

# FLY LINES



AUGUST 2019

## The August Annual Dinner – with our special guest Tamie Fraser

Tamie grew up on a farming property near Glenthompson, a small town on the Glenelg Highway between Hamilton and Ballarat. She attended school at the Hermitage, in Geelong, which later merged with Geelong Grammar School. In 1956 she married Malcolm, who served as Australia's Prime Minister during the years 1975 to 1983.

In 2004 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to the community through fostering the recognition and preservation of Australian artistic achievement, for initiating and promoting a range of activities to support people with disabilities, and for her support of a number of charitable, health and service groups.

Tamie and Malcolm were keen fly fishers, and often fished the lakes and rivers of Tasmania. Two of her favourite flies were the Purple Haze and the Possum Emerger.

Tamie has a well-deserved reputation as a gifted and entertaining speaker with some great stories to tell. She deserves our full support, and this would be an

Friday, August 23,  
8:00 pm,  
at the Kelvin Club

ideal opportunity for members to bring their partners to our annual dinner.

The date for this event – Friday, August 23, at the Kelvin Club. Time: 6:30pm for a 7:00pm commencement.

An invitation to the dinner is included in this issue.



*Tamie is hooked on trout fishing*

# THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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*La Fontaine Stream- a Nancy Tichborne watercolour*

# President's Message

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... from Christopher Gray

It's been a busy month with quite a lot of activity around the VFFA and general trout activities.

First - our congratulations to Charley May for achieving her Casting Instructor's certification recently in Bellingham, England. I understand she broke her rod during the exam, then continued on with another rod to complete the qualification.

## Council news

A membership terms of reference committee is in the process of reviewing our current offerings to members and looking at possible additional events and activities. The committee will meet during the next four months and then provide a report to Council for consideration. This is a great opportunity for all members to voice their ideas. Please feel free to send your thoughts and suggestions to me so that the committee can include them in their discussions.

A new offering was recently emailed out to members – the opportunity to enjoy a day's fishing at Millbrook Lakes. Lyndon Webb and Dermot O'Brien have worked on this with Mark Weigall, the owner/manager of Millbrook Lakes. Mark has offered VFFA members exclusive use of four of their lakes on one day in each season. The days nominated were in each of these months - August 2019, November 2019, January 2020 and March 2020.

The cost is \$125 per member for each day, and there is a limit of 12 anglers each day. Millbrook will provide a roving guide on each occasion to assist members throughout the day. More details are given later in this issue.



## Victorian Fisheries Authority

The VFA recently stocked cheetah trout in Lake Purrumbete as part of its plan to create a trophy fishery in the crater lakes district. The VFA has also stocked another 60,000 brown and rainbow trout across Victoria in various lakes and rivers.

The VFA, ATF, North East and West Gippsland CMAs and volunteers met at Snobs Creek last week to load more Scotty Jordan incubators to continue the trials. The loaded incubators were then placed in Queens Creek (an anabranch of the King River) and the Macalister River. A fantastic effort by all involved.

## Events outside the VFFA

Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Annual Dinner – I, along with Lyndon Webb and Bruce Houghton, attended the WFFC annual dinner, and wow, what a fantastic night they put on with over 70 in attendance. The small team at WFFC caught all of the fish and game that was served up in the nine courses. This is a unique and truly fabulous event, and I urge all of our members to try to get to one of these dinners. My personal thanks to club

president Adrian Jacobs and his team for their generous hospitality.

The Ballarat Fly Fishers are holding their Centenary Dinner on August 31, and this will also be a great night to celebrate their wonderful history and achievements.

The 2019 Wild Trout Conference will again be in Mansfield on Saturday, November 23, and I know that a number of our members will be heading up there to make it a weekend of fly fishing on Friday 22 and Sunday 24.

### Personal Notes

It was good to welcome Barney Stephens as a new member a few weeks ago. It was good to welcome Barney Stephens as a new member a few weeks ago. Barney is vice-president of the Red Tag Fly Fishing Club and has indicated that he would like to be part of our Association too. Great to have you on board with us Barney.

Then some really sad news. Arthur King died recently. Arthur joined the VFFA in

1971 and served as president during the years 1974-1976. He was a hard-working and energetic president and a very enthusiastic fly fisher. A tribute to his life and contribution to the VFFA is given in this issue.

### Our Annual Dinner

Our August Annual Dinner is fast approaching and promises to be a wonderful night with Tamie Fraser AO as our guest speaker. Please confirm your attendance as soon as possible to help with the organisation and planning. I look forward to meeting with all who attend. The Dinner will be followed by our President's Casting Day which will be held on the following Sunday - August 25.

Tight lines and heavy nets for the month ahead.



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## The September AGM

Members are reminded that the September meeting will be our AGM. It's still some weeks away, but President Chris Gray is keen to remind us that all financial members are eligible for nomination and election to the Council. Notice papers relevant to the AGM are included with this newsletter, these being the Nomination Form, the Appointment of Proxy Form, and the AGM agenda.

Council meets on the last Monday of each month, and all the management issues involved in running the Association are dealt with at these meetings so that monthly general meetings can be given over totally to the advertised activities – guest speakers, auctions, fly tying demonstrations, ...

If you have some experience and skills in business and management and a keen desire to see our Association remain vibrant and responsive to the needs of members, please give thought to nominating for Council. Meetings are invariably lively and you will enjoy participating as well as contributing useful insights and points of view for the benefit of our Association.

Unfortunately some highly valued councillors are retiring this year after many years serving on the Council, so there is a need for new people to step forward and offer their services.

The date – Thursday, September 19, at the Kelvin Club.

## Arthur Francis King – 10/2/1937 – 26/7/2019

It is very sad to report that one of our cherished members died recently. Arthur King joined the VFFA in 1971. He was president of the Association from 1974 to 1976.

His wife Margaret emailed us to inform us of his death. Her email included this note: "During his last weeks Arthur talked often about his passion for fly fishing and the pleasures of sharing it with fellow devotees. Trips to the potato dams at Thorpdale or to the Western lakes, to various Victorian rivers, to Tasmania and New Zealand, to the Warrnambool dinners, the tying of flies and casting sessions at Fairfield, and of course the monthly dinners at the Kelvin Club. I would like to thank all those who shared these pleasures with him."

Margaret has also written this tribute to Arthur:

Arthur was born in Wynnum, Queensland, and while studying Chemical Engineering at the University of Queensland came to love the challenges of the mountains nearby, especially Mt Lindesay and Mt Barney. After graduation, he moved to Victoria, working first for Shell in Geelong, then for Altona Petrochemical Company when he moved to Melbourne.



*Arthur fishing the Mitta*

Whilst climbing Mt Rosea in the Grampians he met Margaret, and they began a shared life and love of outdoor adventures, especially in the mountains and on the waters. Up Mt Feathertop in September 1962, when it was still snow-covered, then down to Lake Tali Karng

later in spring, were the first two climbs after he married Margaret in May that year.

In 1963 we sailed on one of the returning migrant ships, the Patras, to Athens, where we hitch-hiked then travelled by train across to London, where Arthur found more opportunities to work in the design field. His first project was the BP refinery on Westernport, where we used to sail our Gwen 12!

Fly fishing began with a trip to North Wales, and developed on the streams of Hampshire where we were living during start-up of the Fawley refinery. He spent a fine May evening in 1967 fishing until late on a small stream in the New Forest, only to have to rise at 3 am the next morning when Susannah decided to arrive ahead of schedule into our lives. "Best rise all night!" he declared.

The family of three returned to Melbourne in early 1969, and watched the moon landing with six week old Rebecca being held up in front of the flickering images so she could be reminded that she had seen history happen!

Before long there were trips to lakes and rivers, camping, learning NOT to throw pebbles where Daddy was fishing. We all remember an evening on the Moroka

River where Arthur was casting, and catching and landing pan-sized fish in rapid succession as we cleaned them and had the butter sizzling in the pan over the campfire coals.

