

FLY LINES



AUGUST 2020

Casting in a Covid Calamity

Unfortunately this appalling virus is still with us and we share the threat with fishing friends everywhere. Alan Pilkington, a frequent contributor to our newsletter, lives in Seattle in the USA, and he, too, has had to live with the menace.

One of Alan's survival strategies was to head off into the wilderness with fly fishing companion Ted Fortier for a week of isolation and social distancing on Rock Creek, a magnificent back-country 'blue ribbon' stream in south-west Montana.

Ted is shown here with a fine cutthroat taken on a Purple Haze.

Rock Creek is a 'bucket list' river – scenic and rich with wildlife, and has a healthy population of rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout.

Alan's very entertaining account of his week fishing this superb stream is included in this issue.

The AGM

Members are reminded that our August meeting this year is our AGM. Information relating to this meeting is given on page 2 of this issue.

Thursday, August 20,
8:00 pm,
via Zoom



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The AGM

The AGM is now just a few weeks away, so our president 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 are the Nomination Form, the Appointment of Proxy Form, and the AGM agenda.

Council meets on the last Wednesday of each month, and all the management issues involved in running the Association are dealt with at these meetings. So if you have some experience and skills in management

and are keen to see our Association remain vibrant and responsive to the needs of members then please give some thought to nominating for Council.

The date for this year's AGM is Thursday, August 20.

This will again be a Zoom video presentation, commencing at 8:00 pm. A few days prior to August 20 members will receive an email giving detailed instructions on how to log in and be involved in our 2020 AGM.

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President's Message

Welcome to another *Fly Lines* newsletter.

We had a great turn out for our guest speaker last month – Karen Brooks. Our move to online speakers using Zoom, brought about because of Covid-19 restrictions, has been generally well received. On the Zoom screen we often now see our members alongside friends and members of other fly fishing clubs. Catching up in person would be wonderful, but this is just not possible at present. So it is pleasing to see our members from far and wide, joining in from their various locations in Australia and overseas.

The move this year to digital meetings for our speakers, fly tying demonstrations, council meetings, and general updates is likely to be with us for some time with the current limitations on numbers that can meet in person.

I hope you have all been able to enjoy the various social events via Zoom from the comfort of your home. If you are having any difficulties joining via Zoom then please let me know and we will try to assist you.

Our Facebook and Instagram pages will continue to be updated with content from around the world wide web.

This month will see the Annual General meeting run via Zoom. AGMs are not quite as exciting as the guest speakers we have, but I would encourage you to join us in support of your Association and the executive. The newsletter this month includes the Notice of Annual



General Meeting, Nomination form and Proxy Form. The AGM offers a great opportunity for you to get more involved in the VFFA, so please consider nominating for a position on council. Nomination forms are included with this newsletter and can also be obtained via email. Most council roles involve just a couple of hours each month.

We are looking for some new councillors to come on board, so please consider this as a worthwhile and rewarding contribution to your wonderful Association. Forms can be completed and returned to Kevin Finn, our Secretary.

We will email the statutory reports and previous AGM minutes along with the Zoom link in the week prior to August 20.

The Melbourne Boat Show went digital this year with a fantastic format and some excellent guest speakers throughout the three days. I watched Dr Taylor Hunt (Victorian Fisheries Authority) provide an update on Victoria's freshwater fishery. He described some of the major projects that have continued this year:

- Eight million fish to be stocked this year in rivers and lakes;
- The development of mega fisheries – Lake Eildon, Rocklands and Tullaroop;
- Melbourne's suburban fishery promoted through the stocking of local lakes;
- Further development of tiger and cheetah trout in Lake Purrumbete;
- The building of a new native fish hatchery on the Goulburn River at Shepparton along with improvements to the Snobs Creek hatchery;
- The five-year Wild Trout Strategy document nearly complete for implementation. This has been prepared in conjunction with the ATF's management and support from clubs, associations and other fishing industry people;
- Native Fish Report cards to support stocking locations, instream habitat and angler access;
- GoFishVic App – citizen report cards and general information on fish caught, locations, numbers, etc.

It's an impressive list of work by VFA management to continue improving the

freshwater fishery in conjunction with organisations such as the Australian Trout Foundation and VFFA to assist and contribute to the management.

The ATF has been actively involved in managing the five-year Wild Trout Strategy and the angler questionnaire that was prepared and distributed earlier this year. Both reports are near completion and will be released to the public very soon. We will provide links to these when they become available.

