tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities that can be synced with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos and Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

The Red Tag Casting Pools – March 21

On the Saturday following the dinner with Simon Gawesworth and Peter Morse the VFFA had organised a day at the Red Tag Casting Pool in Fairfield where members and guests were invited to come along and see Simon and Peter in action. This proved a particularly popular invitation, as more than 70 keen anglers and casters turned up to meet our two expert guests. The day was warm and sunny with a light breeze, so good conditions for fly casting.

It began with Simon taking a double-handed Spey rod and demonstrating the fundamentals of Spey casting. He reminded us that a Spey cast is simply a roll cast with a change of direction incorporated. He described the three types of Spey casts, these being the Skagit cast, the Scandi cast and the Traditional cast. These three casts apparently require lines with different profiles, and he talked about how and where each of these lines and casts might be used. While Simon didn't seem all that keen to put on a display of casting pyrotechnics to display his incredible skills we saw enough to appreciate his mastery. His Spey casts, done effortlessly

and seamlessly with very little apparent focused attention, sailed out long distances with tight loops. He also demonstrated some single-handed Spey casting with a normal fly rod. He described a typical situation where you might, for example, cast across a river and then spot a rise some distance upstream. To reach this rise you would need to make another cast at a 90° angle to that first cast. Using normal overhead casting you would first need to draw line in to shorten it, then turn around and make some lengthening false casts to reach the upstream rise. All this would take some time. However with a Spey cast ... At this point Simon made



Red Tag Casting Pool – Simon demonstrating

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... and here is how you should do it

an incredibly quick flick of his wrist, and a roll cast raced out some 20 metres at right angles to where his line had been lying on the water. If you blinked you would have missed it. It certainly drew a loud gasp of admiration, almost of disbelief.

Peter Morse spoke briefly again about over-lining rods. He pulled out a 2-weight line and cast it some distance with a 12-weight rod. He also made casts with rods that were heavily over-lined. In his talk he emphasised the importance of the width of the casting stroke.

At this point the presentations were completed and both Peter and Simon were available to give personal casting lessons and advice. What would you pay to have a private lesson with one of the world's finest casters? Well lots of VFFA members and other guests there simply approached either Peter or Simon and were given as much time as they needed to discuss a casting issue or have their casting style checked. Pat Levy from

Gillies had also brought along a large collection of Sage rods loaded with various RIO lines, and we were invited to have a cast with them.

While all of this was happening Hughie Maltby was faithfully manning (is that still politically correct) the barbecue and, with his team of helpers, provided a steady supply of beautifully cooked food, along with coffee and other liquid refreshments.

By 2:30 pm the four-hour session was drawing to a close. We packed up and left. Our thanks to all involved – Hughie and helpers for their organisation and the barbecue, Pat Levy and J.M. Gillies and Sage and RIO for the supply of gear to try out, and to Pat through J.M. Gillies for funding the visit by Simon and Peter. And of course our sincere thanks to Simon and Peter who were simply wonderful guests - knowledgeable, expert, patient and very generous with their skills and expertise and advice. It had been a truly excellent day.



Two-handed Spey rod



We start them young



Trying some of those wonderful new Sage rods and RIO lines

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Pat Levy and David Grisold



Colin Morrison and Hugh Maltby in the kitchen



A visiting couple from Chile. They came from distant places to see Simon and Peter casting



Peter Morse in instructional mode



A small part of the collection. Just help yourself



Fishing in New Zealand, February 2015

... from Jim Blakeslee

Each trip to New Zealand is a little different.

On February 11 my wife Tricia and I, with friends Russell and Kerri Worland, flew to Christchurch on the “red eye express” – an 11:00 pm flight, arriving in the dark at 4:30 am New Zealand time on the 12th. We zoomed through Immigration and Customs for a change, with no forensic examination of our boots and fishing gear for Didymo, or deconstruction of our camping gear for other “biohazards.” I thought to myself, “What gives? I think I’ll fly early from now on if it’s this easy (fat chance).”

By 5:30 am we were at the Apex car rental depot to pick up our car, and still in the dark, drove north to the Waipara Hills, then west to Hanmer Springs. It was still early morning when we arrived, bleary-eyed, and managed to find a bakery that had just opened. We had a coffee and Danish pastry for pre-breakfast, then went for a walk around the local nature reserve to kill time. We tried to get an early check-in at our motel at 9:00 am, but were told to come back after 11:00. So, we wandered down the street and had a real cooked breakfast. After that, we crossed the street to the Springs to have a soak in the hot mineral water baths. (It’s not called Hanmer Springs for nothing). By 1:00 pm we were bathed, rested, showered and ready to face the day. Our motel room was waiting for us and we moved in.

