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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

AUGUST 2010

Organisation No. A0024750J

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NEXT MEETING – THE 78th ANNUAL DINNER

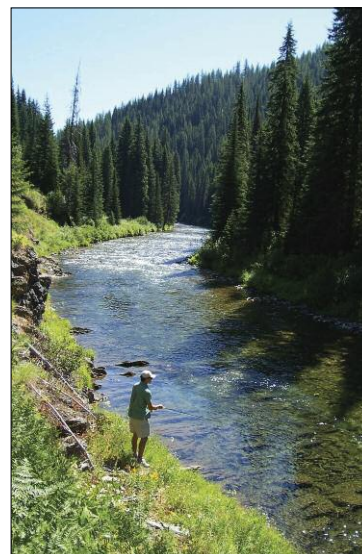
AT THE KELVIN CLUB, 6:30 FOR 7:00 PM, FRIDAY AUGUST 27, 2010

June Meeting - Jim Blakeslee

Jim has been a VFFA member for many years, and was the guest speaker at one of our Annual dinners some years ago. He is our Western District newsletter correspondent and contributes regular monthly reports on the fishing around the Warrnambool area. He gave an enthralling account of his life in fly-fishing, based around a series of photos covering his angling exploits from his early days to the present.

Jim began with photos showing magnificent scenery associated with some of the glorious rivers and lakes of Western USA – the places where Jim first learned to cast a fly. He described his experiences hiking and camping and canoeing with family members and friends. Even in those days, as the photos revealed, he managed to connect with a lot of fish, some large ones among them.

He talked about his sources of equipment, including mail orders from such well-known names as Herters, Orvis and L. L. Bean. He also described the provision of angling opportunities in a state with such a large population. Thus lakes that once provided excellent fishing are now fishless, as budget cuts have seen an end to stocking, and other waters only survive through ‘catch and release’ policies. Jim described the water craft he used in those early days, and had photos of anglers in float tubes and canoes.



A Californian freestone river

He then turned his attention to his early days in Victoria in the late 1970s. Some of the streams he fished, such as the small Otway streams, were similar to the rivers and streams he had fished back in California. On the other hand, many of the rivers he encountered in the Warrnambool area provided rather different challenges. Rivers such as the upper Merri and Moyne and Mt Emu were very slow flowing and consisted of successions of relatively still pools connected by shallow riffles. The fish in these slow pools cruised constantly, and in the right conditions presented excellent polaroiding opportunities, but were a far cry from the fast flowing freestone streams and rivers of California.

Soon after his arrival in Victoria Jim set off to investigate the trout fishing in Tasmania, and discovered the Lagoon of Islands, Lake Sorrell, Lake Pedder and the Western lakes at their best. He recalled January holidays spent camping at the Lagoon of Islands, where massive mud-eye hatches occurred on most evenings and fish between 6 and 10 lb were common. So what happened to this wonderful fishing? Was the decline due to mismanagement, or over population, or drought? What a tragedy such magnificent trout fishing has disappeared.

Meanwhile back in Victoria in the late 1970s Jim was finding some excellent fishing too, with fabulous trout encountered in such places as Toolondo, Rocklands, Wartook, Fyans and Greenhill - before they dried up. The drought has a lot to answer for.



The famous Hopkins Falls near Warrnambool

But Jim hastened to suggest that he still enjoys some fine fishing, though the conditions have changed. In his recent experiences in Tasmania he has found that shacks are preferred to camping out. Boats are now more common, with drift fishing the norm on places like Little Pine, Penstock, and Arthurs. Anglers are more inclined to use guides these days, perhaps reflecting the fact that many are now both more elderly and perhaps more affluent. For those who do choose to ‘get away from it all’ there are better maps, better mobile phones with greater coverage, and good cheap handheld GPS units to keep them safe.

Jim reflected on the changes in both regulations and attitude. Our better fisheries are now under greater pressure due to increasing numbers of anglers, so smaller bag limits, the general acceptance of ‘catch and release’, and barbless hooks are all much more common these days.

Jim talked about his New Zealand experiences. He still manages to ‘cross the ditch’ at least once each season, and again had great photos of his angling companions catching large fish in magnificent surroundings. Air travel is relatively cheap these days, and there is better accommodation available at very reasonable rates. The challenge in each trip is to investigate new options and new waters. These days, Jim suggested, travelers to New Zealand confront new challenges, such as the angling pressure on the accessible quality fishing there, and of course the dreaded didymo. Thus anglers fishing New Zealand need to use boots with cleats and rubber soles rather than the far safer felt soles, and on returning home are faced with those tedious and time-consuming quarantine checks.



Two fine Warrnambool brown trout

Jim reflected on his home surrounds – the Warrnambool area, where things have changed in the past 30 years. The faces have changed. Many of the old stalwarts, such as Arthur Hogan and Geoff O'Brien, have passed on, but their places have been taken by a new generation of young and enthusiastic club members.

Photography has changed – from black-and-white film to colour digital. And the fishing has changed too. The drought has affected the Western district as well. There is now less flooding of the lower reaches of rivers such as the Merri, and as a consequence there are now far fewer runs of those large and strong sea-run browns. There are now more private lakes and private fisheries. The flies have changed, and the excitement of fishing for saltwater species has created new fly-fishing opportunities.

The trout fishing that the district offers needs to be nurtured and preserved, and anglers need to be proactive in protecting what they have. So the members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers have undertaken a number of projects, such as fencing and revegetation, to improve both water quality and access.



The Warrnambool Fly Fishers visit Tasmania

The Warrnambool club has also been active in promoting and enhancing local trout populations. The Western District rivers contain abundant food for trout, and produce magnificent growth rates. But they flow over muddy bottoms that provide little by way of suitable spawning areas. So nearly all the fish are stocked fish, as the Western District is one of the very few places in the state where the rivers are still stocked. However the local anglers have complemented the efforts of DP I by using Whitlock-Vibert boxes to enhance trout populations in suitable areas, and have also experimented with establishing spawning redds by importing gravel.

The Warrnambool Fly Fishers are an enthusiastic and very active group. There is much camaraderie, a strong tradition and a regular celebration of their achievements at the Annual Dinners.

Jim concluded by suggesting that in spite of all that has changed, we shouldn't forget that which remains constant – the reason we call ourselves 'fly-fishers' and bother to cast a fly. We all want to catch a fish, and more often than not, it's one of our great Australian brown trout.

Thank you for listening.

Fly fishing the UK and Europe

Ever thought of doing a trip to the UK or Europe to fish but were worried about where to go and how much it might cost? Now here is an opportunity for any interested VFFA members to enjoy about two weeks of fly fishing in the UK and Europe under the expert guidance of our own Philip Bailey.

Destinations also include Scotland, Slovenia, Italy and Poland.