Information supplied to the VFFA indicates that an overwhelming number of people contributed to both of these reports, which focused on the current state of Victoria's wild trout fishery and invited suggestions on improvements and changes over the next five years. Thank you all for your contributions, as VFFA members were the highest group of contributors.

We are still waiting on the report from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority on the outcome of the survey of the Steavenson River conducted last month.

Closer to home, we unfortunately have had to cancel the casting events at the Red Tag pool in July and August. Notice will be sent out in relation to September's casting day. Our calendar remains flexible as to when we may be able to catch up in person. Follow the updates from Kevin, Terry, Lyndon and our social media.

Stay well.



Karen Brooks – our July meeting Speaker

Thank you for inviting me to speak at your meeting. I am aware that many of you are now back in lockdown, dealing with this coronavirus outbreak. I do wish you all well, and please keep safe.

I have been fly fishing now for some 25 years, having been introduced to the art by my husband Peter, who coached me through those early times. We lived in Victoria then and fished many of the streams and rivers in the state, with occasional trips to Tasmania and New Zealand. We spent our honeymoon bone fishing in New Caledonia, and then in 2010 purchased round the world flight tickets and fished our way through South and North America – a truly amazing journey!

When we returned we set up Driftwater, a fishing lodge in the north of Tasmania where Peter and I host and guide clients on the rivers and lakes of Tasmania.

Four years ago a group of anglers competing in the Fly Fish Australia National Championships stayed with us at Driftwater. At breakfast one morning Glenn Eggleton, the Australian fly

fishing champion at the time, asked me if I might be interested in competition fishing. He had just returned from the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships and expressed his concern that while several countries were represented by both ladies' and men's teams in the competition, Australia sent only two men's teams. Australia clearly needed to have a women's team!

Glenn indicated that if I was interested in competing in the January lake competition in Tasmania he would teach me some of the techniques used. Did I really want to turn my passion into a competitive sport? There certainly was some hesitation. But let's face it – most of us have a competitive side to us! I decided to give it a go.

I had thought I was a reasonably competent fly fisher, but through competition fishing I have learned so many more techniques and thus improved my overall fishing ability. In lake fishing I learned about loch style techniques, static nymphing, plonking, moving dry flies, pulling wet flies, how best and when to use sinking lines, and how to prepare leaders for lake fishing.

When fishing rivers I learned about European nymphing, long leaders for dry fly fishing, the best leader designs for rivers, fishing a dry fly and dropper, fishing spiders and swinging spider patterns. I also learned heaps about fly tying, tying using barbless hooks, using CDC materials in flies and fishing dries on very fine tippets.

One of the other great benefits of competition fishing is the wonderful community of fishermen you meet and befriend who are willing to share their knowledge.



Presentation Ceremony at the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships in New Zealand. The two Australian team members are Casey Pfeiffer (on the right, and top lady angler) and Karen Brooks (on the left, and placed second)

In my first competition in Tasmania three years ago there were just three women competing, and President Jonathon Stagg commented at that time just how good this was. We now regularly have seven or eight women competing in each of our state comps and the Nationals. The outcome of Glenn Eggleton's original idea was to see Australia three years later having its first representative ladies' fly fishing team competing in the Commonwealth Championships in New Zealand. This happened in March of this year, and I was fortunate to be part of it.

Our team was made up of five girls plus one reserve, all selected on rankings from State and National competitions from the previous year. Our team members were Jane Forster (NSW), Kerryn Milligan (ACT), Marian Miller (Vic), Casey Pfeiffer (SA), Anna Bellette (Tas – and our reserve) and myself. Tom Jarman was our Captain/Coach.

The Commonwealth Championships were based at Taupo on the North Island, and competition venues included the



Karen's 'confidence flies'

Tongariro River, Whanganui River, Whakapapa River, Lake Rotoraira and Lake Kuratau.

A lot of planning and preparation took place in the leadup. We had clinics with top FFA competition anglers such as Glenn Eggleton, Tom Jarman, Tim Urbank, Tim Strong, Lubin Pfeiffer and Christopher Bassano, who volunteered their time to help us improve our fishing



Karen fishing the Whakapapa River – a fairly intimidating venue

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A trial run – packing the gear needed for a day's competitive fishing

techniques and fly tying. We all worked very hard.

Several of us made trips to New Zealand to fish the competition waters prior to these being closed to competitors a month before the competition. Our team then arrived seven days prior to the Championships for practice, basing ourselves in Turangi close to the Tongariro River.