Back in Melbourne Arthur continued his professional work in the design and construction of petrochemical facilities in many parts of Australia, and also in the Highlands of PNG and on Bougainville.

As investment in his field was waning he decided to study Contract Law at Melbourne University, which helped him gain the position of Contracts Manager in the newly amalgamated Bass Coast Council. Over three sometimes challenging years he established the newly legislated ways of competitive tendering, oversaw the completion of many valuable community facilities and services, and selected and trained a team to work with him and to carry on after he left at the end of his contract to indulge in the pleasures of retirement. This new role also led to an enduring connection with Inverloch, the locality and its people.

Arthur enjoyed trips to Tasmania, New Zealand, and to the rivers, lakes and dams of Victoria and the Snowy

Mountains. He loved the combination of the solitary pursuit and the conviviality with fellow fly fishers. Away from the water he tied flies, built rods, acquired gear, and built up a collection of books that related to this passion. He was proud of his time as president of the VFFA, because he considered it important to contribute as well as to benefit.

During these past two months in hospital, fighting infections following surgery, he reminisced happily over his varied fly fishing experiences, and enjoyed hearing Margaret read from *Fly Lines*.

I hope you realise how much Arthur's family appreciate the pleasures that the VFFA gave him.

Our family is hosting a celebration of Arthur's life on Friday, August 9, at the Old Shire Offices, 60 Beverley Road, Heidelberg, from 2 pm. Any fishermen would be most welcome to join us. 0438 594 348 is my mobile number.

Thank you all, and may you long continue to enjoy this great activity.

*Margaret King*

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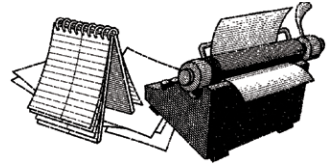
## A New Member

This month we again have the pleasure of welcoming a new member. Barney Stephens has applied to join our ranks, and we are delighted to welcome him into the VFFA. Barney is currently vice-president of the Red Tag Fly Fishing Club and has indicated that he would like to be part of our Association too. We look forward to greeting Barney at a future meeting, and trust that his membership brings many years of enjoyment and wonderful fishing experiences.

As the photo indicates, Barney catches some magnificent fish.



# From the EDITOR'S DESK



*"I carry fewer flies each year, and less gear. Each year I watch a little more, fish a little less."*  
(Christopher Camuto – "A Flyfisherman's Blue Ridge")

*"Fishing, if I a fisher may protest, of pleasures is the sweetest, of sports the best,  
Of exercises the most excellent, of recreations the most innocent.  
But now the sport is marred, and why you ask.  
Because fishes decrease, and fishers multiply." (Thomas Bastard, 1598)*

*"The number and excellence of books devoted to the exposition of angling are so great that no other sport can compare with it in these respects." (James Robb)*

*"Fishing books, lit by emotion recollected in tranquillity, are like poetry... We do not think of them as books. They are our companions and not only river-side. Summer and winter they are with us and what a pleasant company they are." (Arthur Ransome – "The Fisherman's Library", 1959)*

I know it's probably an admission of my stage of life and the now countless fishing seasons I've seen drift by, but I love my fly fishing books. And I've just acquired another one. By Tom Sutcliffe.

Tom is a semi-retired medical doctor living in Cape Town, South Africa. He is the author of seven books on fly fishing and fly tying and has written countless articles for both local and international magazines. He has devoted a large part of his life to the pursuit of trout, and his first book, *Hunting Trout*, is widely recognised as simply the best book on fly fishing in South African fishing literature.

And Tom has now written another book, *Yet More Sweet Days*, and the reviews have been full of praise.

Tom is also a keen friend of the VFFA. We email him the PDF file of our newsletters each month, and in return he generously allows us to use extracts from his books in our newsletters. I have a copy of this latest book for our VFFA library. It is an excellent read.

So what's Tom got to say about modern fly fishing? To quote:

*"Much of the change in fly fishing over the past decade was predictable. Certainly,*

*the technological and design advances in tackle were, as was the appearance of a giddy heap of new tackle and some novel fishing techniques from a bunch of our deeper thinking brothers and sisters. You could safely have banked on more digital communication and you would have been right – but, like me, you would probably have underestimated its impact. ... As a result of wholesale subscription to fly fishing in the form of blogs, websites and a host of other computer-based applications, information flows on a cosmic scale, and fly fishing is now, more or less, a global community."*



*Tom Sutcliffe fishing a South African stream*

“An interesting side question is whether the vast selection of fly tackle now available is reaching saturation point, meaning reaching a level where a sort of angler retail fatigue sets in. On this point, I have to believe that the lives of retail fly-tackle dealers have become a nightmare of choices, just as the life of your everyday angler has become a nightmare of choices (never mind the beginners, who must be confused beyond belief).”

“One interesting change is the emergence of what, for want of a better term, I call *trends* in fly fishing. There’s a trend to travel – often to far-flung, exotic destinations – as clients of the increasing number of destination outfitters, which offer fishing for a list of species that has grown as long as your favourite fly rod.

And there is a trend towards inclusivity, meaning you now find increased diversity among fly fishers, certainly a healthier representation of anglers of different races and cultures and, with it, a welcome growth in the number of lady fly fishers.

The trend to use protective clothing is as expected as it is relevant, especially in still and saltwater environments where the risk of damaging UV radiation is really high. For example, UV gloves are now almost as ubiquitous as sunglasses, and I am never without snake gaiters, even if they’re mainly on my legs just for my own peace of mind.

... These are some of the main trends as I see them. There are many more, but we can rest with this lot for the time being. If there were any downsides to fly fishing over the same period, and there were, they were mostly not insurmountable. Some, though, are concerning – like the altering weather patterns I mentioned that are exacerbated by climate change. The denialist lobby around this developing disaster is of particular concern. So many industrialised nations still see the risk of climate change as no more than an inconvenient truth – or, worse, the wacky

theories of a bunch of misguided, radical left-wing climatologists.”

And finally – some thoughts from Tom on those ‘feral trout’:

“The anti– trout lobby in South Africa, noticeably less vocal in other countries where trout are alien, like New Zealand, Australia and Argentina, has been well countered by the brave and dogged efforts of the Federation of South African Fly Fishers, where people such as Ilan Lax and Ian Cox (both lawyers), Dr Bill Bainbridge and many others have tirelessly presented a cogent case in support of sanity or, if not sanity, at least common sense and pragmatism.

Pronouncements I’ve heard of late from assorted reputable sources suggest that invasion biology is becoming if not an outdated postulation, at least one that is being revisited. As the obvious fluidity of the world’s species unfolds, it becomes more and more apparent that the xenophobic approach to life on earth needs to be questioned, as it ignores the simple fact that the world is in a dynamic, ever-changing state of flux as far as species distribution is concerned. I don’t need a scientist to tell me this.

Rather than trying to rid our country of its lovely trout or trying to limit the stocking of our trout waters through reams of strangling legislation, lets focus on preserving the ecosystems that sustain trout – our rivers and streams. We’ll be doing a lot more good than chasing our tails trying to oust a fish that has already been here well in excess of a century. Besides, trout do no measurable harm, and add vastly to the economy and provide untold joy to the thousands of devoted disciples who regularly stalk them.”

Wise words from a very wise man.

Best wishes,

*Lyndon*

## The July Meeting With Rene Vaz

Rene comes from Auckland, and he runs the Manic Project Tackle – a large wholesale tackle company. He spoke for over an hour on the range of fly fishing tackle that Manic provide, and he had a very attentive audience. He had much to say that was both instructive and stimulating. Here is a very brief summary of his presentation.

**W**ho has heard about Manic Tackle? The easiest way to check us out is to check our website. We are a wholesale business dealing with a bunch of brands. One reason why we have done well is because we carry so much stock.