For more information and a copy of the suggested itinerary contact Dave Long on 0419 369 248 or email dl.ssv@bigpond.com

VFFA Meetings & Activities

AUGUST 2010

- 1 Sunday Casting
- 7 & 8 Bullen Merri trip
- 8 Sunday Casting
- 15 Sunday Casting
- 18 Council
- 22 Sunday Casting
- 27 Annual Dinner and VFFA History Launch**
- 28 President's Casting Day

SEPTEMBER 2010

- 8 Council Meeting
- 16 VFFA AGM**
- 22 Meeting of the new Council

OCTOBER 2010

- 2 & 3 Fly-fishing Conclave at Woodend
- 21 General Meeting: Fly Tying with the Masters**
- 23 Season Opening Trip to a Private Fishery near Ballarat
- 27 Council Meeting

Roll Casting With 'Grass Leaders'

One cast that is difficult to practice over grass is the roll cast, as it needs the surface tension of the water to grip the line and help load the rod. So roll casting over grass can be an exercise in frustration. However a recent article on Spey Casting in a US magazine offered a solution. The writer suggested that you need to construct a 'grass leader' to attach to your fly line. The grass leader is made by taking about 4 metres of reasonably heavy leader line – say 0.4 mm diameter or 8 – 10 kg breaking strain, and cutting it into 20 cm lengths. Now tie these short sections together using a three or four-turn Blood Knot. When you tie Blood Knots the little tags that are left over stick out at right angles to the line, and you would normally trim these off. But in tying a 'grass leader' you leave these tags about 1.5 centimetre long. You thus wind up with a leader about three meters long, made up of short sections with their tags sticking out – the whole thing looking a bit like a length of barbed wire fence. When you practice your roll casting over grass these little tags catch in the grass, thus simulating the water tension that is needed. Your editor confesses that he tried it out on his next-door neighbour's front nature strip (which has got much better grass than the editor's place), and it seemed to work fine. Lovely long roll casts.

President's Message

Approaching the end of my term as VFFA President, I have reflected on the many experiences I have enjoyed over the period. There is something special about publishing a book, and I think my involvement, along with many others, in the publication of the VFFA History for release at the August Annual Dinner, is a stand out highlight. The publisher, Mike Stevens, sent to me a digital, full leather bound copy some four weeks ago for presentation to the author, Tony Brothers.



Peter and David present Tony with his copy of the History

Most members would be aware that Tony has had continuing health problems over an extended period, and the receipt of this unique, early copy for Tony was very important. Former President David Grisold and I visited Tony in hospital and presented the copy to him. The moment was special for all of us. Tony has “lived” with the project for some years, and to see the satisfaction on his face when he was able to see it in its finished form was memorable.

The Annual Dinner is nearly upon us, and it would be wonderful to see the Kelvin Club at capacity with VFFA members and guests. For those of you who have not already booked, a booking form is enclosed with the newsletter, giving you a final opportunity to reply to what promises to be a great night. We also enclose a book order form for those of you who may have misplaced last month's form.

VFFA Jim Blakeslee was a very entertaining and informative speaker at our July General Meeting. We had an excellent turn-up for the evening, and the room had a good feel about it. A report on the evening appears in the newsletter. Jim hails from Warrnambool, and Hughie Maltby has made arrangements with Jim to “host” a VFFA November weekend in the area. His local knowledge and capacity to get onto fish is without peer, and I think there are many members who would welcome the opportunity to join the weekend. Keep an eye out for the advertisement in a coming newsletter.

A matter of continuing concern to all anglers is the push from some quarters to reduce/limit the angling experience. The Victorian National Parks Association's push for the introduction of a further twenty marine parks is the most recent example. Fortunately, there was a quick and vigorous response from many potentially affected parties, and the government was quick to rule out further marine parks. To quote Minister Gavan Jennings, “The Brumby Labor

Government has ruled out creating more marine parks and will not amend the current marine national parks before the election and during the next term of government. This is similar to the moratorium introduced recently in New South Wales.”

Note the use of the word “moratorium”, which means delay, or postponement. Although this proposal was not going to directly affect trout fishing, it is a timely reminder of what I believe is an ever-present threat from some quarters to fishing in general. We must remain vigilant, and lend our support to the opposition to these threats.

There is a fishing show being held at the Showgrounds on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of September. The ATF is sponsoring a casting platform, and Mick Hall has enquired as to whether any VFFA members might be available to help with the manning of the stand. Please contact myself if able to help out.

On a closing note, I am very much looking forward to the August Annual Dinner evening, and trust we will have a big attendance at what is the highlight function on the VFFA calendar.

Tight lines,

Peter Boag

The August Dinner

The Victorian Fly-Fishers’ Association 78th Annual Dinner will be held at the Kelvin Club on Friday, August 27, at 6:30 for 7:00 pm.

The Dinner is the Official Launch of the VFFA History:

The Country For An Angler: A History of the Victorian Fly Fishers’ Association,
authored by Dr Tony Brothers and edited by Rick Keam.

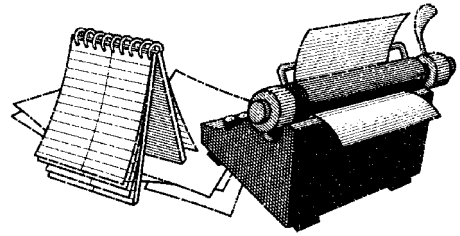
The cost is \$60 per person (plus drinks), and members wishing to attend need to forward their replies to the Honorary Treasurer, Mr Tony Mitchem, by Wednesday August 18. An invitation and reply form is included as an insert in this newsletter.



VFFA Annual General Meeting

The September meeting will be the VFFA Annual General Meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday September 16. Accordingly, the “Notice of Annual General Meeting”, “Nomination Form”, and “Appointment of Proxy” notices are included with this newsletter as inserts. More details will be given in the September newsletter.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



I like August – it's a month that generates a tinge of optimism and new hope. The worst of the winter is behind us, the days are starting to lengthen, and, back in those times when I worked for a living (prior to retirement), the streets I drove through on my way to work were invariably filled with trees covered in blossom by the end of August. It's the month of the countdown – ticking off the days to the start of the new trout season. And we know that the passing days see a steady improvement in conditions. As time passes the temperatures warm, the bugs come out, the rivers start dropping and clearing – and the excitement of a new and untouched season of trout fishing is all there before us in prospect.

For VFFA members August is the month of the Annual Dinner – undoubtedly the premier social event on the calendar. Every Dinner is different. The format is similar from year to year, and the company familiar - it being a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old mates from years past and colleagues from distant places. But each Dinner offers its own special character. This year sees the release of the official VFFA History. It has been a long time in preparation, with Tony Brothers the driving force and author, and Rick Keam adding his expertise as a professional editor in the past 15 months. The end product is a book that will be an item to treasure, making this year's Dinner a very special event

The months that follow are filled with interest too. September sees the opening of the trout season and the opportunity to check out some favourite haunts. October commences with Peter Hayes' Fly-fishing Conclave at Woodend. I attended last year's Conclave and found it enormously enjoyable and helpful. Last month's newsletter gave comprehensive details, and those interested in checking the program will find the details at

<http://www.peterhayesflyfishing.com/page15535330.aspx>. Members are reminded that if five or more VFFA members attend there is a 10% discount on the cost.