Each day was spent practicing on the Tongariro and Whanganui rivers, and fly tying and prep sessions then followed late into the night. During the practice week our selection of flies was narrowed down to five main flies for each of the rivers. These were then tied in various sizes with a range of tungsten bead sizes.

The final day's preparation included checking that our gear was ready for the competition: hook points checked for sharpness and eyes cleared, tippet spools filled, spare leaders tied up, spare nymphing leaders tied up, spares of anything that might be required – rods, reels, tippet, net, floatant, desiccant, a

change of clothes, wading staff, backup fly box ... Fly boxes were connected by a lanyard just in case they were dropped. Then we loaded a huge bag with all the things we had to carry to our beat on the river or lake.

Fourteen teams had entered for the comp, but sadly Covid-19 caused the two Canadian teams to withdraw and head home on instruction from their government. Overall 57 competitors competed. South Africa, Scotland and Australia entered full ladies' teams, and there were individual ladies from England, Northern Ireland and New Zealand representing mixed teams from those countries.

Each team consisted of five anglers, with one angler from each team placed in each of five groups that rotated through the five venues. Each session of competition was three hours.

Draws were posted on the evening prior to the start of the competition, with all competitors then pouring over them, checking boat partners and beat allocations. Bus departure times were checked. Gear was checked – yet again. Waders and clothes were laid out ready for a quick start in the morning. Sleep was broken as we prepared mentally.

Day One - Session one:

This session for me was on Lake Rotoraira, and my boat partner was Steven from the Isle of Man. Each competitor has half of the session to decide where to fish. Conditions were cool with a moderate wind.

We knew that the fish would be in close early, so my set up was a clear intermediate line to start pulling small streamers. I started with three flies spaced six feet apart, but dropped back to two flies as the wind picked up later

in the session. My boat partner hooked up first and I soon followed, finishing the session with six fish, placing me fifth in my group. My successful flies were a Gold Sparkler on the top dropper as an attractor and a Hertzel Bugger on the point.

Day One - Session two:

This was on the Tongariro River, and was a great session for me, despite drawing a challenging beat. I had fish rising to the many lacewing moths which were drifting down the river. I finished the session with 14 fish, placing me second in my group and in 11th position overall. Top flies for me were a Gold Squirrel nymph on the point and a Claret nymph with copper bead on the top dropper. My dry fly was a CDC F fly with a claret body.

Day Two – Session 1:

Session one for me was on the Whanganui River. The bottom of my beat had sheaths of shale rock with channels between them. Several casts in I hooked a huge rainbow which I played for some time before breaking it off. I had been using 0.14 mm tippet so changed up to 0.16 mm immediately. Soon after I picked up a nice brown – relief, as I then had one on the board. We knew from practice there were many small fish in the quiet

water along the edges. By swinging nymphs on my European nymphing set up I picked up many fish close to the edges, but sadly only a few measured the necessary minimum 20 cm.

Working out deeper I hooked and landed some larger fish, which increased my tally. At this point my controller decided to wander off just as I netted one. So I raced up the river, fish in net, wading through a deeper section to reach my controller – and my foot slipped and I had my first swim for the day.

Fortunately the fish stayed in the net, was measured, and added to my scoresheet. I finished this session with seven fish, placing me 8th in my group for the session.

Day Two – Session 2:

Session two was on the Whakapapa River, which was strong and powerful with a very slippery substrate. Wading was challenging, and only two or three fish had come from this beat in each of the previous sessions. The top section looked more promising, but twenty minutes in I had only had one touch and couldn't get a hookset. I nymphed the pocket water at the top of my beat and



Lake Kuratau – one of the competition venues

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Australian Ladies' Team. From left – Tom Jarman (captain/coach), Anna Bellette, Casey Pfeiffer, Jane Forster, Marian Miller, Kerryn Milligan and Karen Brooks

I netted several fish, but only a couple measured over the 20 cm necessary.

There was a long slow pool there that I fished with nymph under a dry. The long bubble line on the far side looked promising, but sadly didn't produce. With only about 50 minutes left in the session I ran the 200 metres back along a bush track to the lower section of my beat to nymph the huge pocket water there. I waded out as far as I dared and hooked a large rainbow. He took off through a couple of pockets, leaping close to the far side of the river, before escaping with my fly attached. Blow!!

