

FLY LINES



APRIL 2018

The April Meeting - with Charley May

Originally from England, Charley May is a biologist by training and a marketer by trade who's been mad about fly fishing since she was a kid. In late 2016 she headed off to the Mitta Mitta to chase some trout. Whilst on the water she started thinking about all the friends she'd taken out fly fishing, and wondered: why not turn this into something more serious?

So, in August 2017 she launched her guiding business — *Charley May Fly Fishing* — and hopes to inspire women, young people, and burgeoning fly fishers of all kinds to give it a go. In

Thursday, April 19,
8:00 pm,
at the Kelvin Club
(in Melbourne Place,
off Russell Street)

her presentation — *Adventure Awaits* — she talks about her journey, guiding experiences, and the challenges and opportunities of getting more women into the sport.

This will be a wonderful opportunity to hear a very enterprising and adventurous young guide talking about her experiences. No doubt there will be lots of good advice on catching those elusive trout too. This meeting provides a fabulous opportunity for members to bring family members – wives, sons and daughters, grandchildren ... along to hear a top young speaker and become enthused about fly fishing.

All members are welcome to join us at 6:15 pm for dinner in the Kelvin Club prior to the meeting, but PLEASE make a booking by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, April 18, by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message.



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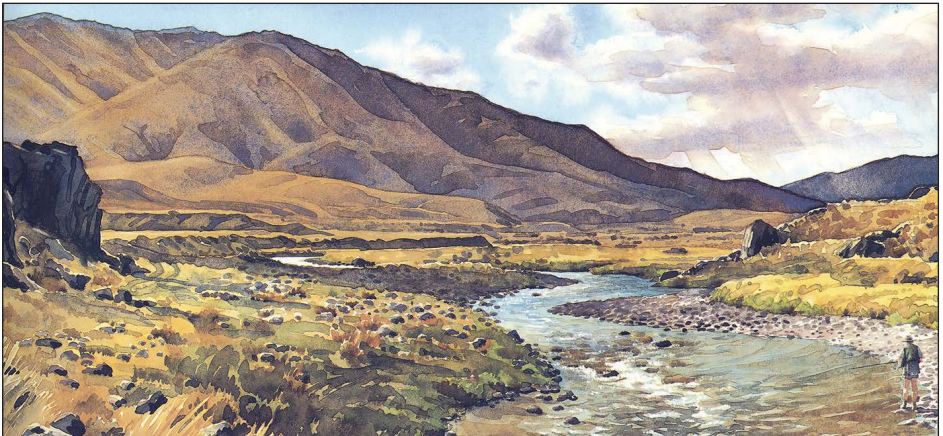
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Hakatatamea River - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour

President's Message

The other day I was reading a copy of the magazine *Country Life* from England and I came across a delightful little story about a ceremony performed each year in Scotland to mark the start of the Scottish salmon fishing season.

Apparently, among other activities, a ceremony is held during which a dram of whisky is hurled into the River Tay from a traditional, ancient silver vessel called a quaich, as a blessing to mark the first day of the salmon season and presumably as a bribe to the angling gods in return for a good season.

Now while I (and a number of my VFFA friends I should quickly add) would consider hurling a glass of whisky (which I assume was a fine single malt) into a river to be a dreadful waste of Scotch, I had to admit it did seem a rather nice way to mark the start of the season. I also assume that the hurlers of this precious dram then proceeded to find a better use for the remains of the single malt, which I would also applaud.

Which then made me think about our own ceremonies associated with the opening and closing of our local trout season, for which we mostly don't do anything particularly special. Maybe a BBQ and a few beers on a river bank with a couple of fishing mates, but not much else. It's a pity we don't have some traditional event, perhaps on Gilmour's Bridge over the Goulburn at Thornton, for the next Opening. I'll bring the whisky!

Well, I finally managed to wet a line for the year. A weekend at John Pilkington's estate on the Big River at Enoch's Point with a bunch of my VFFA friends was the occasion, and what a great weekend it was too. Well, it always is, isn't it? Not only did I wet a line, but I also enjoyed



some sport chasing small trout on the Big and Taponga rivers. Everyone who went on the trip thoroughly enjoyed themselves and reading through the comments in John's visitors' book, it looks as though next year's event could already be fully booked! Thanks John, for your amazing hospitality and thanks to you and Dave Wark for the great delicacies that emerged from the pizza oven.

By the time you read this I shall be somewhere in the Khancoban area trying to outwit some north-eastern and NSW trout. It's become a bit of an annual event for a couple of us and one I look forward to with great anticipation.

And then, on the way back we'll be spending the weekend at Omeo for the annual event with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' Club, the Dudley Lee Donger competition. Last year I was fortunate enough to land the heaviest fish for

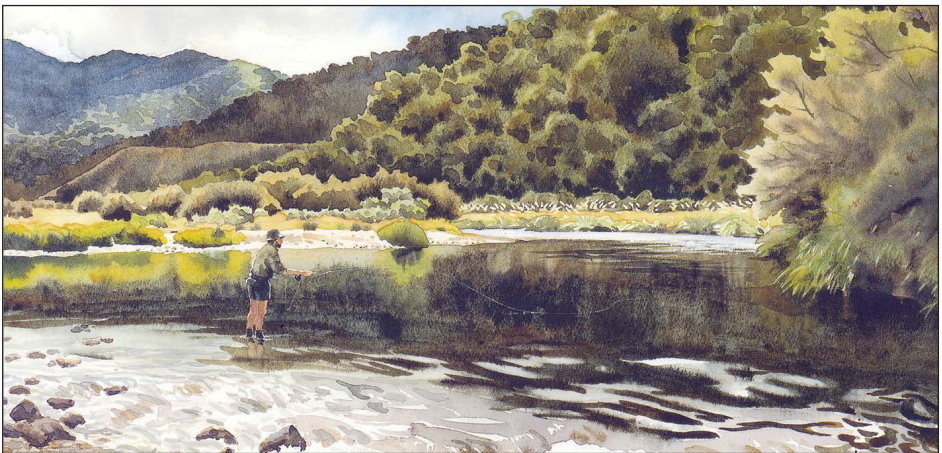
the weekend and managed to win the Donger for the VFFA for the first time in about 10 years, so this year I'll be leading a strong VFFA team trying to hold on to the iconic trophy.

But the fishing competition is just one part of the Donger weekend: the camaraderie and friendship between the BFFC and the VFFA is the other. Everyone who has taken part in this event over the last few years has remarked on how much they have enjoyed it, and I for one am looking forward to once again catching up with my East Gippsland

fishing mates on a beautiful river surrounded by magnificent alpine scenery.

But then, isn't that really what fly fishing is all about? Yes, it is great to catch a few fish, but just being there with like-minded friends, seriously seeking to outwit the wily trout and then relaxing in the company of people you enjoy. That's pretty hard to beat.

Until next time, Tight Lines,



Upper Mohaka River - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour

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 can be read & saved on iPad / tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities can sync with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos & Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

The May Annual Auction

The May meeting will be our only auction of equipment and books this year. These are always very popular events, and a great opportunity to pick up a top Sage or Winston rod or Hardy reel for a pittance. Bargains galore. Hughie Maltby, who is organising the items for sale, and who will be our auctioneer on the night, has given us this note:

Our May Auction promises to be a special occasion as we will be selling an excellent range of rods, reels, flies, fly tying equipment and materials, along with some modern and also sought-after books.