We also work with the brands we stock. As an example, Simms is the biggest fly fishing brand in the world and we do most of their product testing on footwear, because if you fish New Zealand you know that boots get beaten up in New Zealand and wear out quicker. So as a company we work on developing our own stuff as well as working with the big brands. We also hold large quantities of gear so that retailers in New Zealand and Australia can draw from it.

Check our website. We have a blog that is full of information that will be of interest to you. And there's loads of great information and tuition on our site.

I want you to spend money on our products. But I also want you to get value for what you spend, so that you will

then want to spend more with us. We in Australia and New Zealand are on the other side of the world, so we try to buy items from where they are made.

Where does tippet material come from? Yes, all the really good stuff comes out of Japan. Our competitors buy a product made in Japan and then ship it to the US, where it might sit in somebody's warehouse for 12 months. It may be a couple of years by the time it gets shipped to New Zealand or Australia, and the worst thing you can have with tippet material is old product.

The other problem here is what you guys are paying for as consumers? You're often paying for lots of flights carrying this material around. Then you also pay import duties into two countries. Hence you end up blowing so much money. We found, for example, that while Simms waders are made in the US, their boots and clothing are generally made in Asia. So we now buy multiple shipments straight out of these Asian factories. Then instead of paying for something that has been sitting on a shelf for a long time you are paying the right price.

We spend a lot of our time designing product. We are designing rods now for New Zealand and Australian conditions under the Airflo brand, and instead of buying Airflo rods from the UK we buy these rods direct from China. We can offer you a \$200 or \$300 rod that is so much better than what our competitors offer. Our competitors use cheaper componentry to produce rods at this lower price because their rods fly round the world a few times before getting here. And they are often



*Rene Vaz had a great story to tell*

selling just a few rods while we're selling a few hundred.

I have here an Airflo rod that we sell for about \$200 - \$250 and it has a reel seat on it that you would normally expect to see on a rod selling for \$600. So you're getting things here of better quality and cheaper because we are designing them for Australian and New Zealand conditions. And you guys can then buy two rods for your \$600.

Here is another one of our brands - a rod model called Primal. Before setting up Manic company I used to run a rod manufacturing company in New Zealand called Composite Developments, so I have a background in materials and rod design. Here on the screen is a picture showing how these Primal rods are constructed. They are very light but have good hoop strength and longitudinal fibres that give the rod its action. The goal was to eliminate tip bounce and produce a rod that is really stable. Previously the trend was to make rods stiffer and hence harder to cast. Our philosophy was to create rods that were easy to use but with low amounts of bounce.



*Good gear need not cost the earth*

Does anyone here do any Euro nymphing? The rod I'm holding here is a 10 foot 2 weight rod designed especially for Euro and Czech nymphing. It is really soft because we want it to bend easily but not wobble all over the place. It has proved to be a very popular rod.

Airflo rods are our cheapest, and Primal rods sit in the middle. At the top end we sell Scott rods, because we believe that Scott craft the nicest fly rods in the world. They use high-quality components and all components are made in the US.

Has everyone heard of Lamson reels? As a company they are constantly seeking new ways of producing better fly reels. They



*Rene had a very attentive audience*

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*The latest camo gear – the angler lost in the shrubbery*

designed the first large arbor reels, and they are always using the most advanced machinery possible. The material in their reels is very thin yet very strong, and their spools are incredibly light. This of course is related to 'start-up inertia'. Arguably Lamson have the best drags systems in the market, but spool weight is absolutely critical. A very light spool takes no effort to start it and no effort to stop it.

Old reels had a little balance knob opposite the handle to balance the spool. But if you look at the spokes in this Lamson reel they are thicker opposite the handle, and the weight of this extra thickness acts as the counterbalance. A truly incredible spool design.



*Whoops! Not a lot left*

Let's talk about Simms waders. I assume everybody here has breathable waders, so be aware that Gore-Tex is the only material that actually breathes underwater. When you walk into a river and stand in the water with sweaty legs you'll feel cold if that sweat is not being evaporated out of your waders. We sell other waders that are cheaper and made from other materials, but Gore-Tex is the only material that will breathe underwater.

The focus now is on creating lighter waders that are as durable as the previous heavier waders. The material in the latest waders feels like a pair of track pants. It feels really soft. Stiff fabrics fold and then wear out, whereas soft and malleable fabric doesn't wear out as quickly. This new soft fabric is more breathable and also extremely durable.

The new waders from Simms have a contour look. You can move your leg without having a wader that is really big. Whenever you stood straight in older waders you had lots of folds in the material, but the new Simms waders are trim.

Wading boots. Here is a boot that we launched last January and it is both extremely light and extremely comfortable. It feels like wearing a light pair of sneakers, but still gives really good support. The studs are aluminium and if you want a rubber boot that feels like a felt sole then aluminium studs are by far the best.

We stock Trout Hunter tippet and leader material. Trout Hunter is the thinnest fluorocarbon material available, so if you normally fish with, say, 3 or 4 lb tippet then you will find with Trout Hunter that tippet of this same diameter is actually about 8 or 9 lb. It is insanely strong. I have personally found that the best way to catch more trout is to reduce the thickness of my tippet material. All the top guides

are now using this material. It is quite simply the finest quality fluorocarbon now available. It's very thin and very supple.

Clothing can make you a lot more effective on the water. Apparel will help you stay dry, stay fresh and comfortable, avoid sunburn, keep the bugs off, and help you disappear. If you wear one of those old PVC jackets you know what happens when it rains. Water runs down the sleeves and down your collar, so all of a sudden you not fishing so well.

You're not focusing on the fish when you're wet and cold, so we are developing jackets for all types of fishing. On the last day of a recent South Island trip the weather was foul and people were cancelling their plans. My colleague and I dressed for the weather, fished comfortably and had an excellent day. The rain was hitting the water, so the fish weren't spooky, and nobody else was on the river.

We've now got a range of clothing that provides protection against sandflies and other biting insects. Insect repellent material is used in making this clothing. Camouflage materials are also important,

both for saltwater and for fishing for trout. Blue materials are actually ideal for fishing along lake edges when the backdrop is mainly a blue sky.

I would assure you that handbags are back in. We are seeing a big trend towards hip packs and sling packs in place of vests. The advantage of a sling pack is you don't have the bulk of the vest in front of you, so you are a lot freer to fish.

Another big trend is in rods. When I was working with Composite Developments in 2001 we sold very few 5-weight rods. People only bought 6-weight rods and above. However we are now selling lots of rods in the 2 – 5 weight range. People are also fishing light two-handed spey rods for trout. They are easy to cast bigger distances with. You can cast across a big river with a heavy sinking line with far less effort using these rods.

We are also selling lots of fibreglass rods, which are ideal for small streams and small fish. Glass rods work fine when all you are casting is your leader and a little bit of fly line.

Finally – flies, and this is my theory on flies. Fish will eat anything – open one



*Tarpon take some stopping on fly gear*

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up and you'll find cigarette butts and bits of stick and other odd items inside them. So in terms of fly selection it is critical to have options. The worst thing you can do is fill your fly box with flies that are all the same. We sell a truly huge number of flies each year, and they are all different and they all work. Every single fly we sell catches fish. Rainbows in particular like to get excited and stirred up by something with colours they can see.

Remember that in nature there is lots of colour. It's not all tiny little brown stuff. Spin fishermen use items that have lots of colour, and if they are catching fish then we are missing something. People say New Zealand fish are picky, and sometimes they are. But there are occasions when we fish backcountry rivers with big flashy streamers. These fish have seen all the little stuff, and we think that sometimes they attack a big colourful streamer because they are predatory and something is invading their territory.



*Lots of other species now being taken on fly gear*

With your dry flies try using colourful high vis posts for your parachute hackles. They're easier to spot on the water.

Thank you for your attention.