Back to 0.16 mm tippet and push on. I slipped over again and had another swim before hooking into yet another large rainbow. After quite a struggle I netted this one and he was recorded - 57.5 cm. Whew!!

Landing three fish from a tough beat placed me 7th in my group for the session. Top flies for the day were a Gold

Tungsten Squirrel Nymph and a Claret Copper Bead Nymph.

Day Three:

My final session was on Lake Kuratau, and my boat partner was Paul Gummer from the New Zealand Silver Team. Conditions on the previous two days had been very windy, so the techniques mostly used were pulling streamers on intermediate lines and DI3 sinking lines. But day three was calm, with just a slight breeze building through the morning. My strategy was static nymphing with a Blob on the point, Diawl Bach in the middle and a Cruncher on the top dropper – different flies and technique to what the fish had seen in the previous sessions.

My boat partner was pulling streamers, and two casts in he was into a fish. Then it was my turn. From then we went fish for fish to finish the session with eleven landed for me and nine for Paul. I had hooked several other fish but lost them close to the boat.

Paul asked me on the way back to the boat ramp, "What were you doing?" Clearly the technique I used was one the Kiwis were not aware of. My eleven fished put me in 4th place.

It was a great comp and despite the uncertainty about whether Covid-19 might put a stop to it we were fortunate to get to the finish line. The girls in our team fished superbly, all exceeding their expectations. It was a real team effort. Our reserve, Anna Bellette, ended up fishing two river sessions in place of Marian.

Final presentations saw the Australian men's team finish in second place to Northern Ireland, with New Zealand Silver finishing third. Lubin Pfeiffer from Australia took out the top individual placing, with Chris Medwin from Australia placed third.

Casey Pfeiffer finished as the top lady angler, with myself placed second and Marlize from South Africa third. The Australian ladies' team finished as top ladies' team overall.

The North Island of New Zealand in late summer/early autumn provides exceptional fishing. Many people regard the Tongariro as a winter fishery, but it fished superbly at this time of the year, as did the Whanganui and the Whakapapa. The fishing overall was truly amazing. I know I will be heading back there again at the same time of year.

The world governing body for competition fishing, FIPS Mouche, announced there would be a Ladies' World Fly Fishing Championship in 2020. There has been much excitement over the past six months in anticipation of Australia having a representative world team, selected on three years' rankings, entered in this competition in Norway. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this has now been postponed to July 2021. We look forward very much to representing Australia on the world stage.

We thank Glenn Eggleton for his idea, and Fly Fish Australia and other FFA members for their support.



The 2020 Annual Dinner with Mark and Philip Weigall

On Thursday September 17 at 7:00 pm.

Normally our Annual Dinner is held each year in August. However this year is not a normal year.

As you will have noticed we swapped the AGM to August and the Annual Dinner to September, hoping we could hold both at the Kelvin Club. However due to lockdown restrictions we will not be returning to the Kelvin Club by September, so we will proceed with a virtual Annual Dinner on Zoom. The plan

is to open the Zoom video presentation at 7:00 pm, when we suggest that members and guests have their own dinner, wine, banter and stories ready. There will be a Zoom Door Prize of a dozen of each of Mark's and Philip's favourite flies – the Claret Carrot fly (Mark's favourite) and the Scintilla Stick Caddis (Philip's favourite).

Philip and Mark are well known to us all. Philip is one of our most prolific >>>



Mark and Philip Weigall; Philip speaking to members

Australian writers on fly fishing. He is the author of several superb books and countless magazine articles, and now edits the very popular digital fly fishing magazine *FlyStream*. He is also heavily booked as a fly fishing guide.

Mark is also a highly skilled and very popular guide, as well as being the owner/manager of Millbrook Lakes, our best known and most successful private trout fishery.

Philip and Mark will be introduced at about 8:00 pm, and after their presentation there will be plenty of time for questions and less formal discussion

as the evening progresses. It will be a fun and informative, albeit unusual Annual Dinner and we look forward to your participation.

Using Zoom:

To assist you in joining us for dinner and a chat you can either log on using the usual detailed instructions that will come from Terry Rogers prior to the dinner, or alternatively follow these steps:

Open your internet browser and type in <https://zoom.us/join>

- 1) Type these numbers - 873 6925 3537 into the box labelled "Meeting ID or Personal Link Name"
- 2) Click on "Join"
- 3) A box will then open on your screen asking, "Do you want to allow this page to open zoom.us.app?" Click "Allow"

It is best to have your radio and television turned off if they are on in the same room as you are sitting for using Zoom.