This equipment is predominantly from the late Richard Salvado and Tony Brothers collections, along with a few other additions.

In all there will be around 100 items going under the hammer, so come along and don't miss out on this once only opportunity to pick up some fond memories of our great mates.

The catalogue will be available soon and will then emailed to all members who have provided email addresses to Terry

Rogers. So if you would like a copy of the catalogue please ensure that Kevin Finn has your current email address.

A hard copy of the catalogue will also be included in the May newsletter.



Hughie in auctioneer mode

The March Meeting with Jon Clewlow

Here is a summary of John's presentation.

Last November I was asked to speak at the Wild Trout Conference in Mansfield. Prior to the event one of the organisers contacted me, so I asked, "What do you want me to talk about?" He said, "Well, I'm not sure whether you will take this as an insult or a compliment, but it's a big day, and there are lots of graphs and trends and information and data. So we thought we'd like to have you come along and provide us with some light entertainment." So I said, "Okay, no worries."

But I still didn't know what to talk about. So I thought about it, and I remembered that I'd heard at some point a person from Fisheries suggesting that a 1 kg fish in a fish shop earns maybe \$20, but a 1 kg fish that an angler catches is worth more like \$400. Now I don't know whether that's true or not, but I thought that perhaps I could work out what it has cost me to catch my first trout. And that's what I spoke about at the conference. Then Marianne rang me and asked if I would come and tell the VFFA all about it. I said, "Sure, no worries," because I'd do anything for Marianne. So this is

all about what it has cost me after I had caught my first trout.

Many years ago, when I was about 14 years old, my parents took me to Jindabyne, and on the way there we fished Lake Hume. We chucked some lures out into the lake and caught redfin and other stuff, and I became a mad keen fisherman. I loved it, and I pestered my dad all the time to take me fishing.



That very expensive little Spencers Creek trout

After Jindabyne we went on to a resort at Perisher, and whilst there my dad took me to this little creek called Spencers Creek, a tributary of the Snowy. I cast my small Celta spinner out and wound it back through the water, and this trout rushed up and grabbed it. And I caught it. I was very happy about this, and to be honest I think I was more hooked than the trout was. This was all pretty cool. Then I caught another one. At this point in my excitement I looked up the river and saw this bloke upstream from us waving his arms about, so I said to my dad, "What's that guy doing?" My dad is English, and he said, "Oh, he's fly fishing." I can remember this as clear as day, and I said, "Well I've got to do that." And remember, this was from a 14-year-old.

So I embarked on this quest. I had a friend at high school at the time and I discovered that he had a fly rod and reel, so I bought it from him for \$45. It was an old fibreglass thing. I know fibreglass is really cool now, but it wasn't then I can assure you.

So this began what I call my 'shameful addiction'. My counsellors tell me that the best way to overcome my addiction is to accept that I've got one, and then to talk about it. So here I am, bearing my soul.

My shameful addiction starts with fly reels. Now reels don't do much, do they? Everyone says that in fly fishing all they do is just store the line.

By the way, I must introduce a little caveat here – I'm not much into fly fishing equipment. I'm just not. You can come up to me later and say, "Jon, what you think about this latest Sage something or other mumble mumble fast action 10 foot rod?" and I'll say, "I have no idea, and what's more, nor do I have much interest." I'm keen on using gear that works, and I go to my favourite fly fishing shop and they say, "This is probably what you want," and they point me in the right direction.

Or I know other anglers who are very good and better than me, who will suggest something to me that might suit. So that's it. I don't know much about it. I just want it to work when I need it.

So, reels don't do much, and yet I've got all these reels, and I don't need any more. In fact I don't even need all of these. But I've got them. And the total cost of these reels, that I don't actually need, is about \$2,500.

And so we start our journey with my shameful addiction - spending \$2,500 on something that doesn't really do anything.

Now we go on to rods. Rods are important, and I get that. Some people say that the line is more important than the rod, whilst others tell me that the rod is more important.

Nevertheless, it would be true to say that if you have a good 6-weight rod you can pretty much do anything. You fish >>>

streams, you can go and catch bream, you can go to Millbrook Lakes and fish there, or to Christmas Island. You can in fact do everything with a 6-weight rod, you'd all agree. Right? Wrong! I need all these - ...

- 6 WEIGHT LOOMIS GL2
- 9 WEIGHT SAGE RPLXi
- 3 WEIGHT LOOMIS
- 6 WEIGHT SAGE XP 10'
- 8 WEIGHT SAGE Xi2
- 8 WEIGHT LOOMIS CROSSCURRENT
- 7 WEIGHT VISION 3 ZONE
- 5 WEIGHT LOOMIS STREAMDANCE
- 2 WEIGHT SAGE ZXL
- Total Cost \$4500

- 2 WEIGHT SAGE ZXL
- 4 WEIGHT INNOVATOR IM8
- 10 WEIGHT REDDINGTON
- 5 WEIGHT SAGE ONE
- 7 WEIGHT SAGE SALT
- 6 WEIGHT SAGE ONE
- 4 WEIGHT GREYS
- 10 WEIGHT SAGE SALT
- Total Cost \$4800

This lot would conservatively cost about \$4,500 + \$4,800 = \$9,300. And I don't need all those rods. So I've got too many fly rods and too many fly reels, and I've spent too much money on them.

Now another part of the addiction is outfits, because I do have a problem with fishing shirts as well, and I don't know how you to deal with this. And it keeps mounting up. I've got waders, lines, clothes, hats, accessories, and books, and there is probably \$4,000 worth of that. Over quite a long time, admittedly.

Now flies. I've bought flies, I've made flies, I've purchased materials for flies, and I've spent hours making flies, so I guess the cost here would be about \$15,000.



Just some of Jon's shirts

You might think that's a lot for flies, but you've got to see the stuff I've got. I'm not a hoarder, I'm actually a chucker outer. Except when it comes to fly tying equipment, where I've got mountains of it; most of which I don't need.



That crab fly

To give you an example of this, because you probably think there's no way known I've spent 15 grand on flies, let me just give you an example of this little crab fly. We went to Christmas Island and we were trying to catch these triggerfish, which are quite hard to catch. They're very cryptic, they spook sometimes, they're aggressive sometimes, and you can never be sure what you're going to get. Anyway, my friend Mark Weigall, a very good fisherman, uses this fly. And he said to me, "Jonny, they're chasing it, they're after it, they want it. This fly is the go." And he caught this fantastic fish

on this fly, so I thought, "Right, we've cracked the code for these triggerfish. No one has done it anywhere round the world, but we've worked it out, so I'll make some of these crab flies." And here they are. I think I tied 80 or 90 of them. So as you can see, this is an obsession thing. It is indeed both an addiction and an obsession. And it's a bit of a problem I've got.



... and some more of them

We're up to \$30,800 so far, and this is just on equipment. I haven't even gone fishing yet.