As we unpacked, the first items out of my luggage were my fly rod, reel, vest, wading shoes, hat, polaroid sunglasses, and of course - sand fly repellent. I had a date with the Waiau River near town. There are some great waters to fly fish



Nice one Jim

near Hanmer Springs, such as the Clarence River, but this was the driest year in the South Island for 60 years. As a result, the Waiau, which is usually much higher and a bit murky with glacial flow, was crystal clear. So this was my big chance to fish it at its best for polaroiding.

While the girls had a nap, Russell, a novice fly fisherman, and I drove 20 minutes to the west to a point near the junction with the Boyle River. I gave Russell a short casting clinic, some flies, and a few tips on what to do. Then I left him to work it out for himself. We spent the next few hours limbering up our fly rods, getting into New Zealand fishing mode. On the following day we would be heading north to Nelson to take on provisions for our trek, then eventually on to Kahaurangi National Park and the Karamea River for the main event in the days ahead, so we needed to acclimatize.

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On the trail

As it turned out, I soon fell into the routine. It was 27°C, not a cloud in the sky, and a hot, dry wind from the south-west. There was no hatch and nothing was rising. Nymphing seemed the go, so I looked for white “dinner plate” rocks with fishy shapes behind. I subsequently spotted, cast to and landed three browns that were 3 to 5 lbs. Here’s how. For years I have carried a few #10 Blow Flies, some with blue bodies and some with green. I decided to give them a try as the “strike indicator” rather than the usual bit of greasy wool, with a trailing nymph – either a #14 Gold Beadhead Hare’s Ear or a #16 Lapsley’s Pheasant Tail nymph. (I love that fly. I’ve had great success with it ever since I read about it in a VFFA Newsletter).

The black-hackled, white-winged Blow Fly “indicator” was easy to see, both by me and the first fish that rose and scooped it down. The other two browns hugged the bottom behind their “dinner plates” and fell for the nymphs. I would cast the

flies upstream and across, a few metres in front of the fish. When the Blow Fly was pulled under, or I saw the fish move to the side a bit, I would strike, and the battle was on. As we drove back to Hanmer Springs in the early evening I was very pleased with the good start to the trip.

The next morning it was a scenic and enjoyable drive past some great water, including the Maruia, Buller, and Owens Rivers between Springs Junction and Murchison; then in the afternoon, the Motueka River as we approached Nelson. But we were “on a mission” so no fishing that day. Those rivers will have to wait for another trip. The next day, February 14 at Nelson, we saw the sights, stocked up on bushwalking tucker and fuel for our stoves, got topo maps and hut tickets from the local DOC (Department of Conservation) office at the Visitor’s Centre, then returned to our motel to pack our rucksacks. We were ready.

The four of us climbed onto a trampers' bus at 9:00 am the next morning for the shuttle to the start of our Leslie/Karamea Trek at Flora Saddle. Hopefully, the bus would be waiting for us eight days later on the 23rd at Rolling River Shelter, at the east end of the Wangapeka Trek where we would finish our walk.

From Flora Saddle, it took us a day and a half to tramp to the trail junction with the Leslie River. Along the way we saw stoat traps about every 100 metres and signs warning that 1080 was being used to kill vermin - possums, rats, etc. - that were threatening the native bird population. The program must be working, because we saw and heard more birds this time than when we were tramped in the area ten years ago. The New Zealand birds showed very little fear of humans, and in fact seemed attracted to us whenever we stopped for a rest, which brought a smile to our faces. The ever-present clouds of sand-flies and swarms of European wasps did not.

Once we reached the Leslie we set up camp and had the first chance to do some fishing. From that point on, down the Leslie, then up the Karamea, it was slow

going at times. We had to detour a fair bit because trees had fallen across the trail, or landslides had wiped out the trail, or the trail had fallen into the river in the last flood. But at the same time, the low water as a result of the drought made the tramping much easier than it could have been, especially crossing side streams where, frequently, there weren't any bridges. Fortunately there were swing bridges at the main river crossings. We realized that if the side streams and rivers rose after heavy rain you could get trapped in there for days at one of the huts, unable to move, until the rain stopped and the water levels went down again, in which case a bit of extra food in reserve and a good book could come in very handy.