Saturday October 23 sees another VFFA Season Opener, which this year is a day trip to a private lake near Ballarat. David Featherstone has been instrumental in setting this one up, and Richard Kos has agreed to act as convenor. More details will be given in future newsletters, but we can reveal that this day will be a great opportunity for members to fish a well-stocked lake in glorious surroundings - and at no cost.

November begins with an organised trip to Warrnambool, where members will be able to investigate one of the state's best-kept trout secrets. The rivers around the Warrnambool area – the Hopkins, Mt Emu, Moyne and Merri - offer trout of exceptional size, and with Jim Blakeslee offering his expertise and superb local knowledge, a 3 or 4 lb brown is a very good chance.

Later in November the VFFA contingent to New Zealand departs, and this is an excursion that every member should experience at least once in their fishing life. The scenery is stunning, the rivers are magnificent, the fish are large and plentiful, and the company, guiding and facilities are all you could want. (Just leave your felt-soled waders behind).

And then it's December, and the rush is on with all that end of year busyness. But keep Thursday December 16 free – it's the annual Christmas Dinner, and guest speaker Peter Morse is an excellent choice and a speaker you wouldn't want to miss.

So there's some great things to look forward to. (Just a pity Essendon won't make the finals.)

Lyndon Webb

Media Release from VRFish – dated August 5, 2010

(Courtesy of Dale McCabe)

Fishers celebrate as trout stocking returns to the King Valley!

VRFish is pleased to announce the beginning of a new trout stocking program for the lower King River in North East Victoria.

“Fisheries Victoria has released 2,500 yearling Brown Trout between Edi Cutting and Lake William Hovell as part of a three year program to augment the naturally recruiting population in the lower King River” Christopher Collins, VRFish Executive Officer said.

“The lower King River has been important to Victorian trout fishers for many decades and the commencement of this stocking program is welcomed by recreational fisher's right across the state.”

The Brown Trout, released at various locations between Edi Cutting and Lake William Hovell, are of yearling class and have had their right ventral fins clipped, which will assist recreational fishers and fisheries managers to differentiate the stocked fish that have been released in 2010 from the naturally recruited population and subsequent stocking years.

“The King River Valley is regarded as one of Victoria's premier food and wine regions; the renewed stocking program will provide an additional boost for tourism by expanding trout fishing opportunities in the region,” Christopher Collins said.

The lower King River stocking program is the result of a proposal put forward by VRFish unaffiliated member Dale McCabe at the regional Vic Fish Stock (formerly known as CONS) meetings run by Fisheries Victoria during 2009. The proposal received broad support from individual fishers as well as fishing clubs and associations across Victoria.

The clubs and associations who assisted by way of written support for the proposal are The Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs, The Australian Trout Foundation, Wangaratta Fly Fishing Club, VFFA (The Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association), Mornington Peninsula Fly Fishing Club, Northern Suburbs Fly Fishing Club and Greenwell's Fly Fishing Club

Presentation versus Pattern

(By Rick Hafele. This article is reprinted with Rick's permission from the Fly Fishing Newsletter -

http://www.flyfishusa.com/newsletter/040410/#Presentation_vs_Pattern. Rick's website is <http://www.laughingrivers.com> and is a great source of advice and information on fly fishing and flies.)

What do you do when a trout turns up its nose at your pretty fly drifting downstream? Do you open your fly box and look for another pattern? Maybe you take a close look at your leader and add some 6x tippet? Or perhaps you move upstream or downstream to present your fly from a different angle? Anyone of these options, and perhaps all of them, could be the solution to your problem. But which one should you consider first?

These questions run through every fly-fisher's mind when confronted with selectively-feeding, difficult trout. I had a good example of it just last week when John Smeraglio and I were fishing over some nice trout during a blue winged olive hatch. The water was low and the trout were in a picky mood in flat water where every little thing on the surface stood out like fly droppings on a soup spoon. We had collected duns off the water and knew their size and color. We had also watched the trout feed with binoculars so we knew most of the rises weren't to duns but to emergers in the surface film. With that info we felt confident we had a decent pattern. John got into a position where he could get a nice drift without drag over three or four rising trout. The result – refusals! Okay, fine. John changed flies and tried again. Refusals. So, he tried another fly pattern and more refusals. The trout kept rising so he kept changing patterns. Finally after trying about a dozen different flies he got a nice trout on size 20 thorax dun using four feet of 6x fluorocarbon tippet. So, was it pattern or presentation that did the trick?

A few days after I got back from this trip I ran across an article by Mike Lawson called *Un-match the Hatch*. Mike Lawson knows a thing or two about selective trout, and I found what he had to say quite interesting. In his article (which was actually an excerpt from his excellent book *Spring Creeks*) he cited Gary LaFontaine describing three ways anglers decide what fly to use:

- 1 – Empiricism – “I’m going to use a Pink Lady because that fly worked last year at this time when the river was in this condition.”
- 2 – Generalism – “These fish will take any fly as long as I present it properly.”
- 3 – Naturalism – “I’m going to use a Hendrickson to match these mayfly duns that are on the water.”

Mike went on to describe how he thinks most angler's use a little of all three approaches in their fishing and that none of these is always going to work. This made me think about my own approach and what John and I had just experienced a few days earlier.

First, I'm a bug guy. I love looking at the insects, even when I don't have to for fishing, so I clearly fall into the naturalism category. I find it extremely satisfying to know that fish are feeding on a certain stage of a certain insect and then matching that insect with a reasonable imitation and catching fish with it. I also feel that knowing what insects feeding fish are

taking greatly increases my odds of success. This also means I don't completely buy into the generalism idea above that fish will take any fly as long as it is presented correctly. That said, I do know people who only fish a couple of different patterns all year and who catch plenty of fish. They do tend to change the size of their favorite patterns as the insects change in size, so they utilize a little naturalism in their approach, but basically they firmly believe that getting their favorite pattern presented to the trout correctly is the answer.

After more thought I also realized I use empiricism, or experience, in my pattern selection. For example, when I saw those trout rising to blue winged olives emerging in the surface I immediately thought of a pattern I've used with success in similar situations in the past.

Now that's not quite the same as someone who says that because it is March 16th I just need a size 20 BWO emerger, but experience does influence my choices. I also have a few fly patterns that I never want to be without, because when nothing specific is happening I know they often work. In fact I think it's pretty hard, if not impossible, to ignore your prior experience. Just look at the flies in your fly boxes. If you've been fishing for a few of years I bet most of the patterns in your boxes reflect your experience of past success. I also think experience plays a larger role if you fish the same waters most of the time. Intimate knowledge of a home stream or lake will mean you not only know what fly patterns the fish have taken in the past, but also where fish hang out under different water conditions.

Here's a couple of other points Mike Lawson made that hit home with me.