*Rene with a magnificent South Island brown*

## VFFA Visit to Snobs Creek

### VFFA members and family visit to Snobs Creek Hatchery on September 15

The Snobs Creek Hatchery has produced and grown fish for recreational fisheries and conservation stockings for more than 70 years. The hatchery produces trout, salmon and native fish and is responsible for their release into Victorian waterways.

Female and male rainbow and brown trout brood stock are selected, sedated, and handled carefully to harvest eggs and sperm. After the eggs and sperm have been removed the trout are returned to holding tanks to recover before they are released as ex-brood and stocked into lakes or impoundments.

In 2017-18 the VFA stocked over 1.2 million salmonids of which over 3,000 were brook trout, 630,000 were brown trout, 539,000 were rainbow trout and 29,000 were chinook salmon.

### The Event

VFFA members and family are invited for a private tour of the hatchery with Neil Hyatt, Salmonid Supervisor. The tour will start at 11:00am and take about one to one and a half hours to complete. We

will finish with a barbecue at the pond as guests of the VFA.

Attendees are limited to about 30, so please register asap. Interested partners, children and grandchildren are all welcome.

### Where and When

Snobs Creek Hatchery, 455 Goulburn Valley Highway, Eildon 3713.

Sunday September 15 at 10:30am.

(As the entrance gate is locked at weekends, we will meet Neil there at 10:30 so we can start the tour at 11:00am. Note that the drive there is about two and a half hours from Melbourne CBD.)

Check the weather forecast and be dressed for the outdoors whether it is hot or cold, rain or shine. Hats for the sun.

### Registration

Email or call Bill Fary with your name and those of your guests by September 7.

Email: pbfary@gmail.com or text or call Bill on his mobile 0408 037 540

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## Habitat Workshop At Traralgon

(... from Chris Gray)

Thirty people attended the Australian Trout Foundation's habitat workshop in Traralgon on July 13. They heard a number of presentations from fishing clubs, the Victorian Fisheries Authority and two Catchment Management Authorities.

### Key points from the day included these:

- The CMAs presented their habitat priorities.
- Terry George from the ATF and Tim Curmi from Native Fish Australia explained the importance of having healthy habitats for all rivers in Victoria.
- Renae Ayres, a scientist from the Arthur Rylah Institute, presented a paper on healthy habitat, better flows, and impacts on fish.
- Fishing club habitat priorities were aired and the clubs were given >>>

an opportunity to suggest new habitat projects in alignment with support from the CMAs.

- John Douglas showed us a video that underlined the importance of terrestrial and aquatic life on habitat, and how these align with the environment and affect waterways.
- Volunteer groups were listed, along with discussion on the extent to which they can assist in so many ways to facilitate events with CMAs, land managers and environmental stake holders.

### Mitta Mitta Catchment

- 200 snags have been installed in the Mitta Mitta River.
- Temperatures of 27.4°C were recorded last summer.
- Styles were placed strategically along the Cobungra and Bundara rivers to improve angler access.
- Further riparian work was required in all three river valleys.
- Management of riparian work is required after tree planting to ensure success in the long term.

### Upper Goulburn River

Forty sites have been selected to have some or all of the following:

- Boulder seeding
- In-stream woody habitat
- Lunkers

### Snowy River Catchment

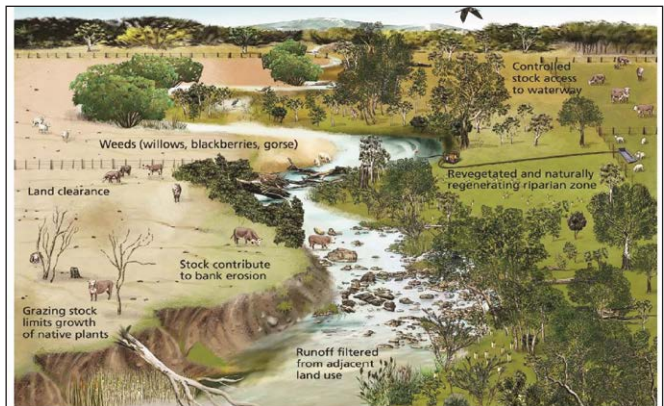
- 1,200 kilometres of the valley has been fenced over the past 20 years

- a fantastic effort to restrict stock access to the river.

- Good numbers of small trout have been recorded in the Livingstone Creek.
- CMAs work on a six-year plan for their funding. Currently they are in year four with submissions in the planning for the next six years. So this is a great opportunity for us to present habitat projects now for consideration in the future. Possible projects include fish ladders, in-stream improvements (snags and boulders), riparian planting, and fencing of waterways.

The National Carp Control report was discussed with some emotion. Readers can view the detail here: [www.carp.gov.au](http://www.carp.gov.au). Anyone wanting to submit comments can do so at: [www.yoursay.carp.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.carp.gov.au).

Over all there was some very robust discussion on the environment and how we can work together to improve fishing options and opportunities. I hope that through the network of fishing clubs and associations we continue to support projects into the future via partnerships with CMAs, the ATF, and land owners and managers.



*Riparian restoration graphic used as part of the projects engagement to illustrate the importance of protecting waterways.*

## VFFA Members Fishing Millbrook Lakes

A note in a recent issue of the South Australian Fly Fishers' monthly newsletter informed members that their club was stocking several more farmers' dams with fish that members could then fish for. This prompted some discussion at Council on the possibility of the VFFA doing something similar. There are challenges with this proposal though, including the fairly steep cost of fish, the difficulty in finding suitable dams, and the problem of preventing non-members from poaching our fish. But the discussion on this topic is not over yet.

In the meantime, another way of providing some good fishing for VFFA members was suggested – the possibility of making an arrangement with an established private fishery. Most members would be aware of Millbrook Lakes fishery. Some of our members are members there. By reputation it is managed very professionally and consistently provides superb fishing.

So we contacted Mark Weigall, the owner/manager of Millbrook and he was quite amenable to the idea of groups of VFFA members visiting Millbrook to fish some of their fabulous lakes. Mark offered us the exclusive use of four of their 14 dams on four days in the year – one day in January, one in March, one in August and one in November. In other words, one day in each season.

The cost per VFFA member for a day's fishing at Millbrook is \$125, which, for a

fishery of this quality, is a very reasonable cost.

Groups of VFFA members visiting Millbrook need to include 6 – 12 anglers. One of the four allocated lakes has a cabin on it where visitors can park cars and find some shelter for lunch/ coffee. Mark will also make a 'roving' guide available to help us with fly selection and tactics.

Following discussion with Mark the following days and times were selected for the next 12 months: Tuesday, August 27 (9 am till dark); Wednesday, November 20 (11 am till dark); Wednesday, January 15, 2020 (11 am till dark; and Wednesday, March 25, 2020 (9 am till dark). These days are all on week days because weekends are when Millbrook members mostly want to fish, so finding suitable weekends when lakes were free was difficult.

It is good to report that our first visit, on August 27, is now fully subscribed, with 12 members replying to the invitation published by email recently. Other members who would like to visit Millbrook in November should mark the date - November 20 - in their diaries and reply to the email invitation when it appears.

No doubt Council will address the issue of sharing the opportunity around and will put in place some arrangements so that those who would have liked to have been included in this first group are given some priority when choosing the group for the November visit.

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## ATF – Wins and Losses

### The WTFMP

The what? The WTFMP is the Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program developed in 2014. It was initiated by the Victorian State Government following concerns from anglers in 2013 - 2014 about significantly reduced catch rates of wild trout from many of Victoria's most popular trout streams. The WTFMP was a

collection of ten projects over three years that aimed to deliver:

- A clearer understanding of the cause(s) of the decline in wild trout fisheries;
- A better understanding of priority trout populations' health and status;
- Improved engagement with fishers to share our understanding of trout >>>

fisheries management, science and factors that drive the fishery;

- More responsive management of wild trout recreational fishing in Victoria;
- Improved fishing opportunities for wild trout in Victoria.