Now let's have a look at travel. My trips include: Snowies – 20 times @ \$500 each trip roughly = \$10,000; day trips around Melbourne environs – let's say 200 times @ \$40 each = \$8,000; Tasmania – about 36 times @ \$2,000 = \$72,000; New Zealand – 12 times @ \$5000 + \$8,000 for helicopters = \$68,000

The subtotal for travel alone is about \$158,000. Shocking isn't it. And then, when you add that to the \$30,800 for gear and flies, this little trout has so far cost me \$188,800. And I haven't gone saltwater fly fishing yet.

Let's talk about the clothes you wear when you are freshwater fishing against the clothes you wear when you are saltwater fishing. Here we have the classic trout fisherman's garb – dull and boring. So when we tell people to come to Millbrook Lakes, we say bring your polaroids, bring your cap, and make sure you wear dull-coloured clothing. Don't wear your bright yellow fluoro top, nor your 'Make America Great Again' scarlet cap. Don't wear anything that might scare the fish.

But when you go saltwater fishing it's a whole new ballgame. You wear nice coloured stuff, even fantastic leggings like I've got on here. I've had so many women admiring me in those leggings.



John looks very becoming in those leggings

Anyway, quite a few years ago my friend Mark Weigall said: "Buddy, do you want to go fishing at Weipa?" I said, "Where's that?" He said, "Up north – we'll go and catch some saltwater fish." >>>

I had never been saltwater fly fishing before. So up we went to Weipa and had a great time. I've been there quite a few times now, and it's a lovely spot to go fishing. But, of course there's a price attached.



The garb looks dull and boring Jon, but the fish looks magnificent

And when I was on the trip Rob Sloane was there too, so I got tied up with *FlyLife* magazine. I have to say that I idolised Rob, and I said to him I wouldn't mind writing an article for you. And I did. He rang me up the next week, and said, "Do you want to go to New Caledonia?" I said, "Sure." I called, and the cost to go there was about \$7,000.

Rob got this deal where kids fly free, so we went on the trip and I caught my first bonefish, which weighed 9 lb. I now love fishing for bonefish.



New Caledonia – a great place to visit

There was this guy there, Philippe, who ran the guiding operation, and he was a really odd character. He was quite good at his job, but his bedside manner was really on the nose. Rob asked him quite politely, "Philippe, do you think the bonefish will come over this flat and into this channel?" and Philippe replied, "How would I know! Why don't we just sit here in some deckchairs and watch!" I had a couple of refusals on the fly I was using, so I asked him, "Do you think I should change my fly?" He said, "I don't know." So I said, "What fly do you think I should put on?" He replied, "Why don't you ask the bonefish?" I said, "Because that's what I'm paying you to do."



Angler and guide both connected

And then we went to this place called Fakarava, which has impossibly clear water and big bonefish. A really good place and I can't wait to go back. Aitutaki is another place – once again big bonefish. Not many fish, but big ones. Fantastic. I really enjoyed it, too.

So let's see what the impact of all this has been on my finances. Weipa - 15 trips @ \$5,000 = \$75,000; New Caledonia – 2 trips @ \$7,000 = \$14,000; Cook Islands – 1 trip @ \$4,000; and Fakarava – 1 trip @ \$6,000. Sub Total = \$99,000.

So, that expensive little trout has got us up to \$287,800. That's what it's cost me so far.

And then we went to this place – Kiritimati, or Christmas Island. Mark and I have decided that we’re going to go to Christmas Island every year until we can’t go any more. So every year we go there, and when we get back we book for the next year. One option when fishing there is to go out on a skiff and watch the driver of the skiff tie some line around his big toe and troll lures behind the skiff to try to catch a big trevally. Eventually you get off the skiff and find some nice water, and the guide points the fish out for you and hopefully you put the fly in the right spot and hook up. When I was playing a fish I said to the guide, “There’s another fish over there. Why don’t you have a go?” And then we were both hooked up.



Of course fly fishing is a great investment with fish like this

Trips to Christmas Island cost \$5,000 each, so that adds another \$20,000 to the total. You don’t have to go overseas though – you can go to Exmouth in West Australia to catch bonefish. It has beautiful clear water. When we were there, there was a school of bonefish coming along a flat, and we got the fly out in front of them and hooked onto one. The bonefish took off, and it probably weighed 8 or 9 lb, and Brett Wolf, the guide, said: “Let him go, it’s okay. There’s nothing here. No rocks to catch the line, so let him run. There are no problems except for that giant tiger shark over there.” And there was this massive shark, the biggest I’ve ever seen.

It looked like a railway platform. I think the bonefish was too small to bother the shark, so we ended up getting it in.

This obsession of mine led to me buying into a trout fishing business. I invested some money into Millbrook Lakes and I’m not sure whether it’s a great investment or not, but I love it. Then, on a more sombre note, here is a picture of the house that I used to own, but my first wife left me because I went fishing too often, and she got the house. So add that into the costs.

So our little Spencers Creek trout has caused me to fork out over half a million dollars. Time to reflect.



The skiff driver hooked the trolling line around his toe. Passengers were all watching anxiously for the first hook up.

Was it all worth it? There are plenty of other things that I could have done instead of going fly fishing. If only my dad had not taken me to Spencers Creek I could have rejoiced in a number of other activities. I could have gone swimming, or I could have spent my time watching sport, or bicycle riding, or bullfighting, or figure skating, or soccer, or cheerleading. But I just chose to go fishing,

A \$613,800 investment?? Well, over 36 years it’s been a wonderful constant, with lots of good, almost zero bad, heaps of physical and mental health benefits, and many great friends. OF COURSE IT’S A GOOD INVESTMENT!!

Vale Terry Simmons

As we indicated in our last issue, Terry Simmons died last December. The following tribute to his life was provided by his wife Lorraine.



Terence Llewellyn Simmons:
January 25, 1940 – December 6, 2017

Terry was born in Manilla, New South Wales. His family moved to Sydney when he was young, and this is where he completed his primary and secondary schooling. He then attended the University of New South Wales where he completed a science degree in textile science.

For most of his working life Terry worked for the Fletcher Jones organisation in Warrnambool. In 1969 he was awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship to study and research textiles in Sweden and Yorkshire (UK).

Terry's greatest passion was music, particularly Early Music. He taught himself to play the recorder and achieved a very high standard of performance. He also sang in various choirs and conducted the Warrnambool Symphony Orchestra.

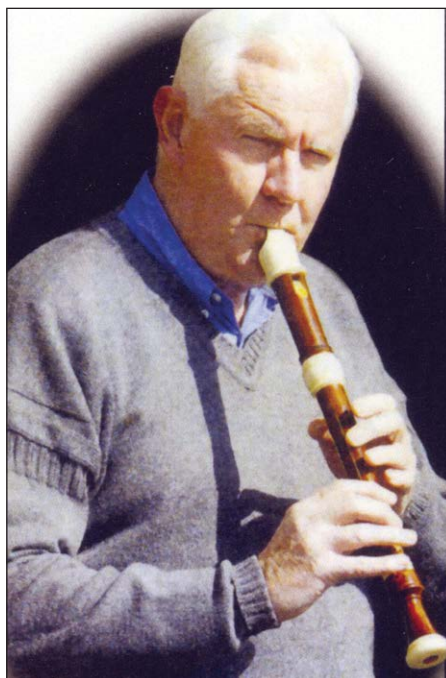
Terry joined the Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club, and after moving to Ballarat in 2005 he took up fly fishing more seriously. He enjoyed many trips with the VFFA and Ballarat Fly Fishers to New Zealand and Tasmania. Whenever possible he travelled to Melbourne to attend VFFA meetings. It was a great disappointment to him that he didn't take up fly fishing earlier in his life.