During a very heavy hatch when trout are feeding in a steady rhythm, trout don't look at every bug that floats over them. Plus, you may not be able to see your fly on the water if you are using a close imitation of the naturals when hundreds of naturals are on the water. Mike suggests this is a good time to use a high visibility attractor pattern like a Royal Wulff, or Parachute Adams and focus your presentation so your fly arrives in sync with the trout's feeding rhythm. He also notes that if the naturals are a size 20 your attractor pattern should be a size 20.

If you can't see your tiny dry fly on the water tie it onto a dropper off of a larger dry fly and use the larger fly as an indicator.

When trout are not showing themselves try skating a big spider pattern across the surface to get them excited. Mike points out that Joe Brooks, Charles Fox, and Ernie Schwiebert, among others, have all recommended this approach to get trout excited. A Canadian fishing buddy of mine has made me a believer of this method on more occasions than I care to remember.

And finally, don't forget terrestrials. Placing an ant or beetle pattern out there with all those mayfly duns might just do the trick much better than a more exact emerger imitation.

So, are you a generalist, empiricist, or a naturalist? If you're like most anglers you use a mixture of all three, but you might want to think about what you rely on most. All three approaches have their pluses, and if you rely too much on just one approach perhaps you should expand your thought process a little. Certainly the right fly presented poorly will rarely work. Likewise picky trout often look away from a perfectly presented fly if it doesn't look right. And the more experience you have the more you'll understand what to try next! Happy casts.

THE COUNTRY FOR AN ANGLER



A HISTORY OF THE
VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION

R. ANTHONY BROTHERS

The VFFA History

Tony Brothers' *The Country For An Angler: a History of the Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association*, published by Michael Stevens, is to be released this August at the Association's Annual Dinner.

In 1861, hunter and naturalist Horace Wheelwright declared 'One thing is quite clear—that Victoria is no country for the angler [or] throwing the fly.' Today's fly-fishers can be grateful that he was eventually proved wrong, but only because of the persistence of many people in the face of many setbacks. *The Country For An Angler* is a tribute to their achievement, and the VFFA's important contribution to it.

The book sets the scene by first revisiting the nineteenth century, adding some fascinating new material to earlier published accounts. These include details of the first significant captures of native fish and trout by fly-fishers. The trials and tribulations of the first VFFA of 1906 are illuminated by recently rediscovered newspaper accounts, as are the growth in popularity of trout fishing in the 1920s, and the emergence of the second VFFA during the trough of the Great Depression. Developments in the fishery, developments within the VFFA, and recollections of and by its members, are then presented for each decade to the present day.

The many previously unpublished photographs, some from early glass-plate negatives with stunning image quality, together with paintings and sketches by the great pre-War Australian watercolourist and VFFA member Harold Herbert, ensure that this will be a work to be treasured. A comprehensive high-quality index enables quick location of information on particular topics, events, people and places.

The Publisher, Mike Stevens of Stevens Publishing in Launceston, describes the books as follows:

Standard Edition

The standard edition will be of 250 plus pages printed in black text, with black and white photos and a small number of coloured photos, on 130 GSM Hanno silk paper, section sewn and hard case bound, round back with head and tail bands, end papers gold foil title and spine with inset image on the front cover.

This will be very similar in appearance to the previous anthology, *Geehi to Great Lake*. It will be different in colour however. This book will have the same Wibalin cloth, but in forest green.

Limited Edition

This edition will be limited to 100 numbered copies. Previous purchasers of *Geehi To Great Lake* will retain their previous number if they order the History. The limited edition will be similar to the standard edition, but on heavier 150 GSM Parilux Dull Cream paper. It will be bound with a premium book-binding material called Rayas, as per *Geehi to Great Lake*, but in burgundy colour. Due to the heavier paper these books will be thicker than the standard edition. They will also have an inset image on the front cover.

The Number 1 copy is to be auctioned at the Dinner.

On Not Catching Fish

(This is part of an article written by Joe Kahler and printed in the June 2010 issue of *Fly Fisherman* magazine. It is reproduced with Joe's permission. Joe and his companion Mike had launched canoes and paddled around a very fishy-looking lake that had been productive for them on many previous outings. But this time – “Zip, zero, nada”. The fish were just not co-operating.)

This was the third trip in a row we'd made like this, and it was getting a little tiresome. All the stuff we tell ourselves to take the sting out of a day of “fishing, not catching” started sounding a little too familiar.

“Well, it was a beautiful day to be on the water.”

“At least we got our workout while paddling today.”

“It's for sure that if they were biting, we'd have caught 'em, with as much water as we covered and the sheer number of things we tried.”

Yeah, right. All the reasons we come up with to explain a slow day of fishing don't seem to get the bitter taste of fishlessness out of my mouth, either.

“The barometric pressure was too high.”

“It was too pretty out there.”

“The water was too high.”

“The water was too murky.”

“There was too much real food in the water - too many shrimp out there.”

The truth of the matter is, we don't really know why it happens (or doesn't happen) the way it does. There are just too many variables - none of which are under our direct control - for us to be able to say with any certainty that it was this or that.

The worst thing about a fishless day is that our significant others still count it as a day gone fishing. Unless they're fly fishers too, they typically want us to stay around the house and do chores and errands and be with them for several days, if not weeks, before we make the trip again. They don't understand that we have ‘a score to settle’ (with whom, I don't know).

All this fishing and not catching got me thinking about what really makes a fly-fisher. I figure it's someone who really is happier in that semi-hypnotic state of heightened awareness and complete serenity that comes at once by holding a fly rod, scanning the surface of the water for fish sign, and feeling the rod load with the energy to launch the line and deliver the fly you tied the night before. It's somebody who finds the process to really, truly be as enjoyable as attaining the goal. It's somebody who genuinely feels like even a fishless day isn't a waste of time.

It's somebody who understands on some deep, wordless level that fishing is a sacrament, an “outward and physical manifestation of an inward and spiritual grace,” a metaphor for something much more important - maybe the closest one I've found for the process of drawing forth from the unconscious those truths we get to see only by seemingly unrewarded effort and practice.

Fly fishing is an exercise in hope and optimism that makes us spiritually stronger whether we catch fish or not. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Vince Lombardi, "I've fished, and I've caught, and believe me, catching is better."

This Month's Yarn ...

(From February 1966)

"I see there's been a request", said Alf, placing the proceeds on the counter, "for anglers to not take their dogs with them when they're out fishing."

"That's all right for most dogs," cut in McTaggart, "but not for my old dog, Fut. I think I've told you a bit about him before. A most intelligent animal; no harm in him at all, and very helpful at times.

In fact I'll give you one instance. I was fishing in a small lake near Dalesbridge. Conditions looked fine, but I was doing no good. I'd tried most things I could think of, but got no response. Now Fut, as I might have previously mentioned to you, always took a great interest in my fishing, and he was remarkably observant. After a couple of hours, during which I had risen nothing, I noticed that Fut had started to wander around the edge of the water. Suddenly he waded in very quietly where there were some weeds. He waited there a couple of minutes, then came out again, walked up to where I was standing and shook himself vigorously. And would you believe - out of his hair fell a number of shrimps. Then he looked up at me meaningfully and I got the idea".