As it turned out, the drought had an added benefit - the low, clear water made it much easier to spot fish. But they could see us much easier too, and were spooky and needed to be stalked with care. There were monsters in the Leslie and I swear I saw one that was 15 lbs+ in one of the pools in the section between Karamea Bend Hut up to Thor Hut on the Karamea River (is that specific enough?).

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Deer, deer, deer – such long faces



All modern conveniences

I thought after my day on the Waiau I had worked things out. But a dry fly strike indicator followed by nymphs just didn't work during the trek. I tried different dries but the fish refused. They weren't interested in the usual back-county flies such as a Cicada, Royal Wulff, Parachute Adams, Mouse, etc, especially in the still water of the big pools.

But the fish in the riffles and runs above the pools ... that was another story. Still nothing taking dries, but a #14 Gold Beadhead Hare's Ear followed by a #16 Lapsley's Pheasant Tail nymph did the trick. All I needed to do was spot a brownie on its station taking nymphs, take care not to be seen, sneak up behind, and with a minimum of false casting present the nymphs a few meters ahead of the fish. I would let them sink and drift back towards the trout, watch for its movement or for the leader to twitch, then strike.

The most memorable battle was with a brown downstream of Crow Hut. After I hooked it we slugged it out for a while in the fast water. He had his pectoral fins down and seemed anchored to the bottom. Neither of us made any headway.

Then the fish got sick of playing around and its body language said "no more Mr Nice-guy" as it turned and took off downstream. I had to tap-dance over the boulders, following the fish as my backing disappeared. I knew it was probably the biggest fish of my trip and I was desperate to land it. The fish literally had me down to the last few turns of 100 metres of backing before I stopped him.

Once the trout made it to the pool below the run it turned and faced upstream into the current, resting. Luckily I was able to wind madly and gain a fair bit of line, because the fish suddenly leaped out of the water, raced off and leaped again, just about spooling me for a second time in the process. I was eventually able to tire him out. I used plenty of side-strain and finally guided him into the shallows where I landed him, then posed for a photo, before releasing him to fight another fisherman on another day. By the way, the fish had both nymphs firmly embedded in his upper jaw. A very greedy fish.

That was halfway through our trek. We had tramped four days to get to the Crow Hut in the mid-section of the Karamea, where most of the fish seemed to be this year. After a great day's fishing the four of us had a pleasant night dining on a "smaller" trout that I had kept and filleted. (I know what you're thinking. We're supposed to catch-and-release, but a bit of fresh fish sure breaks the monotony of eating dehydrated bushwalking rations day after day). The trout was followed by coffee, chocolate and a game of Scrabble before hitting the sack.

I slept soundly that night. In the morning we were fixing breakfast when a chopper suddenly flew in and landed on our doorstep. A guide raced into the hut, checked that we were leaving that



The easy way

morning, gave thumbs up to his client and the pilot, raced out, came back with their bags and an Esky of food and drink, raced out and they flew off downriver. Presumably, they would be dropped off on a sandbar somewhere and fish back to Crow Hut for the night, to be picked up by the chopper at a later date. We checked the Esky and were sorely tempted to take one of their two bottles of wine with us when we left for Thor Hut – revenge for their violation of the “serenity” of the place, swooping in on us like something out of *Apocalypse Now*. But, model citizens that we are, we showed restraint. Still, that bottle of Riesling would have gone down very well indeed ... We weren’t yet finished with our sticky-beaking around. We also checked the tag on the client’s duffle bag. He was a professor from the University of Colorado. Later on, when we related this story to our tramper’s bus driver on our way back to Nelson, the driver figured

the guide would have cost \$800 and the chopper maybe \$1,200 for the day’s fishing. There was a nano-technology conference on in Nelson at the time and we speculated that the professor was having a bit of a junket, mixing fly fishing with his conferencing in New Zealand. We’ll never know.

During the last four days of our trek we thought about this experience and talked about helicopters and fly-in fishermen and their compatibility with the sort of trip we were having – trekking and fishing in a remote area of a national park. The whole affair had been novel but a bit depressing at the same time. We don’t mind sharing the fishing, scenery and DOC huts with others. But having someone drop in on you out of the sky like that does take the edge off the wilderness experience if you happen to be the one doing the tramping.

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Nice water Jim



Watch what you eat!