On our personal trips to New Zealand and Tasmania he fly fished whenever he could, and together we enjoyed the wonderful scenery invariably found in fly fishing areas.

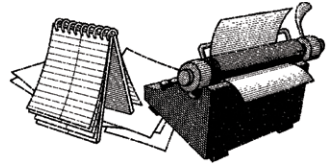
Terry was a Rotarian for over 50 years. He also loved everything French – the food, wine, cars, conversation, and travel. While he didn't ever fish on any of our many trips to Provence in the south of France, he visited many of their fly fishing tackle shops.

Terry died peacefully on December 6, 2017, and is sadly missed by all of his family.

Lorraine Simmons



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"O, Sir, doubt not that angling is an art. Is it not an art to deceive a trout with an artificial fly?"
(Isaak Walton)

"The greatest gift you can give another fisherman is to put a good fish back." (Lee Wulff)

"Luck affects everything; let your fly always be cast. In the stream where you least expect it, there will be fish." (Ovid)

"Wherever the trout are, it's beautiful." (Thomas Masaryck)

I was reading a popular UK fly fishing magazine recently and came across an article by one of their fly tying experts. The fly being discussed was a dry fly tied with a parachute hackle. The tier got to the point where he wound the hackle feather down the post in progressive close turns (as we all do), then to complete the fly had tied a few firm turns of thread around the base of the wing post, thus locking the hackle feather safely in. Then I spotted this bit that really grabbed my attention- he took a brush from a small bottle of superglue and dabbed liquid superglue along the last 2 cm of tying thread, and then wound a few final turns with the superglue-soaked thread. He gave the glue some time to dry, then cut the thread. No knots, no fiddling with whip finishers. Just a very simple way to complete the fly.

The writer of the article then indicated that he often used the same method to complete his nymphs – he simply built up the head of the nymph with thread soaked in superglue, let the superglue dry, then cut the thread. A neat way to complete a fly, and a reminder to me that good fly tiers are full of such tricks – clever techniques and methods they have come up with to simplify the task.

Over the years I've developed a few of my own, though most of mine are

just ways to get around my fly tying deficiencies. When I'm tying parachute flies, such as the parachute Adams and others of that ilk that require wing posts of calf tail, I gave up trying to master that material years ago. White polypropylene is much easier to work with as a wing post, and the trout, the final arbiters of such underhand methods, don't seem to worry at all.

To add to my heresies, when tying the wonderful parachute Adams in the smaller sizes – 16s and 18s – I've given up trying to tie in the two required hackle feathers. The official method requires both a brown and a grizzly hackle tied in as the parachute hackles. But tying in two separate hackle feathers on really small flies is quite tedious and difficult. So while no one is looking, I use just one of the hackle feathers – usually the brown, though occasionally the grizzly when the mood takes. I know there are good reasons why the two hackles are considered necessary, but again the trout haven't complained or mounted a protest. (I do try to stop people peering into my fly box though.)

Another favourite fly of mine is the Royal Wulff, which I always tie with a parachute hackle and a single white wing post, again of white polypropylene. The proper Royal >>>

Wulff has two white wings sticking out, one on each side. But unless the fly is tied by a skilled tier (rather than an inept mug like me) it tends to fall over and lie on one side when you cast it. But a parachute hackle version never does. So, tie in a white wing post, tie a parachute hackle around it, and your Royal Wulff floats like a champ, always lies upright in the current, is easy to see, and catches fish.

Another fly tying suggestion I came across some time ago was using the bristles cut from paintbrushes as tails for larger size nymphs (stoneflies?). Get yourself a black paintbrush with reasonably soft bristles and you've got tails for a lot of nymphs.

If you run out of dubbing wax when tying flies with dubbed bodied, then those yellow UHU glue sticks from any newsagent or stationery shop work fine.

But there are lots of convenient tricks that can be applied to our actual fishing, too. I've come across some useful ones over the years. None are original – they are all suggestions I've read about or have been told about by other anglers.

For example, when you arrive and park your car at the place where you are going to fish, pull out one of those cheap blue plastic drop sheets that cost just a few dollars at reject shops, and spread it on the ground near the boot of your car. You can stand on it whilst getting into your waders (no prickles or stones). Then you can pile up on the sheet the items you intend packing to take with you – sunglasses, hat, fly boxes, drink, nippers, sandwiches, suntan cream, etc etc. A good way not to forget something important.

I lived in New Zealand in 1981 for a year, and the president of the fly fishing club I joined there always carried a pair of secateurs in his vest. It's again a habit that I've got into. A few weeks ago I was

fishing a section of the Ovens River near Bright, and I'd reached a point where to get any further upstream I needed to climb out of the river and clamber along a track through thick blackberries. And of course there were lots of blackberry branches and stalks sticking out over the track. So the secateurs came out and quickly cleared the way ahead.

Another trick I read about suggested attaching a magnet to your fishing vest. A small but fairly strong magnet now hangs on the front of my vest. It is very useful when changing flies – I put either the fly I'm removing or the one I want to tie on onto the magnet as convenient storage. It saves putting flies in your mouth or dropping them in the grass.

Finally, a neat cast Peter Hayes demonstrates. We've all seen pictures in books and magazines of anglers using the bow and arrow cast in tight places. They usually show the angler holding the fly in their left-hand and bending the rod back to then shoot the fly out – usually not very far. Peter's far better technique is, if you are a right-hander caster, to hold the junction of your fly line and leader in your left hand with your arm high above your left shoulder and your leader falling down in a loose pile at your feet with your fly lying unencumbered on the ground. Then you hold your rod in your right hand low down at knee level, with the rod back bent in a large U-shape (so no danger of snapping the rod because the bend is not sharp). Then when you let the line go free with your left hand you get a much longer cast than the feeble attempts you get when holding the fly. This is a very useful cast that I often find helpful in those bushy little creeks.

I'm sure there are countless other simple tricks and strategies that can make our fly fishing easier and more effective. I'd be delighted if readers would email me their

special suggestions and we can list some more in a future issue.

In the meantime, tight lines and wet nets, and buy yourself a bottle of superglue.

Lyndon



Big River Report

This year's trip to John Pilkington's magnificent resort at Enoch's Point on the Big River was again a wonderful experience for the 15 members who attended. The weather was kind, though a tad windy at times, and the river was in great shape, running at its normal height and very clear. As is often the case the best feature of the weekend was the great food and wonderful camaraderie. The fishing is not always easy in the Big River, and the fish caught this year were generally small. Mike Jarvis described them as juveniles that 'should have remained safely tucked up in bed!'

Fortunately, most members seemed to catch at least one or two. Kossy did

well with his nymphs, particularly his nondescript brown possum nymph, and



Fishing can be thirsty work



The Big River is very attractive water

Bruce and Corey Houghton walked down the long, steep Dane's Spur to fish some fairly inaccessible water, where they were justly rewarded with a couple of good size rainbows for their efforts.

John Pilkington and David Wark performed magnificently as chef and deputy chef for the weekend, and the Saturday night roast dinner and sticky date pudding, served and eaten under the stars, was again a highlight of the weekend.