"You're not going to tell me you used them for bait," said Alf, in affected horror. "No, of course not," replied McTaggart, "after all, I was a member of the VFFA! But I put on a wet imitation of a shrimp, which of course I had tied myself, and caught trout after trout!"

Casting Into A Strong Wind

Ever been to Tassie and been confronted with those howling gales that make casting a nightmare? In a recent UK Trout Fisherman magazine, Casting Consultant Mike Marshall, (Senior Coach with the British Fly Casting Club, and a man who can cast prodigious distances) recommended that you can cast better into the wind if you use double taper lines.

He suggests that weight forward lines are fine for casting with the wind, poor when casting across the wind and almost useless for casting into wind. He says: "It is the long 'free flight' nature of the last forward cast that lets them down. On the other hand, a double taper line allows me to cast nearly a whole line into a very strong wind, using just four shoots per cast." He goes on to say that the heavier double taper (because of its long belly), requires a slower and longer arm punching action with a good double haul. "This technique needs a lot of practice." So if you're keen to reach those distant rises in the teeth of a gale, perhaps a double taper line might be worth a try.

A Walk Down Memory Lane

(Or more lessons from Noel Jetson, By Dermot O'Brien)

I had the pleasure of fishing with Noel Jetson from 1991 to 1994, so I really enjoyed the story in the July newsletter on Glenn Eggleton's talk on Noel, who was undoubtedly a great fly fisherman and guide. The article prompted me to dig out my fishing diaries from that period and to "re-live" my trips with Noel. Noel was a man who earned his living from the outdoors, particularly fly-fishing, and my photos showed him wearing a camouflage vest and top. And the rest of his fishing outfit fitted the surroundings. No bright pastel shirts for Noel.



Noel's camo shirt

Much has been said and written about him using a Winston 3-weight rod. I can remember him casting it into the wind near Senators Rock at Little Pine. He made it look easy. If the rod had been high gloss when new, it had been well worn off. It was absolutely non-reflective by the time I fished with him. His gunmetal grey reel was not going to spook any trout in Tasmania's crystal clear water either. Some of the shiny reflective reels on the market today look magnificent down at the pool, but I'm sure they cost us fish.

Like many who really know the outdoors, Noel was a great observer. He would stand back and have a look at the water before he put his or his client's rod into action.



Line management in practice

Glenn Eggleton did say that Noel was exceptional when it came to line management. One of my photos shows him handling a fish just prior to release, his line held in neat loops. Of course, it was out of the way and could not snag, but more importantly he was ready to cast quickly to the next rising fish.

My diary also indicated things like - 6:30 a.m. Little Pine, and the next day 7:00 a.m. Bronte. It is a long time since I fished that early. Must be getting soft!

Noel even had his own theory on hats. He like the English-style tweed hats, saying they would not blow off like the broad-brimmed Aussie hats.

And, we all know that Noel Jetson and Red Tags were synonymous. He was convinced they worked in most situations and for him they probably did. Noel tied a few for me and now I wish I had kept just one.

I spent some very pleasant nights in his stone cottage at Little Pine, hand feeding pet possums and listening to the Devils somewhere off in the bush. He warned me on my first night not to leave my rod outside, telling the story of a fisherman who came out in the morning to find the cork handle of his fly rod chewed off. The Devils had been drawn to fish blood on the cork. An expensive lesson indeed.

When I first stayed at Little Pine I slept in a caravan beside his cottage. On my next trip...no van. He said it had been stolen. From then on we were on the lookout for the stolen item, ducking down isolated bush tracks and the like. He vowed to me he would get it back. I don't know, but I hope he eventually did.

Noel Jetson was also a man of vision wanting to create a man-made lake in the bush behind the cottage. I am sure it would have been magnificent.

It is impossible to write about being guided by Noel without mentioning his wife Lois. The bunkhouse in the backyard at Cressy was warm and cosy, and for a fly-fisherman it was simply ideal. Lois and Noel's hospitality either at home base or on the water was always first class.

Just like the fishing.

A Note From Bernard Holbery

On October 24 Bernard Holbery is organising a day on the Acheron River for men who suffer with depression or who experienced the horrors of the Black Saturday fires.

As November approaches and the Cancer Council and the Beyond Blue organisations unite in supporting men with illness, the *Fly Fisher's Rod and Creel* is organising a second annual "Healing Waters" day. This will be a day on the Acheron River for men who have suffered the tragedy of the Black Saturday fires, along with men living with depression or cancer. This event was a great success last year, with over 60 people attending.

Bernard is looking for members of the VFFA willing to volunteer to assist him on the day with casting, cooking and fly tying demonstrations.

For more details contact Bernard on 0432 023 502.

The Right Toilet Paper

There is good reason for fly fishers to use Kleenex Cottonelle toilet tissue. Hello! In a recent letter to a UK fly-fishing magazine a correspondent was writing in response to an article discussing ways of treating CDC flies after they have caught a fish or two and are starting to look a bit sad and bedraggled. The writer suggested that his solution was to splash the fly around in the stream two or three times to wash off the slime, then to dry the CDC bits by patting them with sheets from one of the more absorbent toilet tissues. He then dosed the fly up with one of these powder floatant materials, such as Frogs Fanny or Docs Dry Dust. Toilet paper is cheap – it might be worth a try. Kleenex Cottonelle is one brand that is very absorbent, but I'm sure there are lots of others equally as fly-friendly.

Alf Wark's Holiday - Part 2

In the Christmas/New Year holiday period of 1931/32, Alfred Wark's friend Kevin Molphy of Heyfield, whose family ran cattle up on the high plains, invited him on a packhorse trip to the area below Mt Howitt. After what was obviously a memorable Christmas Day in the company of large country families of the era, the group set out on Boxing Day. In all, they would cover 270 miles. Between brumby-catching and other activities, they augmented their diet with fishing and hunting. Alf's record of the journey, some photographs of which are included in the coming VFFA history, summarises it as: 'OH! WHAT A TRIP!!!'

His diary entries describing it were written in pencil, probably because ink might have been destroyed by rain, and were written in a light hand. Some sections are now very faint, and transcribing even the clearer material has required a magnifying glass. However, despite the illegibles, the general narrative is always clear.

The following is the second half of Alf's account of his holiday, and the final extract from Alf's Diaries.

Friday 1st January (25 miles)

Up early and packed and after a gift of fore of lamb and some necessary tea, left at 10.30 am—the hottest day yet, flies very bad. —crossed the W'gatta River 29 times—some crossings very bad: steep banks—strapped [K—?] River and pushed on to Moroka yards—5 miles extra—pitched tent and tried for trout; a dead stream and no fish—the greatest variety of insects I have seen—blackfish 1½ lb & 5 lb* by self—yarn & bed 10.30.