The WTFMP has focussed on achieving a better understanding of the key factors that influence the performance of these prominent fisheries. Some of the key findings were:

- Trout are adaptive and resilient, but their populations and 'catchability' are dynamic and can fluctuate with changing environmental and climatic conditions;
- Water temperature and river flow rates are important to survival rates, growth rates, and natural recruitment of wild trout;
- Hot summers and resulting high water temperatures can severely impact trout;
- Thus there is evidence that trout move upstream to cooler and/or shaded reaches in hot summers;
- Streamside (riparian) habitat is critical for trout - to buffer against changes to water temperatures, to provide in-stream habitat (fallen timber), and to encourage the production of terrestrial food sources;
- In-stream habitat such as rocks, timber and structural complexity provide important habitat for trout;



*These are the trees planted on the Steavenson River  
– apparently fine fodder for cows*

- Stocking yearling brown trout into rivers has proven to be ineffective in boosting populations;
- Angler engagement (and participation) is important in managing the wild trout fishery;
- Angling pressure on wild trout stocks has been shown to be low in popular alpine regions.



*Scotty Jordan incubators being loaded*

### **Scotty Jordon's again**

One consequence of these conferences and discussions was that VFA agreed to trial Scotty Jordan incubators in partnership with the Australian Trout Foundation and recreational angler groups. So again this year a number of anglers, including ATF personnel, loaded Scotty Jordan incubators with fertilised trout ova at Snobs Creek Hatchery. These incubators have since been deployed. Lee Carpenter from Snobs Creek assisted Australian Trout Foundation's Matt Byrne (Chairman of Stocking) in transporting and deploying incubators in Queens Creek (an anabranch of the King River).

The remaining incubators were placed in the Macalister River by a very enthusiastic band of anglers that included ATF Committee representatives Peter Murray and Ray Throup, along with members from the Sale, Latrobe, VFFA and Bairnsdale clubs.

Our thanks to Lee and JD (from the VFA) who delivered the incubators and then pulled on their waders and assisted with the installations. Thanks, too, to Matt Bowler and Rob Johnston from the West Gippsland CMA for organising easy access to the locations and for helping out at the Macalister.

### The Losses

In May 2018 a group of some 60 keen volunteers from a number of angler groups met at the Steavenson River and spent two or three hours planting 600 trees along the river to improve the habitat, and thus the fishing.

Tragically, Kris Leckie from VRfish recently visited the site and gave this report:

“It is with great disappointment that I report on yet another incident of cattle grazing at our Steavenson River tree planting site. I visited the site this afternoon to see how the plants were faring and was shocked at its current state. With the exception of just a few eucalypts that are growing well, the vast majority of the plants have been damaged or destroyed by cattle. ... I don't know if the landholder has put his cattle in there or if the neighbor's cows have gotten in again. It's likely that some of the damage has occurred from deer browsing, but given the trampling of the guards, it would appear that most of it has occurred



*Keen volunteers in action*

from cattle. Many of the plants have been stripped of leaves and will most likely die.

Due to the guards being knocked over many plants have ended up in the river. I managed to fish out a few, but there were at least another half dozen that I couldn't reach, and who knows how many have washed further downstream.”

This of course is very disappointing news, especially to those who gave their time to planting the trees.”

It is likely that DELWP and/or the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority will take some action. We can only wait and see what transpires.



*ATF president Terry George organising the action*



## Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club Annual Dinner ...

On Saturday, July 20, the Warrnambool Fly Fishers held their annual dinner - their 52nd anniversary game dinner in fact. While the club has about 25 members the attendance at the dinner was well over 70. These annual game dinners have earned a wonderful reputation, and many of the guests return year after year to enjoy this incredible feast.

The chef was again Robert King, who has been preparing these game dinners now for well over 20 years.

During the last few years the dinners have been held in the function room under the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion. This year the weather was particularly cold, and the heaters battled to warm the cavernous function room. But the atmosphere was warm and the company in good voice. We hardly noticed the temperature.

WFFC President Adrian Jacobs welcomed the many visitors, including Chris Gray, Lyndon Webb and Bruce Houghton representing the VFFA. Adrian confessed



*VFFA president Chris Gray attended the Warrnambool dinner*

to using his welcome notes from the previous year, so apologised to the relatives of anyone he mentioned who had passed away in the past 12 months. Adrian has a lively sense of humour and had his audience in stitches before the courses came rolling out.

This year the banquet commenced with hors d'ouvres of deep-fried crumbed abalone and whitebait with lime aioli.



*Enjoying some magnificent food*

These were followed by four entrées—game soup, Killarney thresher shark curry parcels, smoked trout and smoked eel on toast, then finally truffled hare, rabbit and duck terrine with Woodford crabapple jelly. The main course was grilled kangaroo sirloin with roast vegetables. The finale was a cheese platter with Woodford quince paste, coffee and tea.

After the meal there were some raffles to draw. Whoops – they don't have raffles at these Warrnambool dinners. Instead they run a series of 'swindles'. And there were some fine prizes for those whose swindle tickets coincided with numbers on the tickets pulled out of that big barrel. It was fascinating to see how cleverly and deviously the organisers operated to ensure that all tables had a winner or



*The entrées were magnificent*



*The Warrnambool dinner was very well attended this year*

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two. Swindles are complicated, but we all know that.

Then there were trophies to present. The Arthur Hogan Trophy for the largest trout caught in local waters was won again to Jim Blakeslee, whose name now appears on the trophy some 16 times. Jim has a property just north of Warrnambool - at Woodford on the Merri River. So he knows every inch of the Merri River, and is on speaking terms with all of the trout in residence. Then again it helps that Jim is an incredibly skilled and experienced angler. So Jim - our congratulations on another well-deserved win.

The Geoff O'Brien Memorial Trophy for the best selection of flies tied by a WFFC member was awarded again to Peter Hussey. Peter is a fine fly tier and uses his fly tying and fishing skills to fish the Hopkins and Merri river estuaries for bream and estuary perch. He is recognised for his expertise in fishing for these species

And finally it was all over. Our congratulations to all who were involved in the preparation and organisation of this year's dinner. It remains a very special event in the VFFA calendar, and the calendars of many others too.



*Peter Hussey receiving the trophy for some very fine fly tying*



*Adrian Jacobs presenting the Arthur Hogan trophy for the largest trout caught in local rivers to Jim Blakeslee. Jim has now won this trophy 16 times.*



*A very convivial atmosphere*

# Return to the Rye River, Yorkshire, England 2019

... By Andrew Mossman

We fly fishers all know the order of insects called Ephemeroptera. There are over 3,000 species of them and they have a worldwide distribution. They are fundamentally important to fly fishing for trout, and when dry fly fishing was developed in Hampshire in the mid 1800's much of it related to imitating ephemerids. Today they are ubiquitously known as mayflies, however in Ronalds time, the early 1800's, only the large Green, Grey and other Drakes were called mayflies, and this was because they hatched in May.

The drakes, and there are several species in North America also, still hold a wonderful fascination for fly fishermen. When they hatch in large numbers it appears that all the fish in the river are feeding and rising, and to see such a hatch and the fish's enthusiastic response is just marvellous. These mayflies are huge, some up to 30 millimetres tall, and even a little bigger than our Kossie Duns, our largest mayflies.

Before going to England, John, a friend of mine living near York, invited me to have a couple of days fishing with him on the Rye, a small river near York. John is the president of the local fly fishing club which has leased 4½ miles of this river and which is available to members and their guests to fish. I wrote of a couple of days fishing I had with John on the Rye in *Fly Lines*, October 2015, and won't describe it all again, other than to say it is a superb little river. Much of it is similar to the Hampshire chalk streams, with extensive weed beds and wonderful hatches, and at this time of the year, English mayflies often hatch. Yes, real

mayflies, Ephemera Danica, Green Drakes.