John's brother Alan Pilkington, who lives in Seattle (USA), was in Melbourne for a short visit, so also attended the weekend. To an interested gathering he described the sorts of gear used in Washington State, where he fished his home rivers for large steelhead. Kossy reports that there was a very entertaining 'gear junky' session, with members swapping rods and lines and trying various new combinations.



A feature of Enochs Point is the profusion of Australian birdlife

Most members packed up on the Sunday morning and returned home, taking with them choice memories of a truly wonderful weekend.



Roast lamb under the stars on Saturday night



Bruce Houghton with one of the rainbows he landed



Hughie Maltby carving the roast



It wasn't all about the fishing – the social life was a major feature of the weekend



Casting at Northern Suburbs Fly Fishing Club

Members interested in competition casting will be interested to hear that the Northern Suburbs Fly Fishing Club is holding the Northern Open Casting Competition on Sunday, April 15. This event is open to anyone.

Registration opens at 8:00am, with a \$10 registration fee. First casting commences at 9:00am.

This is both an Open and a Handicap event, and competitors will cast in events including:

- 1) Dry fly
- 2) ICF Skish
- 3) ACA Skish
- 4) Wet fly

There are trophies and prizes for all events, including a prize for a 'Lucky Score'. A BBQ will be provided at no extra cost to registered participants.

Interested participants can obtain more information from Nick, NSFFC Secretary, by emailing him at secretary@flyfishing.org.au

FISH HABITAT WORKSHOP

SATURDAY 28TH APRIL 2018 AT MYRTLEFORD

ALL SAINTS FOOTBALL & NETBALL CLUB (ABLETT FUNCTION ROOM)

35 LEWIS AVE. MYRTLEFORD

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM (CHECK-IN 9:30 AM)

IF YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT RESTORING
RIVER HEALTH AND FISHERIES, COME ALONG
AND FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

* EVENING FLY & LURE CASTING

* BBQ DINNER

* OVERNITE CAMPING

* SUNDAY FISHING SESSION ON
LAKE BUFFALO AND LOCAL STREAMS

(BYO CAMPING / FISHING GEAR AND REFRESHMENTS)

FREE EVENT - RSVP BY 14TH APRIL

REGISTER AT:

[FACEBOOK.COM/TROUTFOUNDATION](https://www.facebook.com/troutfoundation) - CLICK 'EVENTS'

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LEAVE YOUR NAME, CONTACT DETAILS AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE

SEATING IS LIMITED - REGISTER EARLY

(REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES)

This Habitat Workshop is supported by the 'Applied Aquatic Ecology Research Hub'

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Target One Million
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NORTH EAST
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



GOULBURN
BROKEN
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



Omeo fishing

(... by Humpy)

It has been an interesting season this year in the Omeo area. Basically, the trout fishing has been fine all season. Even on opening weekend, when the water temperature was only 4°C, a fair number of trout were caught. Since then the fishing has been good to very good.

During the summer we were fortunate in that we didn't have too many hot days. The water temperature crept up into the low 20s in January, but by February there had been quite a few cool days, and the nights were cool, too. So most of the rivers were running at about 19 to 21 degrees, and the trout were comfortable.

It also helped that during the summer period the water flows were generally at an ideal level. We had some excellent rain in early summer, followed by showers midway through January. However, February and early March have been really dry and, as a result, the rivers have dropped quite a bit. They are very clear, and hence the fish are spooky in the smaller waters.

This year has been an excellent grasshopper season. Any river flowing through farmland has boasted large numbers of hoppers. These have thinned out a little in early autumn, due to the dry conditions and the pastures being grazed very short. Having said that, this year has been and continues to be a great year for fishing dry flies. The most successful flies have been hopper patterns or big bushy dries such as a Royal Wulff or Humpy. Evenings have seen caddis as well, along



A fine brown from the Mitta

with a smattering of other insects, so an Elk Hair Caddis has done well.

The Mitta River has been good all season, and continues to fish well. It still has a reasonable flow and a decent evening rise when conditions are favourable. The Gibbo River, on the other hand, has been low and is not fishing well. The Bundarra River is one of our favourites and has produced good fishing all year. However, at the moment it is low and clear and the fish can be spooky. The Cobungra River is fishing well to hoppers, but Livingston Creek is low and fishing poorly.

This year we have caught some nice fish. There are plenty around between half to one pound, and fish of 1 to 2 pounds are showing up regularly. It is good to see this range of sizes, and there has been the odd trout to 3 pounds amongst them, too.

The indicators are good for autumn. All we need is a little rain in the near future and we should have some great late season fishing.

Fabulous Days on the Goulburn

(... from Rick Wallace)

There are few hatches – or more correctly falls – that I enjoy fishing more than the annual emergence of willow grubs. These tasty morsels transfix trout, and those pursuing them, like nothing else.

Fishing opportunities have been few and far between for me this summer, but I was able to sneak out to the Goulburn for a full day in late February. We all like to fly out to New Zealand, Tasmania or even Patagonia to chase the superlative trout fishing on offer in these places, but in the last few seasons the Goulburn, while rarely easy, has offered up fishing that has been almost the equal of these marquis destinations.

I enjoyed some fabulous fishing casting cicada patterns to fat healthy trout last season on the Goulburn, and to get onto the grubs in one of my few forays up the highway this season really hammered home how well this river can fish.



Two magnificent images of Goulburn River browns rising – photos courtesy of Antony Boliancu

I parked the car and strolled down to the river in waders and short sleeves, thinking a hopper would be my first choice of fly with each footstep scaring up clouds of locusts. But once into the undergrowth, fresh possibilities arose.

The willows scarcely looked stripped of leaves, but sure enough a steady plop of grubs was falling on the water and exciting our fishy friends.



The result was a red-letter day of fishing with some nice fish to 3lb to the net, but more importantly for me, it was a day of discovery.

One such fish of four pounds offered one of these classic learning opportunities. In truth this fish schooled me well and truly. It was sitting in a little run under a canopy of willows in a classic Goulburn backwater of the kind so prevalent once the flow hits 4,000 ML.

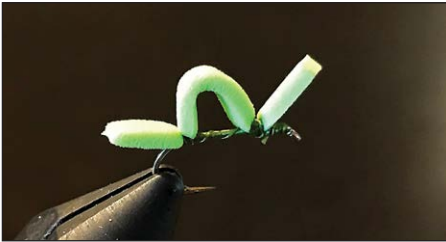
Transfixed really is the right word for these willow-grubbing trout. They abandon all thoughts of pretty much everything else, along with their natural caution, when the grubs are on the menu.

They stick up high in the water column relying on the water flow to bring the grubs to them, or more often prowling the backwaters at speed mopping up the hapless larvae. This one was doing a combination of both – relying on the flow for the bulk of his food, but when the rate of the fall dropped off he would cut laps through the backwater slurping down grubs.

I approached with caution and fired off a cast. The fish locked on to the grub pattern, zoomed up to it with a flick of the tail, took an agonisingly long look at the fly, only to reject the offering. I kept casting whilst creeping ever closer. I need not have bothered too much with such caution, as with a backdrop of heavy foliage and the fish sitting close to the surface and fixated with the grubs, stealth was not so necessary.