Flaps up, about to land

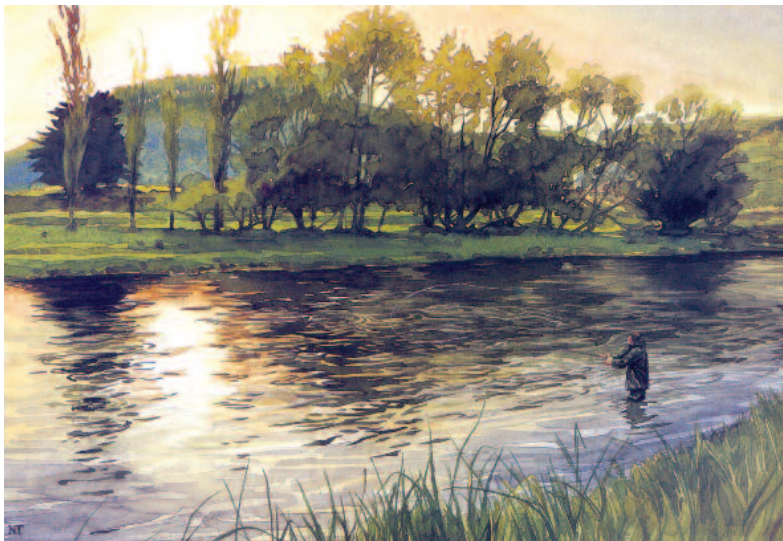
Now that I'm back in Warrnambool, if I'm not busy in the vineyard I'm taking time off to dive for abalone and crays and fish for whiting at Killarney Beach, or fish for estuary perch and bream in the Hopkins River estuary just upstream from town. The weather is cooling down, too, which should start the trout moving again. But I'm waiting for a good rain to make a proper 'autumn break' before chasing the trout again. A good soaking, followed by a few warm, calm days usually triggers the ant hatches that give us some exciting, truly memorable dry fly action around here. I can't wait.

I still think about that Esky full of food and the bottles of Riesling the guide dropped off in Crow Hut. We showed restraint then, but not tonight. We lashed out and raided our cellar. Along with some fillets of whiting my wife and I enjoyed a chilled bottle of 2009 Pegasus Bay Riesling, from the Waipara Hills north of Christchurch. It's a tough life.

Jim Blakeslee



Jim with a superb South Island brown. We wish there were a few of those in the Yarra



Tichborne watercolour - Mangatainoka River

Fly Fishing in Argentina

... Harry Robertson, of Hanover Fly Fishers, Virginia

I relaxed and settled into my seat as the safety message sounded over the PA system prior to departure for an overnight mid-February flight to Buenos Aires. I had caught up with friends in Atlanta, Georgia, who were joining me on my annual fly fishing trip to Argentina. We would continue the journey on a domestic flight out of Buenos Aires, after an overnight stay imposed by the airline schedules in this area. This allows time for tours, shopping, and the highly touted Argentine steak dinner which is not overrated.

As the plane taxied down the runway I looked around at my fellow passengers, wondering what had spiked their interest in this destination. Family in area, students, trip of a life timers, fisher people, businessmen? As I pondered their reasons for travel I doubted that many had made this trip for twenty-four consecutive years as I had.

I spent a restless night dozing sporadically and was relieved when the cabin crew started preparations for breakfast and our arrival. I still get a thrill from the view as the plane descends on an approach that follows the Parana River south from Paraguay. This river delta abounds with sporting opportunities at hunting and fishing destinations that I have enjoyed through many years.

We exited the aircraft, cleared customs, and waited whilst playing the 'luggage lottery', as I choose to call the nervous wait. All the bags arrived, thankfully, and we boarded the reserved transfer to a downtown hotel. When we arrived I found a friend of many years waiting there for me. He keeps me posted with

the fish talk from the variety of fishermen coming and going there. He arranges safe and affordable transfers and hotel reservations for them. He is a retired federal policeman with unparalleled connections with diplomats, hotel management, restaurants, passport control and marvellous city tours.

We have a long-established custom of sharing a cantina table while he catches me up on his activities, his family and the banter of the fishermen. This year there were mercurial stories from different lodges on the same river where I will be taking my groups, the Rio Grande River in the Argentine section of the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego. Large fish, small fish, strange habits, low water, water too cold, many fish and a paucity of fish. All a bit discouraging, but I had heard it all before in my quarter of century of tenure. Soon we dismissed the subject and went on to others.