**Some 'dead stream'! When it came to fish, Alf had a one-track mind...*

Saturday 2nd January '31 (20 miles)

After a very hot night the flies got us out at 6 am and after fish brekkie packed up and left 9 am—heavy climb up the hill behind the stockyard—struck the old mining track and then across the plain on Arbuckle and had a canter and gallop along the plain and a race to the T[?]y Plain hut. Mick Higgins and sons at hut. Went duck shooting got 3 out of 4. Black ducks. Had a yarn with Mick and boys and after game of Euchre had a coffee then bed—very cold night with a white frost on the ground in the morning. Slept like tops—Kevin Higgins and I walked down the Gorge later—no ducks.

Sunday

Spent the day at Higgins Hut. Mick & Charles left for the Carey muster; had a washing day, cooked dampers and ducks; best feed yet, baked in camp oven. Slept for 2 hours. —A big mob of ducks came over at dark—have a go in the morning. The fires on the hills [came?] over on the flat. Jack Molphy after duck put them up—none—Beard ½" long—Ned Kelly.

Monday (12 miles)

All day at Higgins Hut. Up 9.30 in morning got wood and water and baked. At 10.30 Joe Colo and Lee Walsh arrived—Jack Molphy and I went with them to the Big Plain and chased mob of horses where we yarded and cut out 2—rode round the Back Creek & [Lost?] Plain home. Mick Higgins & Charles arrived home 8 pm with bottle and I was interested in campfire yarns of exploits of men, horses and dogs.

Tuesday 5th January (16 miles)

Left the Snowy Plain Hut at 10.30—Watched branding calves by Colo & Mick. Lunch before we left—Track good to Arbuckle and after we went up Surveyor Creek the track was vague and exceptionally rough—only Chas' bushcraft got us in. Trouble with packhorses early—rocks and timber everywhere—horses and dogs knocked up—Wellington hut pretty rough—cooked Ducks and Damper.

Wednesday (14 miles)

From Wellington [hut] to Lake and the Wellington River—Up at 7 am and I climbed the peak—blowing a gale—took photos of Gable End and plains—followed blazes to Lake—rough stony track—Left horses at top of spur and walked down—Lake beautiful sight—very deep—Trout rising to Dragon Fly—Put up tackle—rose one on J.W. Dunne then hooked one on Kirk Cocky—2 lb & 1 lb—Missed 2 others and hooked 1—³/₄ lb—only fished 1 hr—followed Big Spur out—saw the brumbies on clear siding—chased a roo—arrived camp pitched tent and went fishing. Landed 4 lb[er] on Coachman and rose ½ lb—fell in creek so came home—had light tea and hobbled horses and turned in 9.30—up a few times to the horses during the night—have plans for brumby hunt on the morrow.

Thursday (10 miles)

Up at 7.30—big fish breakfast—saddled and rode up to old Garvie paddock—Sighted one brown brumby on grassy slope—then mob of 10 who moved off—at foot of Monument trapped another mob of 5—2 foals—Dogs locked [on] and ran full belt [sic] after them—made for scrub and missed them—back at camp and had sleep till 5 then walked 5 miles—beautiful water and saw one fish—dynamited water*—Charlie and Kevin took horses for feed and tried for brumbies again—no sign of them. Put up a roo and Sparks killed him—made pancakes.

**Speculation by Alf—not a statement of what he did!*

Friday (25 miles)

A day of accidents—started early 7.30 with expectations of arrival at 3 pm finished at 11.30 and then off again—Packhorse bolted for 2 miles full belt [sic] and we after her—lost a pack saddle and contents—wasted 3 hrs [illegible] not find bag and then cantered to make up time jumping logs on track—Jack's packhorse started, my pony bolted and then on and bucked me. Up and on again and arrived at P. Garvie's at 7.30. Tea and stayed [illegible] turned in at 8 pm and slept like a log.

Saturday 9/1/31 (29 miles)

Left P. Garvie's at 9 am. Phyllis kicked by Nancy in yard and slightly lame—rode to Stubbins where shoes changed and she was worse—walked to McMichaels and changed over to Belle—drove Phyllis ahead—hot and [sweaty?] with rain [coming?]
—made good time down the cuttings—rain commenced at [illegible] and home at 6.30. Bath and bed at 11 pm.

Sunday

Mass 11 am. Called J. Garvie. Norie Rice. O'Brien's for tea, Clem H. there.

Home 1 am.

UK Report...

(from Phil Bailey)

This season has seen the longest spell of dry weather for 70 years here in the UK. The rivers are well down below summer levels, and in fact were at summer levels when the season opened at the end of March. We have had rain in the past few weeks but not enough to bring the rivers into a 'spate' and to flush them out. The last good rain was on March 23.

Fishing has been harder but not impossible, and we have managed to snag a few fish each day. It keeps the reputation intact anyway.

Sometimes you come across a fly that just keeps on catching fish and you don't know why. My guiding partner, Bob Smith, has modified an old spider pattern into a parachute hackled dry fly that seems to catch fish when all else fails, especially on those 'dog days' where the fish rise but you cannot seem to catch them.

In a book entitled *Presenting The Fly To The Trout* by Frederick Mold, there is a fly pattern given called "Black Magic". This pattern is a soft-hackled fly tied with a body of black tying thread, a small ball of fine copper wire under the thorax, a thorax of copper coloured peacock, and a black hen hackle.

Fred Mold swears by this fly when the fish are taking small gnats or black flies. Well, my fishing mate took the basic pattern and turned it into a dry fly, as follows:

Bob's Black Magic

The dressing is:

Hook: Light wire grub type hook. (A Tiemco 2488 in size 16 would do.)

Thread: Black

Ribbing: Red hologram lurex (fine)

Body: Black tying thread

Thorax: Peacock herl

Wing: White or pink Aero Wing

Hackle: Black cock - 3 turns.

We will use this dry fly right through the remainder of the season - and it will dominate our catches. Tie some up. Choco will have a couple to show you when he returns, as this fly is what we will be using when he fishes with me this month.

Not long to go now before the season opens, so get tying and practise your casting.

Cheers and tight lines,

Philip

Report from Out West

Jim Blakeslee has provided us with a brief report on the Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club's recent Annual Game Dinner, which was held this year on July 17 at the Brauer-Ander Park Pavilion. Some 51 people attended this year's dinner, including VFFA President Peter Boag and Hamish Hughes. Jim reports that the food was excellent and the company in fine form after a few glasses of refreshments. The chef, Robert King, and his staff did a great job.

The Geoff O'Brien Memorial Trophy for tying the best set of flies was awarded to Peter Hussey, and the Arthur Hogan Memorial Trophy for the largest trout from a local water went to Jim Blakeslee himself, for a brown trout from the Hopkins that weighed in at 2.4 kg. Russell Worland won the 'swindle of the night' - a couple of days in the Cabin at Millbrook Lakes, kindly donated by Dash Laver.