My reason for introducing this article with a short discussion on mayflies is because during the two days I enjoyed on the Rye they hatched. Not in huge numbers, but odd ones coming off all day, and also there were big afternoon and evening flights of spinners. There were therefore egg laying spinners flying over the water and spent spinners on the water.

I was hoping for some mayfly fishing on this trip so I tied a full range of flies, similar to my New Zealand imitations but in different colours and rather larger of course. But first the naturals.



*Mayfly Dun*



*Mayfly Spinner (The satisfied lady I mentioned)*

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The dun above was photographed on an earlier trip to the Rye. But the female spinner was the one that I found under the swarm of males in the grass.

it was settling from a spate the week before. I put on a Para Adams size 15 and immediately caught a small fish of 8 to 9 inches. Very few mayfly, green drakes,



*Mayfly Upright Emerger*



*Mayfly Emerger*



*Mayfly No Hackle Possum Dun*



*Mayfly Spinner*

The following are the flies I tied for my trip including also the spinner I tied in York. The Emerger and the No Hackle Possum Dun are tied with natural possum body hair dyed light green.

Huge flight of mayfly spinners between the trees.

After booking in at the Club house, we arrived on the stream at approximately 10:30am having decided to fish the Lower Nunnington beat. It was a clear sunny day with light breezes. The water was at a good level, but not crystal clear as

were hatching so I put on my emerger, size 11, which was tied with a looped wing of green and clear orlon. I fished up slowly and carefully catching fish mostly of about a pound, with an odd bigger fish up to 1½ lbs and a few smaller ones. I lost one good fish when my tippet failed at the fly knot. It was hard to judge the size of the fish that were rising, and I had several splashy rises that were not felt. However splashy rises are consistent with fish rising to large hatching duns.

There was a moderate hatch of mayfly all morning, with the weather clouding over and the breeze stiffening a little and

becoming cooler. A wonderful morning's fishing with 14 fish of mostly a pound, and half of them wild. John had had a good morning also, catching similar sized fish.

No sandwiches on the river here, but off we went to the 400 year old local village and had a most enjoyable lunch. Delightfully English. We were back on the water by 3:00pm, but a little further up the beat, and when we arrived there was a very impressive flight of mayfly spinners in progress. It was in the clear spaces between some alder trees and the male spinners were swarming up and down to a height of at least 25 metres, waiting for the females to arrive. They were at least 25 metres from the water, and not over it. When a female spinner flew into the swarm she was immediately grabbed by a male and while mating they settled into the long grass. I tried to photograph the mating spinners but the long grass made it too difficult. The photo of the spinner above is of a satisfied lady, who is about to lay her eggs and die.

This was the first time I had seen mayfly spinners and I was just amazed by their beauty. John went downstream, but not before I suggested he try the emerger that had worked so well for me. I fished up, still having my emerger on, and caught a fish immediately. I then had a couple of boofed rises, and decided it was time to change.

The spinners by now were flying over the river, laying their eggs and sometimes standing upright on the water. Odd spent spinners were floating past me. The fish had commenced rising to them, sucking them down enthusiastically, but quietly. I put on a spinner, size 10, that I had purchased some years ago at Stockbridge. I had also tied a number of spinners before I left Melbourne, but

not having seen the naturals, my ties were just too big and inelegant. I cast my fly to the first rising fish, who took it beautifully, and a few minutes later a 1¼ pound fish was released.

The next fish also took quietly and I tightened gently but the point failed at the fly knot. As I only had two of these flies, I had tied the first fly on very carefully. With obsessive care I tied my remaining spinner on and cast to the next riser, and with an even gentler tightening the Stroft tippet failed again. When I moved to Stroft some years ago my tippet failures virtually vanished. So what was going on? I tied on a different CDC spinner and tested the knot carefully. It seemed all right and with a very soft strike I caught a 1 lb fish. That's better I thought, but the same knot failed on the next fish. Clearly there was something very wrong with my Stroft tippet material. Perhaps it was too old, so I got out a new spool and replaced the bottom section of my cast. The problem now was that I did not have a good spinner pattern, so I tied on my own, much less elegant spinners, and did not get an offer. They were tied with natural seals fur bodies and looked good, but I think the body was too thick, not white enough, and with inadequate ribbing.

Odd dun were still hatching and I got one more on my emerger. Time was up and so off to a glorious dinner in York with the girls. I don't normally cease fishing at 5:15 when the flies are hatching and the fish are rising, and when it does not get dark until 10pm, but I guess when in Rome, etc, and I was fishing with an English gentleman, so I remembered that gentleman's hours applied. But all being considered I still got 20 fish in the time allotted, and John got a good bag too.

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The next day was a perfect sunny day, and clearly I had a need for some good spinner patterns. I mentioned this dilemma to John, and was immediately offered his fly tying kit. All in a beautiful portable wooden cabinet. I tied three absolutely standard spinner patterns on a size 10 round bend hook. They all had a long ginger tail, floss white body ribbed strongly with black floss ribbing, and a very large ginger hackle with 3 turns of grizzle wound through it. That should do I thought, and only a few minutes late, off we drove to the river.

This day we fished the top beat of the Nunnington water. When we arrived at 11:15 there were no mayflies hatching and only odd fish rising. I put out the emerger to the first riser, but he humped under it. Always an indication that the fly was not quite right, so I put on a Para Adams, size 15, and immediately caught two fish. I fished on but quickly became aware that the Adams was not quite right also, with two rises not felt.

There were odd light brown, medium sized caddis in the air so I put on my standard caddis that I use in New Zealand, size 15, and I offered it to a steady riser in an eddy above a bush in gliding water right against my bank. The fish quietly took the fly and then rushed all over the pool, and below the bush right in against the bank. I kept him out of the many snags below the bush on several occasions but in he went again. I felt the line hit something near the bank, and despite not being held tightly, he took off with my fly.

The river was very quiet and there were only a few rises in the long glassy pool, mostly under trees. I replaced my caddis and caught three more fish. All of a pound and one from right in under an overhanging branch.

The fish then refused the caddis so I put back the Adams and caught a couple more. However I had several refusals, and kneeling down I noticed masses of tiny black beetles on the water. I have never seen such small beetles but put on my smallest black beetle, a size 19, which was 10 times larger than the naturals. Three fish slashed at it but did not take it.

John then caught up and it was time for lunch, so off to the village for a snack with Margot.

We were back on the river by 3:15, and the afternoon was now warm and sunny. There were still almost no mayfly to be seen, so back to an Adams which was rejected. I noticed some small black caddis in the air, so I put on a black caddis and caught a fish that was rising in an eddy across faster water. I got three more and was then broken on the strike by a fish that was rising a 20 metre cast across a large pool. I thought the strike was ok but feared my new spool of tippet might be involved.

Suddenly the fish stopped taking the black caddis so I put back the standard caddis and caught several more in against a beautiful bank, under trees. Just wonderful difficult fishing. One of the fish, a strong wild fish, weighed 1½ lbs. I was concentrating well and slowly and quietly fishing up. The fish were mostly on the far bank and would often rise right beside or even below me. They were often in eddies or under trees and I got another of 1¼ lbs that rose just below me, in an eddy also across the current.

The fish then refused the caddis. There was a pale ginger fly in the air. They looked and flew like termites, but I don't think England has termites. I put on a CDC New Zealand fly with a yellow body, whose name I do not know, and

caught the next two fish with two casts. In a large deep pool I lifted another and the tippet failed, yet again.

The evening was perfect, calm and warm, with mayfly spinners starting to appear. They were flying over the water, sometimes landing on it, and then taking off again with odd spent spinners in evidence. There were also caddis and the yellow fly in the air. I was surprised that there was not a general rise, although odd fish were rising and working.

I went back to an Adams and caught several more, but did not see a spinner taken. It was now 5:45, I had 18 fish and the “gentleman’s hour” was getting closer so I determined to try my new spinner despite the apparent lack of interest.