We departed the hotel at the ungodly hour of 4:00 am for the domestic airport, then checked in and boarded for the three hour flight to Tierra del Fuego. Many people do not realize that Patagonia is roughly 1,600 miles long! We were transferred to the Despedida Lodge and greeted by the owner, who has been a close friend of mine for over twenty years. Imagine my surprise when he rather tersely told me he needed to see me in his office - now!

I was imagining the worst - lease problems, government problems, you name it? The door closed and a smile I had seen many times sprang from ear to ear! Now the story really begins. He tells me: "You will not believe the river!" He goes on to say that the river is cold with



Harry's fish

very low water conditions, but in his 40 years in Rio Grande he has never seen such a wealth of fish! Every one of the 14 pools is full, and the fish are biting all day, every day. Fishermen were consistently having 30 to 40 count days. Now the kicker - the fish are enormous. No-one is catching merely the 4 to 6 pound fish mixed with an occasional larger fish. I looked at the lodge logbook to see the proof - it was all there. We chatted with my group but were very careful not to make promises or speak of fishing that may not be a trend.



Harry's friend Franz Mayr with a magnificent trout

My group fished with both Spey rods and single-handed rods. The lines were both sink tip and floating, depending on the pool being fished and the conditions. The area is known for the wind - it gusts and can blow sustained at 30 mph. The river is circuitous, so in every pool one can find a fishable place to cast. But note - I did not say it was easy!

The flies used were size 12 nymphs, Madam Xs, Green Machines and a variety of streamers. The patterns were presented with casts across the stream that are then swept by the current until the fully extended lines trail for a few moments before being drawn back for the next cast. These fish were not feeding but strike viciously at a skated dry fly on some days!

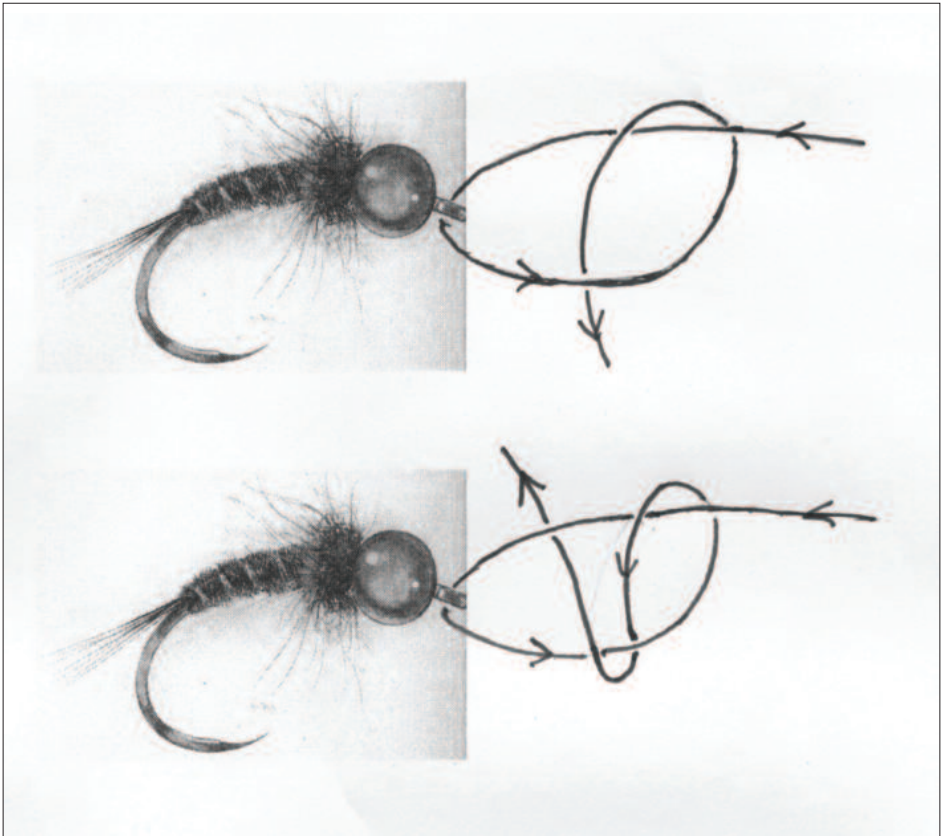
Anadromous fish like those brown trout of the Rio Grande live in salt water. The adults return just as salmon do to the river of their birth. Evidently the approximate 35 miles of the Rio Grande is almost perfect in its entirety for the redds (nests) these fish need for a successful spawn. There are reports of nesting in all areas from a lake where the river begins in Chile almost to its exit to the east into the sea.