It will take a little while for Zoom to open and then you will join the rest of the members for an enjoyable night.



Recent VFA Stockings of Trout

It's good to know that while we have been locked up indoors in recent months the VFA has been busy stocking our Victoria rivers and lakes with trout, so that when the new season arrives and the restrictions are eventually lifted there will be something there for us to catch.

If you want to know the full story then this site - <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/fish-stocking/db/search-species> - has all the details.

A brief summary listing some major rivers and stillwaters that have been stocked since the beginning of May includes these:

Brown Trout Stockings:

Barkers Creek Reservoir (11,800), Bullarto Reservoir (500), Devilbend Reservoir (10,000), Eildon Pondage (203), Lauriston Reservoir (20,000), Mount Beauty Pondage (1,000), Talbot Reservoir (2,000), Tullaroop Reservoir (3,243), Wombat Reservoir (1,000), Eildon Lake (15,000), Merri River below weir to Dennington (5,000), Merri River Grassmere to Wollaston (5,000), Moorabool Reservoir (7,000), Upper Coliban Reservoir (10,000), Lake Wendouree (12,000), Bellfield Reservoir (10,000), Gilllear Lake (1,000), Hepburn Lagoon (5,000), Macalister River below Glenmaggie Lake (2,000), Moorabool Reservoir (13,000), Mount Emu Creek below Castle Carey Bridge to Panmure (1,500), Mount Emu Creek Skipton to Darlington (1,500), Moyne River (2,000), Newlyn Reservoir (3,000), Pykes Creek Reservoir (5,000) and Purumbete Lake (10,000).

Rainbow Trout Stockings:

Albert Park Lake (1,500), Blue Rock Lake (10,000), Lake Bolac (8,000), Bostock Reservoir (3,000), Bullarto Reservoir (1,000), Lake Eildon (28,000), Eildon Pondage (870), Lake Gilllear (1,000), Lake Glenmaggie (25,000), Moorabool Reservoir (7,000), Pykes Creek Reservoir (5,000), Talbot Reservoir (2,000), Tullaroop Reservoir (50,000), Upper Coliban Reservoir (20,000), Lake Wendouree (6,000), Wombat Reservoir (1,000), Wurdiboluc Reservoir (16,000).

Now that’s a lot of fish, and these are just the fish stocked in some rivers and stillwaters since the beginning of May. If you check the website above you will discover many smaller waters that have also been stocked, and if you check the website for the stocking numbers since the beginning of the year you will find some eye-watering numbers (to pinch a current term).



More trophy trout in the making.

This Month's Yarn ...

(From August 1965 ...)

Hamish, who has an interest in boats, opined: "You know, some of those fellows who tow big heavy motor boats behind their cars must get into trouble at times, especially when they drive into places where there are no proper tracks."

"Absolutely agree. Some of those clowns don't show much judgment," said McTaggart, who was looking around anxiously for someone to replenish his glass of lunch. Fortunately Chris obliged.

"And yet," he continued after a reflective mouthful, "I know of one case where a driver was lucky that he had a big boat on a trailer behind him. He was also fortunate in that he had taken my nephew Clarence with him. I think I've mentioned Clarence to you before."

"You have indeed," agreed Pilks, "but this sounds like one of his experiences you haven't mentioned before."

"Well," said McTaggart, "I'll mention it now. It seems that this motor boat addict, a wealthy farmer called Ashby from up in NSW, decided to take his outfit into a little-known inlet on Eppaldon Lake. He got it in all right, because the road in - a rough clay track - was downhill all the

way. But then it rained while they were there, so the trouble started on the return journey. The track was steep and slippery, and the car just skidded and went nowhere. Clarence got out and tried to push, but he might just as well have tried to push an elephant through a keyhole."

"But then Clarence, who I've told you before is an ingenious lad, had an idea. Not far from the water's edge was a windmill. So Clarence got some tools from the car, climbed up the structure, and detached the wind-vane, which was about a metre and a half in diameter. Then he detached the propeller from the back of the motor boat and replaced it with this wind-vane, which, incidentally, just cleared the ground in its new position."

"Ashby got back into his car and Clarence got into the boat and started up the engine of the boat. His idea worked perfectly. The wind-vane, operating like the propeller on an aeroplane, took over and the boat pushed the car straight up the slippery slope to the road at the top, where, of course, their troubles were over."