I tried three more casts for the same result – the fish would eyeball, and then refuse, the false grub, but keep chowing down on the naturals.

Something was clearly wrong – my hand-tied grubs were of the C-shaped variety with the foam tied down at two points on the shank of the hook. Tying on flies of a darker shade of green produced a change, but for the worse – no interest at all.



Rick's deadly little willow grub pattern

At least I knew I initially had the colour right as I swapped back to the original shade. Looking at the naturals, my foam was probably a bit more thickly cut, so I hacked away at the fly with the scissors between rejections to try to thin it out. Still to no avail. I was starting to scratch my head and wonder if getting schooled by this first fish would be an omen for how the day would turn out.

I'd like to claim that what happened next was a deliberate tactical change, but it was just a dose of good old fashioned

luck. My last desultory cast before I was set to give up on this fine fish landed a metre to his right just centimetres away from the grass lined bank. This time he swooped over and grabbed the grub without a hint of caution and I was up tight to fine Goulburn brown.



Connecting with another Goulburn River willow grub feeder

Ultimately, after a brief struggle in the timber-lined run this lovely fish popped the 4X tippet (memo to self - 3X tippet for willows!), and swum off into the depths. As for me, I was happy to add another trick in the kit bag. We all know about avoiding silhouettes when polaroiding, but the same applies to our flies. Clear, slow water gives the fish a great chance to pick up any faults in the fly's form. But cast in close to the bank and the fish's line of sight brings a visual backdrop of bankside grass and shrubs into play, and all of a sudden any minor imperfections are nowhere near as obvious.

I love these breakthrough moments or learnings in fly fishing. I can still remember discovering the advantage a cliff or stand of trees as a backdrop makes to polaroiding visibility on grey days.

I can't say I needed this little trick again during the course of what was a fantastic day. Other fish – admittedly all slightly smaller – weren't as fussy. Most were perfectly happy to attack >>>

my grub patterns. There's few things as exciting as creeping among the willow branches, spying your quarry, flicking out a little cast and watching these superb browns race across to eat it.

The fights are usually quick and dirty. Hand to hand combat and more than a bit of luck is usually necessary to keep them out of the timber. For me it's all about getting the eat, but it is nice to get a few on the bank too. This day I think I hooked ten and landed six, all solid fish.

Days like this really build your enthusiasm, and I am already tying up some variants on my early willow grub flies with thin versions and others shaped more like the Greek letter Omega, along with some straight ones for a bit of variety.



Nice one Rick

Work has conspired to keep me away from the willow-lined backwaters of the Goulburn, and the grubs are likely gone by now, so I haven't had a chance to test my new models against the river's exacting spotty judges.

The last Victorian trip I managed this season was just as much of an enigma as the willow grub challenge I have described here, but with nowhere near as pleasing a result.



... and another

Friend Dan Lovecek and I fished the King River, both upstream and downstream of the William Hovell dam for a humiliating double donut – zero fish over the two sessions. It was a winery weekend with wives and friends, so the pain was dulled somewhat by enjoyment of non-fishing activities in a beautiful part of the state. But it got us thinking about what's happening with this river as we saw relatively few fish.

Locals say that below the dam predation from Murray Cod has hurt the trout stocks. Perhaps not a bad problem to have, to be honest – we'll come loaded for cod next time and fish further downstream.

Any thoughts or intel that VFFA members have on this would be most welcome. Lest anyone think my pessimism about the King stems from one failed session, it is actually the third time in a row I have blanked on this beautiful looking stream, after my first try in its clear bubbling waters last year yielded a three pound brown on the second cast.

As I said to Dan at one point during this unproductive session, if you set out to design a trout stream you would end



The Goulburn is our biggest Victorian trout stream, and also one of our most productive

up with something pretty close to the King River around Whitfield – nice runs, pocket water, pools, stable banks and lots of streamside vegetation.

But given the rumours of the cod, Dan and I were willing – if not happy – to accept getting skunked. The upper King should have been a different proposition. It's a bonafide blue ribbon trout stream and is a beautiful piece of water.

We got up at 6, heads still a bit bleary after too much local sangiovese, and rumbled up to the water above the dam in Dan's Discovery. I'd tied up some black crickets knowing they are a prevalent food source at this time of year and the trout up here love them.

We couldn't tempt anything up with our terrestrials, and went through the gamut of attractor and imitative dries and then nymphs for no result. We only saw two fish in four hours before rejoining the

main party to contemplate our failure over a few glasses of wine.

We reached no firm conclusions, although the water was kind of warm (next time I need to bring a thermometer) and the literature says this is a stream that fishes best before Australia Day.

One session is hardly a guide, but we couldn't blame the cod up here in the high country above the dam and only seeing two fish in a kilometre of skinny water is a bit of a worry.

Again, I'd be happy to hear how VFFA members fared on the Upper King this season and if they have any secrets to impart on conquering what must be one of the best-looking trout streams in the Victorian Alps.



Report from Way Out West - Tassie in January 2018

You never know what you're going to get when you plan a trip to Tassie. When I was teaching full-time from 1976 until I retired in 2005, I usually fished Tassie in January. I mostly camped out and combined my fishing with bush walking, and often had my best fishing towards the end of the month, just before returning to Victoria for the start of the school year. Then, for most of the last decade in my retirement, I have been joined by other Warrnambool Fly Fishers, including Bob Loch, for a Tassie Trip. Initially we rented a house at Miena for a week or so in January, but in recent years our trips have been in early December.



A rather large Lake Ada tiger snake coming across to check out the arrivals

Sometimes the fishing has been great, with full lakes, warm settled weather, blue-sky days good for polaroiding trout in the Western Lakes, overcast and humid days with excellent dun hatches and plenty of spinners, and breezy days with gum beetles and Great Lake beetles falling on the water to bring the fish up. On other years it was hard going, with few hatches, fish populations depleted by cormorants, or low water drought conditions. Or there was a blast of arctic air, freezing rain and snow to put an end to any hatches and make conditions very unpleasant for fishing.

We fished the usual places – Little Pine, Penstock, Arthurs, the 19 Lagoons area

– with good bags some days. There were other days when nary a trout was seen, hooked or caught, and we would return to our rental house beaten and fishless and reminded of just how tough fishing Tassie can be.



Jim Blakeslee with a fine Western Lakes brown

So, this year, for a change, I decided to revert to my previous habit of fishing Tassie in late January. Bob couldn't make it, so I was joined this time by Lester Walton and his mate Mark, along with Chris Beaton, Alan Richardson and Zoran Vasic. When we arrived at Miena it was a glorious, sunny, warm blue-sky day.

We moved into our accommodation, had lunch, then rigged up and headed off for an afternoon at Little Pine, to find a few duns popping up and some black spinners in clusters near rocks along the Impossible's Shore. There was the occasional rise by a fish, but they were mostly oncers. However, there was one fish that kept rising fairly regularly to spinners along the shore to my left. On my third cast to "the spot" the fish sipped down my #12 Great Lake Beetle. I waited ("God Save the Queen"), lifted, and was into a good fish. It jumped, then sprinted out towards the safety of weeds and deeper water offshore. After a short battle, I skidded my first brownie of the trip onto the bank for a photo, then released it to live and fight another day. It

was a promising start to the trip, but this was the last rise I saw. However, I did pick up another fish blind casting along the shore.