I very carefully tied it in on, and in a shallow run had one splashy rise and then caught two smaller fish. I was almost back to the car, just below an iron bridge, and in against the near bank caught a strong fish of 1¼ lbs. I fished on up under the bridge and in the long glassy pool caught three more and missed a couple of others. I was opposite the car and tightened on what I had decided would be the last fish, but he came off on the first jump. Another rise and this one did not come off, and that was it. Time was up, the river was alive



*Typical of the better fish caught*

with fish with the air full of fly, including many mayfly spinners, and being the well-trained husband that I am, I walked out of the river at 6:29 pm, one minute early.

But what a day. At no time was the fishing predictable or consistent. The fish did not settle down and feed on spinners, or the various caddis that were there all day. They kept changing, and to keep catching them it was necessary to observe what was available at any time.



*The Rye is a beautiful river and a delight to fish*

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They were not easy, and were often in difficult lies. But if you presented to them with a fly well enough, representing what was in the air at that time, there was a good chance of a rise.

I was fishing with a generous friend, and although we fished separately, both of us caught lots of fish, and the river and the conditions were just wonderful. Just about as good as it gets, I think.



*Weed beds on the Rye*



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## A Week of Fly Fishing at Weipa, Queensland.

It had been four years since my last trip to Weipa with Bob Loch, Bill Hewett, Chris and Neil Beaton, Peter Carman and Neil Martin. On that trip, Alan Philliskirk's Cape York Charters ([weipaflyfish.com](http://weipaflyfish.com)) had provided us with three boats and guides and accommodation at the Weipa Lodge. We had a great time that year, and caught heaps of fish that included 35 different species.

This trip was a bit different. The Lodge was quiet. My friend Zoran Vasic and I were the only ones there for five days of fly fishing in the first week of July. A minimum of four persons staying at the Lodge is required for meals to be cooked for clients. Since there were only two of us we had to walk five minutes to the Heritage Resort for our breakfast and lunch, which was OK but not ideal. We had one of Philliskirk's guides for the week - a great guy with a fantastic personality named Mark Bargy. Not only was he knowledgeable, patient and helpful, but he also had the fastest and

most comfortable boat available for fly fishing charters in Weipa.

On the Monday and over the next four days our routine was to rise at 5:30am, get dressed and have a coffee before our pre-dawn walk to the Heritage for a quick breakfast at 6:15. By 6:45, as the sun began rising, it was back to the Lodge to get our fishing gear ready and be waiting for Mark's ute to arrive, boat in tow, at 7:00 o'clock on the dot. On our way to Evan's Landing in Weipa Harbour we would stop at a coffee van named "Capeuccino" (we're on the Cape York Peninsula - get it), run by a couple of



*Weipa accommodation*



*Wise advice*



*A fast boat like this helps*

attractive young ladies. They made great coffee, too - espresso, latte, skinny flat white with one sugar ... whatever you wanted.

At the landing our guide would launch his boat and tie up at the floating jetty while Zoran and I finished our coffees. After the mandatory safety speech, we would then be underway by 7:30am. In the mornings we invariably had clear, blue sky days, calm seas, and the temperature a mild 18°C, warming to 32°C later in the afternoon.

Mark would motor west to the entrance of Weipa Harbour, turn left as we entered the Gulf of Carpentaria and power to the south.

That first morning, after travelling for about 30 minutes, we saw birds working and long tail tuna busting up. So we stopped to have a cast with #2/0 White Klausers. We both ended up hooking,

battling and landing a couple of longtail tuna (like a northern version of bluefin tuna). It was fantastic. You would cast the Klauser into a school of feeding fish, strip the line back as fast as possible, watch tuna zoom past and inevitably one of them would turn and engulf the fly.

After that it was mayhem! All the loose line flew off the deck and in no time the reel went from zero rpms into overdrive. Even with the drag screwed down tight, within seconds all the fly line was gone along with 100 or more metres of backing. It was particularly exciting if we both had a hook-up and crossed over each other a time or two as the tuna made laps around and under the boat.

After maybe 10-15 minutes, when we had regained all our line and the fish was at the side of the boat, Mark would grab the straight 30 lb fluorocarbon leader, "tail" the tuna and lift it aboard. What a thrill and relief at the same time! After a quick photo the fish was returned to the water (well, maybe not all of them as I must admit we ate some).

After a while the tuna disappeared, so we cruised south at 30-40 knots for another half hour before turning in towards the shore to do some sight fishing over sand and mud flats and around rocky reefs and outcrops in the clear, shallow water.

Inshore we targeted species such as queenfish, giant trevally, tuskfish, blue bastards (morwong), golden trevally, blue salmon, tarpon, permit, etc. We were fishing with 9 or 10 weight 9 foot rods, and reels loaded with intermediate, sinking or sink tip lines with 300 or more metres of 30 lb braid backing. Tippets were mainly 20 to 30 lb fluorocarbon.

We would cast crab or shrimp flies at species that feed along the bottom (blue bastards for example), use a s-l-o-w

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*Jim looks pleased with this one*

retrieve to get their interest, then strip-strike if it looked like the fish had eaten the fly. If a fish that feeds up in the water column (such as queenfish, GT or tarpon) came by we would cast the same crab or shrimp fly in front of it, retrieve the fly quickly, and usually get a take. They weren't too fussy as long as the fly moved fast. If we were specifically targeting a fast moving fish like a queenie, GT, tarpon, blue salmon, etc, we couldn't fail if we tied on a #1/0 White Klauser and used a fast retrieve. I had learned this on the trip four years ago when Alan "Fish" Philiskirk's advice was "at Weipa you can tie on any fly you want as long as it's a White Klauser."



*Another fabulous fish*

Around 10:00am it was time to sit, relax, have a sweet biscuit or lamington with a cup of tea and discuss our next move. Since it was still sunny and calm we decided to try another venue or two along the coast. We subsequently hooked

a variety of fish. The most challenging were the tuskies and blue bastards that often followed the fly but failed to take. "Bastard!" If they did take they ran straight for the nearest reef and broke you off. "Bastard!!"

Lunch was around noon. We had salad boxes with cold meats and water or soft drinks on Days 1 and 5. But once Mark found out, on our first day, that we enjoyed sashimi he bought wasabi, pickled ginger and soy sauce from the local Woollies just to be prepared. We ended up having fresh longtail tuna sashimi for lunch the next three days as we caught tuna every day, without fail.

Catching Spanish mackerel was another matter. It took us several days before we landed one. Here's why. Mark had a particular reef on his GPS where he knew the mackerel would usually hang out. So in the afternoon, once the daily sea-breeze from the south or south-west kicked in, it was time to take advantage of the tail-wind and start heading back north to Weipa. On the way we visited his mackerel reef that, as it turned out, also had quite a few big sharks.

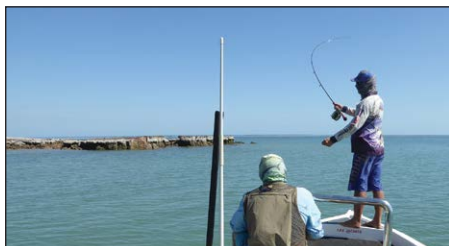
I used a fast sinking line, 30 lb leader with 6 inches of wire to stop the fish biting me off, and of course a #2/0 White Klauser. I cast my fly and allowed it to sink to the bottom in about 40 - 60 feet of water, then stripped it back as fast as I could until WHAM! The line stopped and a quick mackerel head shake later line ripped out through the guides. I watched my backing evaporate from the reel as it screamed and screamed. Eventually the first run ended, backing was regained as I wound furiously, and the fly line came back into sight. The fish took off again but stayed near the surface this time and the run was a bit shorter.