Members and guests at the Warrnambool Annual Game Dinner

The Warrnambool Game Dinner is a very special and rather unique event, and the food is always of interest. The printed menu informs us that the Hors d'Ouvres were deep-fried crumbed abalone and whitebait, Entrées included game soup, smoked trout, smoked eel, and terrine of hare and duck with crabapple jelly. The main course



was kangaroo sirloin and roasted veggies, and the Finale consisted of platters of cheese with quince paste and fresh fruit. All followed by tea or coffee.

Fishing Report:

Jim didn't have a lot to say about the current fishing, other than to indicate that following good rains in recent weeks the local rivers are finally colouring up and beginning to flood out into the paddocks. Locals are hopeful they will get a good flushing out so they will be clear of weed for the springtime fishing. With some more of that rain the Warrnambool anglers might again experience some of that wonderful fishing to large sea-run browns that used to be such a feature of the fishing in the lower Merri each year.

SOME FAMOUS FISHING WRITERS

H. PLUNKET GREENE

(1865-1936)

Like Lord Grey, Plunket Greene made his reputation as a fishing writer on the strength of only a single book. And that book is not so greatly inferior to the former's *Fly-Fishing* in the charm of its writing, although it contains less in the way of instruction. *Where Bright Waters Meet* was first published in 1924, and its contents range over a wide variety of waters, including the Test, Kennet, Spey, Blagdon Reservoir and the Wildbad River in Germany. Its central theme, however, is life in the village of Hurstbourne Priors, Hampshire, in pre-first-war days, and in particular the tragedy of the little River Bourne, whose wonderful fishing was ruined by overstocking. And it is a tribute to the author's powers of writing that the culmination of the tragedy can be read without a lump in the throat.

Plunket Greene was born in 1865 and brought up in Ireland, where his early experience of fishing was confined to the wet fly on the Dargle River in County Wicklow. His forebears had been in the Church or the Law, and he was intended to go up to Oxford to study for the Bar. At the age of 16, however, he met with an accident while playing rugby, resulting in concussion. This injury was not properly treated and left him incapable of any serious work for a couple of years. It was then discovered he had a remarkably fine voice, and as he was also very musical he was sent to Germany to learn to sing. He eventually became a professional singer of considerable renown.

His first experience of Hampshire fishing was at Whitechurch, on the upper Test, where he rented the Mill Stretch in 1900. In this year, as he tells in his book, he spent one Sunday morning following the Test valley downstream, until he suddenly came upon the village of his dreams, near the junction of the Test and the Bourne. Two years later, on the arrival of a son and heir, he found his house in Kensington too small, and decided to move into the country. After scanning the pages of *The Times* for several months he came upon an advertisement for a house to let at Hurstbourne Priors, and went down to see it.

To his astonishment and delight this proved to be the very village he had fallen in love with two years previously. He took the house on the spot, together with a rod on the Bourne which went with it. And there he and his family lived from 1902 until 1912, under conditions as near perfect as anything that could be found in an imperfect world. To the older generation, indeed, this part of the book makes nostalgic reading.

Plunket Greene was a magnificent figure of a man, standing six feet four inches and athletically built. He was, moreover, possessed of a most charming personality which captivated not only his audiences as a singer but all who met him.

He was a most skilful and successful fisherman, and in his second season on the Bourne killed no less than 165 trout averaging 1½ lb apiece – a remarkable bag for such a small river. He was not, however, particularly interested in entomology, and carried no more than half-a-dozen patterns of fly. Of these he was content, as often as not, with his great favourite, the Iron Blue dun.

Although he is only known in the angling world as the author of *Bright Waters*, he also wrote several books on music and a charming book for children entitled *Pilot and Other Stories*, which would delight all but the most sophisticated grown-ups. It contains one fishing story, appropriately entitled "Iron Blue."

Like so many famous fishermen, Plunket Greene was devoted to the Flyfishers' Club, of which he became President in 1936. He died, however, during his term of office in the August of that year. Besides being a noted singer and skilled fisherman he was also a keen cricketer, so it is appropriate that his grave, in the church yard of Hurstbourne Priors, lies between the cricket ground and the River Bourne, both of which he loved so well.

Taken from *Trout and Salmon*, February 1964

(Written by C. F. Walker, and notes provided by Andrew Braithwaite)

The Second Trip To New Zealand

(Julian Newton-Brown)

My second trip to New Zealand was in November 1978, three years after the first trip. Rob Harwood and myself joined John Hayes, Jack Kelly and Peter Calder of the Compleat Angler. Jim Gomerski and Allan Klieman made a party of seven.

Our first stop was at Kurow, where some of the others had previously caught a lot of fish. We arrived in time to fish the evening rise, which was disappointing as the only fish caught was one that fell to my Dunny Brush - which I had tied on in desperation after trying many others. As a consequence all the others members of the group wanted a few, but I had only two or three. Peter Calder had some fly tying gear but no turkey tail feathers for the wings. So on the next morning we went to the pub, bought a round of beers, and asked the barman if he knew anyone who farmed turkeys. "You like turkey do you?" he asked. "No, only their feathers", I replied. We were directed to a farm where Allan and the farmer talked guns for some time before I put the question of a few tail feathers to him. He was most obliging, and grabbed a fine gobbler by the tail as it launched itself over the fence, pulling out every one of its tail feathers. I still have some to this day.

Kurow was not fishing well, so I took Peter Calder to the Hakataramea, where we had a fine day of sight fishing. Next we moved on to Omarama for some patchy fishing. Jack Kelly and I looked at the Ahuriri. Jack had been there before and wanted to inspect a ditch on the far side, as he didn't like big waters. We waded across easily, but the ditch had disappeared, and as we waded back we found ourselves in deeper water. Anyone who has been in a strong current with a shingle bottom will know how dangerous it can be. So I said to Jack, "Do you like me?" He gave a puzzled look at such an obtuse question considering our dire circumstances, and replied, "Oh, you're OK I suppose." Then I said, "Why don't we put our arms around each other and wade across with four legs rather than two." Jack face lit up with a big toothy grin as he extended his arm. "Yair, I like you that much," he said. We made the crossing safely, even though the gravelly bottom and current made it tricky.

Allan Klieman had left us at Kurow, and Rob Harwood and I had determined to go to the Greenstone because of the glowing report I'd received on it on my previous visit. We prepared to leave and the other four decided to come with us. When we arrived at Queenstown I made enquiries regarding getting to the Greenstone, but every attempt was fruitless. The following day we dropped into the tackle shop in Queenstown where I had previously met the ranger who had told me about the Greenstone some years before. He informed us the Forests Department had just built a hut on the Greenstone and another on its tributary, the Caples, which we were welcome to use. As to getting there, the only way was by helicopter.

So we headed to Frankton Airport where I asked Don Sparry, the principal of Alpine Helicopters, if he would take us. He was not at all obliging, saying that the last lot of our countrymen he had taken there had returned with a huge box of fish. He went on to say that there were not a lot of fish in the river, and that he liked to fly over and fish it himself occasionally, and so was keen to preserve the fishing that remained. I replied that I had fished on occasions with his maintenance man, who would vouch for me as not being the sort of person who would kill fish in the manner he described.