Zoran Vasic did well too on those Western Lakes

Back at the house that evening we tucked into a hearty meal of steak, salad and a glass or two of red, and discussed our moves for the next few days. The weather was predicted to continue warm and sunny with a north-easterly breeze, so the plan was to head up top and try to find risers or polaroid fish in the Western Lakes. And this is what we did.



Jim is a top angler and catches a lot of fish in Tasmania

As it turned out, we had warm, pleasant conditions for most of the week, but the fishing was hard work. There were very few duns, spinners or beetles flying about, and only an occasional rise. There hadn't been any good rain for months, so the water in many of the lagoons was low and the fish spread out. Since they weren't rising the task was to locate them. Other than blind flogging, we had the greatest success when we walked and walked and looked.

When we were able to polaroid a fish and cast a beetle pattern to them, the beetle was usually taken without hesitation. At the end of the day most of us had managed to land two or three fish from waters such as Double Lagoon, Botsford, Kay, Rocky, Lake Ada, Ada Lagoon and Lake Augusta to name a few.

The tail-end of the week was hopeless. Fishing was reduced to blind casting into a gale, as the weather had turned cloudy and cold, with a strong southerly wind and pelting rain. Even snow on the last morning.



Waking up to snow – any sort of weather is possible in January in the Tasmanian Highlands

It was a relief getting back to the rental house, propping in front of the fire and thawing out with a glass of anti-freeze in one hand and a plate of biscuits, cheese, salami and olives within easy reach of the other. We had started off the week with summer conditions and, once again, finished with winter conditions in January. That's Tassie for you.

Fly Fishing The Streams Of The Drakensberg – South Africa

... by Peter Brigg. Peter has very kindly provided this article for *Fly Lines*. He lives in South Africa, and caught his first trout in the headwaters of the Buffalo River in the Amatola Mountains of the Eastern Cape in 1955. He has been involved over the years in a wide range of fly fishing activities from retail business to clinics and guiding. His particular passion is for light tackle and high-altitude streams where he also pursues his other interests of hiking and photography. He is the author of two books, *Call of the Stream* – a fly fisher's passion for hunting trout in mountain streams (2008), and *South African Fishing Flies* – an anthology of milestone patterns (2017). He also has a blog - <https://callofthestream.wordpress.com/about/>

I suspect that little is known internationally about fly fishing in South Africa yet there is so much to offer the angler in this country. There is quality fly fishing to be had in regions such as the Western and North Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. Not only small mountain streams, but classical rivers and magnificent lakes where double figure trout are not uncommon.

Then there are rivers where the fly fisher can cast to the powerful indigenous yellowfish, or if it is your preference, the game fish of the Indian Ocean. South Africa is a land of sunshine and wide-open spaces, of unforgettable scenery and wildlife. It is also a place to get away from it all and where you can enjoy the hospitality and rich cultures of the people of this country.

However, this article is specifically about the KwaZulu Natal Drakensberg mountain region of South Africa, known locally as "The Berg". An area fairly recently granted World Heritage Site status - uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park covers some 243,000 ha and is situated at altitudes varying between 1280 metres and 3500 metres. The Park boasts two major Heritage Site criteria - cultural, having one of the world's greatest collections of rock-art with over 35,000 San paintings in some 600 known sites, and the vast natural environment,

providing the visitor with breathtakingly beautiful and unique mountain landscapes rich in indigenous fauna and flora, much of it endemic to the area.



Brown trout are beautiful in any country

Out of the deep folds of the earth below the towering majestic peaks, many sparkling streams rise and begin their long journey towards the warm Indian Ocean on the eastern seaboard. It is in the high altitude feeder streams such as the iNjisuthi, the emHlwazini, iDidima, the Bushmans, umKomazi, the iNtonjelana to name a few, where the descendants of the original seeding of brown and rainbow trout nearly 120 years ago, have made their home.

It was Yorkshireman John Clarke Parker who was credited with pioneering the introduction of trout into these streams. Parker settled in this country to farm in the then Natal Province in the 1800s.

Despite many early failures, with dogged persistence and the encouragement and support of certain individuals in his home country and with grants from the Natal Government of the day, he eventually, successfully seeded many of the Drakensberg streams with brown trout in the mid 1890s.

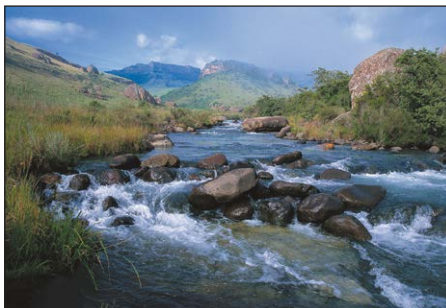
The freestone streams of The Berg are set in arguably the most spectacular mountain scenery this country has to offer. Their gradients are steep with water as clear as the mountain air, cascading down boulder strewn runs, through emerald green glides hewn out of the bedrock over millions of years. The valley floors are cluttered with massive fallen blocks of sandstone from the strata high above, and the banks are protected in places by precipitous cliffs, indigenous forests, grasses and woody vegetation.

In these streams the rainbows are feisty and energetic, the browns ever selective and cautious. They are masters of disguise, needle-sharp and can at times seemingly evaporate into their dappled world of the pebbled stream-bed without trace, let alone, notice. In the uplands the fly fisher can be alone all day, fishing miles of river away from civilisation, in crystalline places where the black eagle and bearded vulture soar effortlessly in wide blue skies, where kingfishers and herons haunt rivers and where you may hear the bark of sentinel baboons from the ramparts or the eerie cry of a jackal at sunset. It is home also to the eland, mountain reed buck and the shy oribi.

Like most South African streams, water levels can be inconsistent at times, either very thin or raging torrents. There is little one can do about low water but on the other hand, fortunately at these altitudes, the spates experienced after heavy summer storms usually fine off as quickly as they rise. The best months in my experience are during spring, from late September through to the end

of November, depending on snow-melt from good winter snowfalls and early summer rains, and then my preferred time, autumn, from mid-March to the close of the season at the end of May.

The streams support a rich insect life, consisting mainly of a variety of small mayfly nymphs, midges and caddis. Terrestrials such as beetles, ants and hoppers make up a fair percentage of the trout's diet, especially during the summer months. Hatches are somewhat erratic but occur usually around midday and at last light. It is no secret that mayfly nymphs are by a country mile the trout's favourite food, and a carefully drifted imitation will bring the greatest chance of success.



Another magnificent South African trout stream

But, it is the quality of the dry fly fishing in these waters that sets the blood coursing through the veins of most fly fishers. The trout will on most days rise freely to surface imitations that mimic emerging and terrestrial insects. It must be said that perfect imitations are not necessarily the recipe for success, but rather flies with a buggy appearance that have distinguishing trigger features of the ever-present food items and are representative in general shape, size and colour of the natural.

If it is challenging fishing you are after, this is it. These wild trout are as wary and alert as you will find >>>

anywhere. Ultra-light tackle - 0 to 3 weight lines, medium and medium to fast actioned 7 foot to 8'6" rods, floating lines, 9 to 12 foot leaders with fine 5X and 6X tippets, and flies from size 14s down to size 20s are suited perfectly to the diminutive conditions. The emphasis is on stealth and careful presentation rather than distance. Up close and fine, short, drag-free drifts are important, just as are the use of strike indicators when nymphing.