It is my fervent hope that this fertile but delicate fishery will exist for generations to come. This will come through the continued combined efforts of the lodges on the river and governing bodies of the resource management, all working with sound principles to allow use of the river by local residents and visiting sportsmen.

The Davy Knot

Us fluff chuckers are heavily into knots; they're an essential part of the craft.

Here is a new one to try – the Davy Knot. This knot is attributed to Davy Wotton, a British fly fishing expert now living in the United States. The positive aspects of this knot are its speed, size and strength – all necessary attributes for a fishing knot. It can be tied very quickly, thus getting you back to fishing in a minimum amount of time. It is also very compact, making it a suitable knot for small flies. Finally, tests have rated it as 85% or higher in terms of line strength. Give it a try and see what think.



FLY OF THE MONTH

The Adams Comparadun



We are all familiar with the Adams and the Parachute Adams. These are great patterns that are justifiably popular because they are such effective fish catchers. Well, here is another one from the stable to add to your collection. And this version is slightly easier and quicker to tie too.

At the recent VFFA dinner Simon Gawesworth and Peter Morse were our special guests. In a conversation during the dinner Peter described a recent trip to New Zealand's South Island, where he found the fishing more challenging than in previous trips, but still managed to catch a good number of fish. His most successful fly was a dry fly – a size 16 Adams Comparadun, tied for him by Mike Tenner in Tasmania (TroutFlies.com.au). The photo above is of one of Mike's ties.

Materials for the Adams Comparadun (Mike Tenner's tie)

Hook: Dry fly, sizes 12 - 18.

Thread: Grey 8/0 Unithread

Tail: Small tuft of deer hair fibres.

Body: Grey fur or grey synthetic dubbing (Adam's colour). Grey seals fur can also be used.

Wing: Deer hair, tied comparadun style.

Tying Procedure

1. Run some thread down the shank and tie in some deer hair fibres for the tail. The length of the tail should be about two-thirds the length of the shank.
2. Cut a second bunch of deer hair fibres from the hide, and level them up in a hair stacker.
3. Wind the tying thread halfway back along the shank and tie in the deer hair fibres along the shank.
4. Keep winding and binding down the deer hair fibres till you are about a quarter of the shank length from the eye.
5. Then stand the fibres up and splay them out a little so that they are perpendicular to the shank. The length of the wing should be slightly less than the length of the shank. Trim off the excess fibres at the butt.
6. In getting the fibres to stand vertically and more spread some texts suggest that you pull a small quantity of the fibres back and run one turn of thread through the gap. Then pull a few more fibres back and run another turn of thread through the gap. Keep doing this four or five times until all the fibres are standing up. If this procedure is followed the deer hair wing is quite widely spread. Might be worth a try.
7. Tie several winds of thread in front of the wing to stand it up.
8. Then add some more body dubbing to the thread and wind it on in front of the wing to build up the material there and support the wing.
9. Whip finish and tie off.



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 or one of his assistants 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.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA)	\$70.00 each
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
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges.....	\$7.00 each
<i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie	\$20.00
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 0423 283 079.

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2014 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Publishing • FlyFinz • Hayes on Brumbys
- J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall • Millbrook Lakes Lodge
- Mountain Stream Company • Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker
- Pro-Angler Tackle • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd
- The Complet Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne
- Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

VFFA Meetings at the Celtic Club & other activities.

April

- 3 – 5 Easter
- 16 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Speaker: Neil Hyatt, Program Leader Fish Production, Fisheries Victoria
- 17 – 19 Big River trip - 'Chateau Pilkington', Enoch's Point
Event co-ordinator - John Pilkington
- 22 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm

May

- 21 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Auction of Fishing Tackle
- 27 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm
- 30 – 31 Closing Weekend – at Dobson's on the Goulburn
Event co-ordinator – Richard Kos

June

- 7 Sunday Casting - 10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 14 Sunday Casting - 10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 18 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Speaker: TBA
- 21 Sunday Casting -10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 24 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm
- 28 Sunday Casting -10:00 am Red Tag Pool

July

- 5 Sunday Casting - 10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 12 Sunday Casting - 10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 16 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Speaker: TBA
- 19 Sunday Casting -10:00 am Red Tag Pool
- 22 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm
- 26 Sunday Casting -10:00 am Red Tag Pool