*Longtails go like the clappers*

After that it seemed inevitable that the fish would be mine – except that it wasn't. I brought the mackerel within view of the boat. I pulled it closer and closer, leaning into my #10 Sage as hard as I dared. It was at the side of the boat with Mark reaching for the leader when a 10 - 12 foot bull shark shot up from the depths and CHOMP! I locked up on my McLauchlan reel and broke the shark off rather than lose my new Rio fly line. I was devastated. Zoran and I felt the same again and again that day, and on subsequent days as the sharks got all, save one, of our mackerel.

By 3:00 pm on Monday it was time to head north to Weipa and be back at the Lodge about 4:30 in time for a G&T, some nibbles, and to watch the sunset before



*Polaroiding from the deck*

getting cleaned up and heading to the Heritage for dinner. Then we had to do it all over again for each of the next 4 days!

By the end of the week we had a tally of 25 different species. We had failed to land some of the icons such as blue bastards, barramundi and permit, but, to be fair, we were there at the wrong time of year for barramundi and permit. For barra it's better to be there in March, April, May when the water is warmer. For permit, it's October and November when they are there in large schools.

Both of us caught some species that are rarely caught. Zoran got a "brown bastard" morwong that is seldom caught on a fly. His technique was to cast his Klauser at a tarpon and get snagged on the reef, then jiggle the fly to free it. Zoran jiggled it again, but it remained stuck fast until ... the line suddenly moved away! After a struggle with the ??? at the end of the line, he eventually pulled in a "brown bastard", to Mark's amazement. Mark took a photo with his phone and sent it to "Fish" Philiskirk, who was in West Australia. "Fish's" response was "Well, goodness me!" (or something similar).

>>>

On day five, Friday, I was casting to what I thought was a BB. I hooked it, fought it to a standstill, got it to the boat and Mark netted it. He then announced that it was another oddity - a "grey bastard" (morwong or painted sweetlips).

We both hooked BBs and thought we had them. After a long fight, Zoran's best one spat the hook at the boat as Mark reached for the leader. Severe disappointment! My case was a bit different. I polaroided a big BB in three foot of water, put the crab in front, and slowly retrieved it. The BB followed, followed, followed...and finally took the fly! I locked up on it and stopped it from getting to the reef. I had him!

I was gradually winding him in when – NOT AGAIN! - a big bull shark zoomed in. There was a huge swirling cloud of sand as he chased the BB round and round (think of a cartoon dust-up between the Road Runner and Wylie



*We could do with a bigger net*

Coyote). Miraculously the BB exited the cloud to relative safety so I wound furiously trying to get him away from the shark and to the boat. But the inevitable happened. The shark rushed out of the sand storm in hot pursuit of his prey, made a beeline for the BB and CHOMP! He got my "Bastard!!!"



*Sunset at Weipa*



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# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *The Purple Haze*



This month we are featuring a dry fly called the Purple Haze. This pattern is a favourite fly of Tamie Fraser, our guest speaker at the August annual dinner. Tamie is a skilled fly fisher. She has fished Tasmania a lot and the Purple Haze has been a very effective fly for her in those Tassie lakes and streams.

Where did the pattern come from? Andy Carlson, a fly fishing guide on the Bitterroot River in Montana, first tied this fly some years ago. It is essentially a Parachute Adams with a purple body. It's fame spread, and the Purple Haze is now a popular and very effective pattern in Montana and countless other places as well.

But like many flies there are varied opinions in how it should be tied. The photo above is of a Purple Haze tied by Hubert Reichelt, while the image on the next page came from Mike Stevens at the Essential Flyfisher store in Launceston. There are a few obvious differences.

The details below describe the fly as tied by Hubert.

### **Materials:**

**Hook:** Standard dry fly hook in sizes 10 – 18. Most popular sizes – 14 & 16. Hubert suggests size 14 for Australia streams and size 16 for New Zealand South Island rivers.

**Thread:** Purple, 8/0 or 6/0 - depending on hook size.

**Tail:** Speckled moose-body hair or (Hubert's recommendation) elk body hair, or if these are not readily available then use a mixture of stiff coachman brown and grizzly cock hackle fibres.

**Body:** The purple tying thread.

**Wing Post:** White calf body hair or white calf tail fibres, or (for those who find these materials tricky and fiddly) try white Hi-Vis.

**Hackle:** As for the traditional Parachute Adams fly – a mixture of coachman brown and grizzly cock hackle feathers.

**Tying the Fly:**

1. With the hook in the vice run some purple thread down the hook shank from the eye to just before the bend.
2. Tie in the tail material. The tail should be about the same length as the hook shank.
3. Wind thread back to the point where you will tie in the wing post.
4. Tie in the material for the wing post, which should be almost as high as the length of the hook shank. In tying in the wing post material first tie the base of it on the top of the hook shank so that the wing post material lies along the hook shank and sticks out over the eye. Then raise the wing post so that it is vertical by tying turns of thread immediately in front of it and around its base.
5. Prepare the two hackle feathers for inclusion. Then tie them in vertically by tying them a short distance up the post – the grizzly hackle feather closest to the post and the brown hackle feather on top of the grizzly hackle feather. These feathers need to be tied in with the dull side facing out so that when they are tied in horizontally their dull sides will be facing down. The point here is that the natural downward curve of the hackle feathers (if their shiny sides face up) will provide better support for the fly when it is floating on the water and thus keep the wing post nicely vertical.
6. Run the purple thread back to the tail and wrap threads forward to build up the shape of the body – thinner near the tail and fatter where the thorax would be. Tie some thread in front of the post too, to ensure the hackle feathers are secure.
7. Now tie in the hackle feathers. Hubert has some firm instruction about this. First tie in the brown hackle feather – two turns (for hook size 16 or smaller) or three turns (for hook size 14 or larger). Lock it into place firmly with two or three strong turns, then cut of the waste.
8. Then tie in the grizzly hackle feather so that it is above the brown hackle feather – again two turns (for hook size 16 or smaller) or three turns (for hook size 14 or larger). Again lock it into place firmly with two or three strong turns, then cut of the waste.
9. Tie off the thread to complete the fly.



*Mike Stevens' Purple Haze*

(Here is a helpful trick from an English professional fly tier: in tying off the brown hackle feather first paint some superglue onto a centimetre or two of the tying thread. Then wrap this superglue coated thread around the brown hackle. Do the same with the grizzly hackle feather - take a few turns of superglue coated thread around the grizzly hackle, give it 10 -20 seconds to set, then just cut the thread. Our English professional fly tier assures us that he's never had a hackle glued in like this unwind on him.)

## VFFA 2019 meetings & other activities

### August

- 23 Friday Annual Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:  
Guest Speaker – Tamie Fraser
- 25 Sunday President’s Casting Day at the Red Tag Casting Pool, commencing  
at 10:00 am
- 26 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 27 Tuesday VFFA Members Fishing Day at Millbrook Lakes (Booking Essential)
- 31 Saturday Ballarat Fly Fishing Club Centenary Dinner

### September

- 7 Saturday Opening of the new trout season for rivers in Victoria
- 15 Sunday Visit to Snobs Creek Hatchery
- 19 Thursday VFFA Annual General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
- 22 Sunday Sunday Casting – 10:00 am at the Red Tag Casting Pool
- 30 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

### October

- 6 Saturday VFFA annual visit to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley Club’s  
stocked dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers
- 17 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club:  
Speaker – Chris Wisniewski, from Tasmania’s Inland Fisheries  
Service
- 28 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

### November

- 1 – 3 Annual trip to Warrnambool (date and details still to be confirmed)
- 20 Wednesday VFFA Members Fishing Day at Millbrook Lakes (Booking Essential)
- 21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club:  
Speaker – Cameron McGregor, from River Escapes (fly fishing for  
Murray cod)
- 23 Saturday 2019 Talk Wild Trout Conference at Mansfield
- 25 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

### December

- 12 Thursday Annual Christmas Dinner with guest speaker David Grisold (VFFA  
past president and life member)

#### VALUED DONORS

#### The following made donations for the raffle at the 2018 Annual Dinner:

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