If it's bigger fish and larger rivers you are after then these mountain streams as they join other tributaries grow into more classical rivers at lower altitudes in pastoral surroundings. Here as the waterways meander sedately through wide valleys, the gradients flatten, and the speed slows into long deep runs protected by willowed grassy banks. There are fewer fish, but they do grow to an average of 1½ lbs. Quite often trout of

3 lb and more are caught in these reaches, with fish up to 5 - 6 lb, surprising the angler occasionally.

You will of course need heavier tackle along these stretches. Most local anglers use 8 to 9 ft, 4 weight rods, but nothing more than 5 weights.

For the more adventurous, a hike into the mountains and a few nights under canvas while you pursue the trout of these streams in pristine wilderness surroundings will be a memorable experience. For those wanting more of the creature comforts when the day is done, you can return to one of the many well-appointed chalets or lodges. Here you can relax, enjoy the warmth of the hospitality and rest contented under a canopy of a million stars, for tomorrow will be another glorious day in Africa.

(written in July 2009)



A gorgeous South African high country stream

FLY OF THE MONTH

The Bag Fly Revisited

(These notes were kindly provided by Mick Hall.

They are a short summary of a comprehensive article on the Bag Fly written by Mick in 2008.)



It must be twenty years or more when the late Lindsay Haslem and I were fishing the Goulburn River near Alexandra. The day was fine, the river was low, and the fishing was lousy - well, until we met this elderly angler bait casting his way up the river using a minnow and sporting a couple of nice fish in his bag. We talked together, and this old guy swore by some preserved minnows that had recently come on to the market. "Those flies of yours don't work here. You need to get some of these minnows to use on your fly gear," he said, as he walked on his way.

Sometime after he left I found a packet of preserved minnows near where we met. He must have dropped them while we were talking. Looking at this packet of very dead dull-eyed creatures in the palm of my hand I thought, "Why not?"

I looked in my fly box for a hook large enough to do the job, selected an old battered Muddler Minnow, and stripped all the deer hair off along with the wings. This left just a small stubble of deer hair, part of the tail, and the gold lurex body. "That will do," I thought as I threaded the hook through the minnow and tied a half hitch of leader over the bait to help secure the lot. I roll cast it over the river.

Well, the bait went one way and the fly another. "Stupid idea anyway," I muttered, placing the rod over my shoulder and slowly wading back to shore dragging the line behind me. Well, you guessed it: a fish snatched the remnants of my Muddler. Lindsay called out: "You got one mate!" "Wait till you see what I caught it on," was my reply.

So a quiet morning turned into a fruitful afternoon. I can't remember just how many fish were taken that afternoon, but it was enough for us to tie replicas of that stripped-down Muddlers for many years.

Five or six years later, Jim Cree, a member of Yarra Valley Flyfishers, was talking about catching fish on the "Bag Fly". He told me how he had met some old guy on the Goulburn River who had used this fly in the Dome Hole below the old wall of Lake Eildon. They had tied strands of hessian fibres from an old sack along the shank of a hook and, if my memory is correct, that's all it was.

The Dome Hole is now submerged, but in its heyday it was a mecca for trout fishermen of that era. Torrents of water would flow over the old spillway, cascading into a large pool below called the Dome Hole. Schools of smelt would be washed over the wall to the waiting trout below.

Jim Cree's version of the Bag Fly had a gold lurex body, and on seeing his fly, it looked very similar to the stripped down Muddler Lindsay and I had been using.

Ten years later my wife and I sold our home in Melbourne and shifted, lock, stock and barrel to Eildon. Soon after settling in there I met an elderly gent named Bill Austin. Bill was a long-time resident of Eildon and even in his 96th year was still fishing with a fly. At one time he and his wife owned a lodge on the banks of the Goulburn River within easy walking distance of the Dome Hole, historically one of the most famous Victorian fishing venues.

Famous anglers of old such as Reg Lyne, Theo Brunn, Vic McCausland, J. M. Gillies, Lord Stonehaven, Bert Webb, and George Heller frequently fished these waters, and most stayed with Bill and his wife Mavis at their lodge.

In my discussions with Bill I asked if he knew about the Bag Fly. "Oh yes," he said, "I think I have one," as he poked through his fly box. I held his original in my hand, and asked the obvious question: did he know who first designed it? Bill was unsure, but thought that perhaps the late Reg Lyne had something to do with it. I later discovered, however, that it was George Heller, a close friend of Reg Lyne, who originally designed the Bag Fly. The original pattern is an excellent representation of the smelt still found in many of our lakes. However, even back in those early days there were a number of variations.

The pattern I found most useful is now given below. (Other variations can be found by referring to issue 5 of *Freshwater Fishing magazine*.)

The Materials:

Hook: Partridge Limerick - Sizes 4 - 8.

Thread: Black 6/0.

Tail: Black hen hackle fibres.

Rib: Medium to heavy copper wire – six or seven turns to protect the gold tinsel.

Body: Gold tinsel or lurex.

Wing: Plumbers' jute fibres (hessian).

Crest: Hot orange cock hackle fibres.

Throat Hackle: Black hen hackle fibres.

Tying Notes:

1. Run some thread down the hook shank and tie in the tail. Also tie in the copper wire rib and the tinsel for the body.
2. Run the thread back to just short of the eye, and then wind the tinsel on to complete the body.
3. Tie off the tinsel, then wind on the ribbing and tie it off too.
4. Turn the fly over in the vice and carefully tie in the black fibres for the throat hackle.
5. Turn the fly back and tie in a small quantity of jute or hessian fibres for the wing. These should extend well beyond the hook bend, as shown in the photo above.
6. Trim away the excess hessian fibres and tie a small quantity hot orange cock hackle fibres in over the top of the hessian fibres as a crest.
7. Wind on a few turns of black tying thread to complete the head, and whip finish to complete the fly.

Note: In recent years I have been adding a gold bead to the head of this fly to improve its action, and it has worked very well.

Fishing the Bag Fly:

The key to successfully fishing the Bag Fly is the type of water you fish it in. Look for medium flowing water just below the rapids as it enters a pool - the type of water that's wavy, but not broken. Keep your rod tip low to the water and in a straight line to the fly. Expect a strike as the line swings back across the current. Keep your fly submerged and avoid drag. If this happens, take a pace or two downstream - this will allow the fly to sink again. Do not mend your line unless absolutely necessary, as this creates slack line and you will miss any gentle takes.

VFFA 2018 meetings & other activities

April 2018

- 9 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
14 – 15 Donger Weekend at Bairnsdale
Event Co-ordinator – Mike Jarvis
19 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Guest Speaker: Charley May, professional fishing guide.

May 2018

- 7 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
17 Thursday VFFA Auction – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Hugh Maltby and Peter Boag are co-ordinating this event

June 2018

- 4 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Guest Speaker: Terry George, ATF president
29 – July 1 Weekend trip to Lakes Purrumbete and Bullen Merri, where a VFFA team will compete with a team from the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers for the Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge

July 2018

- 2 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
19 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
Guest Speaker: TBC
28 Saturday Warrnambool Annual Dinner

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2017 Annual Dinner:

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