He accepted this and said, "OK, I'll take you. The chopper is \$300 per hour. Three of you need to go to Mt Creighton Station, (a property opposite the Greenstone's entry to Lake Wakatipu), and the other three of you need to remain here. The three from here will go to the Greenstone, then the chopper will go and pick up the other three and drop them at the Caples. The round trip will take an hour and the same on return, so \$100 each. When do you want to go?"

We decided to leave as soon as we could and return five days later. Jim Gomerski, John Hayes, and Jack Kelly decided to fish the Caples, with Jack being quite apprehensive about the chopper trip. We raced into town to get supplies and then Rob, Peter, and I returned to Frankton. After a scenic flight and a quick unpack we had time to fish before dusk settled. The hut was set in a backdrop of beech trees with a commanding view of the river. It had a cast iron stove and a table with bench seats in the main room. On either side were bunk rooms with four bunks. We were bemused to find a number of deer's feet on the seats.

On the outside rear wall was a fly-proof meat safe and a water tank, and further away there was a little house with a long drop. When we returned after each having caught and released a mixture of browns and rainbows the owners of the deer's feet were there. They were culling deer, and told us they dried the feet and then removed the tendons which they sold to the Chinese. The revenue was enough to pay for their ammo. They were pleasant company for a couple of nights, and we agreed to supply them with a trout in exchange for some venison.

The river was perfect, as was the weather, and the fishing could not have been better. The hills in the Greenstone Valley still had snow on the peaks but the weather was mild and pleasant. We alternated, two going upstream and one walking well down and fishing back up. While there were sections of rather shallow water with no fish there were lots in the deeper pools. All in all it was a marvelous experience and exceeded my ranger friend's descriptions.

On the last day I went upstream alone and caught a few rainbows, but then moved a long way further without seeing fish. I eventually encountered a brown that looked about two

pounds which was on station mid-stream. By this time the wind had got up, as it always did in the afternoon, but on this day it was fierce. After some fruitless casting I finally lined the fish. It spooked and departed. After another long walk I couldn't find any more so decided to return to the hut. When I arrived back near the spot where I'd seen the one I'd spooked I went inland a bit and crept up to see if he had returned. He had, so I said to myself, "THINK you dopey beggar. There must be a way to catch that fish. Maybe a roll cast will do the trick." With the wind still howling I crawled up to a little bush just below the fish, tied on a dry, and rolled the line out. The fly landed in the right spot, the fish rose to it, and I struck too soon. But the fish didn't spook. I replaced the dry with a nymph, saw the fish move as my line drifted back downstream, so waited, then struck. The brown leapt out of the water and raced off down the river. While in the air I could see it's size was far in excess of two pounds. With my backing rapidly disappearing I chased it downstream and after a long battle finally netted it. Peter's Salter scales weighed it at just over 5½ lb when cleaned. I took it to Queenstown and gave it to friends who owned the flats we were staying in.

On arriving back in Queenstown the other four left, but told us they had left their grog in their van at Mt Creighton Station, so they had suffered through five very dry and thirsty days. Rob and I had a few days to fill before our flight, and we caught fish in the lake at the end of streets lined with houses. In the clear water it was easy to see fish cruising the shore, so we would cast a nymph the same distance out and as the fish got close give it a little tweak. The nymph was eaten every time. The bloke in the tackle shop wouldn't believe us. I saw my ranger friend there again, and I offered to pay for the coal we had used, but he wouldn't hear of it. So ended a most memorable trip.



TE WAIROA STREAM MOUTH

FLY OF THE MONTH

Ken Meek's Water Boatman



A real one



The counterfeit

Your editor is occasionally guilty of fishing some private dams down Leongatha way, and most of these dams seem to have a fairly healthy population of water boatmen. So it goes without saying that a water boatman pattern is often productive. But water boatmen live in more places than those Leongatha dams – they are very common in stillwaters everywhere. They are a popular food item for trout, and thus of considerable interest to anglers. As a consequence the fly tiers have been busy, and representative patterns abound. Fortunately most are fairly simple to tie. Water boatmen are a type of beetle, but they have two additional prominent features – they swim by means of a rowing action using two long legs as paddles, and they hold trapped air around their abdomen and under their wings, giving a translucent silvery appearance when viewed from below (the usual fish perspective).

So water boatmen patterns typically have a silvery body, a dark wing case, and a couple of paddles sticking out the sides. An example is the Pearly Corixia, described in a recent SAFFA newsletter, which has a body of pearl Diamond-Brite, a wingcase of cock pheasant tail fibres, and paddles made from a couple of the cock pheasant tail fibres tied out the sides. A pattern from a US magazine similarly has a body of black yarn covered with flat silver tinsel, dark ring-necked pheasant fibres for the wingcase, and small-diameter rubber legs as paddles.

But the pattern that I mainly use was created by Ken Meek – a veteran fly-fisher from the Leongatha area. Ken is a very thoughtful and inventive tier who has created a number of patterns that work well in his part of the state. His water boatman pattern seems somewhat back to front – it has a dark body and a silvery wingcase. But it works – the trout love it. And I was interested to read that backswimmers, which are a close relative of the water boatman, have a dark green or brown abdomen and a very pale or white wing case. Perhaps when I think I'm fishing a water boatman pattern the trout are

actually taking it for a backswimmer. Who cares – if the trout keep chomping on it, I'll keep fishing it.

Tying Ken's Water Boatman

Materials:

Hook	Wet fly - size 14
Thread	Black 6/0
Tail	Two black goose biots
Body	Dubbed black sparkle dubbing, or other suitable black dubbing.
Wingcase	White shellback, eg white raffia or similar white material
Paddles	Two rubber legs tied in to stick out at 45°
Head	Black tying thread

Method:

1. Place the hook in the vice, tie on the thread and run the thread down to the bend.
2. Tie in two black goose biots as a tail. The length of these should be about half the hook shank in length.
3. Tie in the wingcase material – it should be a strip about 1.5 – 2.0 mm wide.
4. Dub on the black dubbing and wind it on, building up a beetle-shaped body. Stop winding the dubbing when three-quarters of the shank is covered.
5. Take a strip of thin-diameter rubber leg material about 3 – 4 cm long and tie it in crossways at right-angles to the hook shank so that equal lengths stick out each side of the hook shank. Then pull the legs back on each side so that they are held against the dubbed body and sticking out at about 45° to the shank. Wind thread over the point where the rubber legs are tied on to the hook shank to hold them in place.
6. Add some more body dubbing and build up the body by winding a turn or two over the point where the legs are tied in.
7. Tie the dubbing off, then pull the wingcase over the body and tie it in. Cut off the excess wing case material, then build up a small head with the tying thread and whip finish.
8. Coat the wingcase with head cement.
9. Trim the legs with scissors so that they are exactly equal in length and slightly longer than the hook shank.



LIBRARY NEWS

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

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

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

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

OVERDUE BOOKS

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

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

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

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

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2009 Annual Dinner:

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