ATF Report from President Terry George, at 13/07/20

Unfortunately the Trees for Trout planting days scheduled for the Steavenson and Ovens Rivers were called off because of Covid-19 restrictions. However great work by Sue Kosch (GBCMA) has seen the crown land frontage fenced off at McNamara's property (Marytone Lane) and the adjoining property (about 2 kilometres). In addition, Sue has engaged

a contractor to plant trees and thus get them well set during the wet months.

We are liaising with Andrew Briggs (NECMA) and Peter Jacobs (Upper Ovens Landcare) and all being well we hope to re-schedule the 4,000 trees planting day near Porepunkah for August/September.

Rubicon River Walk

A meeting with the Rubicon Outdoor Education Managers arranged by Paul Stolz (ATF) and Sue Kosch (GBCMA) for June 16 was attended by Sue, Paul, Andrew and Tony (Education Dept), and myself. The purpose of this meeting was to plan a safe trail for secondary school students and recreational anglers from the outdoor school centre to Camp Jungai (about 2.6 km).

Access from the outdoor centre to the river is made via a private road down to the gauging station. The landowner has given the Education Department

permission to use this road and has provided a gate key.

Access along the river is quite good until you reach the trout farm outlet, where an improved bridge will be required. In all, we marked eight places on the map where stiles will be required, plus another at the road access point should we successfully obtain permission for angler access from the current landowner.

Unfortunately for more than 90% of this stretch the crown river frontage is unfenced and open to stock access, and damage is evident. Riparian vegetation is practically non-existent apart from some



Stevenson illegal waterway works

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old gum trees. Lots of riparian planting is required, but in-stream habitat is satisfactory due to the large boulders in the flow.

This riparian restoration work and/or fencing will not be immediate, as there's a great deal of liaison work with landowners still required to seek their co-operation and approval.

Working with NECMA, VFFH&F and Recreational Anglers and Clubs

The Ovens River "Trees for Trout" planting day at Porepunkah is now planned for September. The Ovens River near Smoko Campground weed control planting is now most likely in 2021.

Nariel Creek will require revegetation because of the bushfire damage.

The Kiewa River at Tawonga is possibly another site on crown land, so anglers can legally access it.

Morses Creek near Wandiligong needs in-stream habitat and planting.

The Delatite River from Hearn's Road to Delatite Lane and the river gorge are both to be considered for work when funding is available.

The Jamieson River needs more boulder seeding along Russell Bates property.

We have a number of projects planned with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, including habitat restoration projects on the Macalister, Wellington, Thomson, Agnes and Franklin rivers, and more.

In addition, when we can we will schedule the delayed Habitat Workshop with Glenelg Hopkins CMA at Warrnambool.

Victorian Brown Trout Genetics

Priority Action Number 6 in the Victorian Wild Trout Strategic Plan reads: "The VFA to prepare a brown trout management plan to ensure hatchery stocked trout retain wide genetic fitness". Accordingly the ATF has been requested to recruit recreational anglers in various regions to collect fin clips from wild brown trout and send them to Brett Ingram for his scientific research.

Stocking Trials, Incubators and Fry

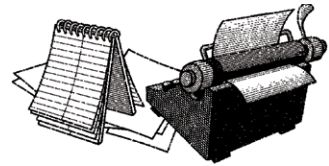
Because of Covid-19 restrictions we are unable to involve volunteers at Snobs Creek to load the Jordan Scotty incubators. As a result the ATF and the VFA have agreed to postpone incubator trials until next year.

The good news is that the fry stocking trials will continue this year with five rivers to be stocked with genetically distinguishable fry. The selected rivers are the Macalister, Upper Dargo and Jamieson, and another one or two streams will be selected by John Douglas and Matt Byrne. One possibility is a recovery stocking for the Nariel, but this is dependent on an electrofishing survey and proof that there is amply food in the stream to sustain the fingerlings.

Our involvement in the Jordan Scotty stocking trials is ongoing. It was considered vital that we acquire wild trout genetics for these trials, and further good news about this ATF initiative is that the VFA has approved the acquisition of wild trout ova from Gadens Hatchery in NSW. The DNA of the donors will be obtained as usual for future surveys.



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"If you've got short, stubby fingers and wear reading glasses, any relaxation you would normally derive from fly fishing is completely eliminated when you try to tie on a fly."
(Jack Ohman - Fear of Fly Fishing)

"To go fishing is the chance to wash one's soul with pure air, with the rush of the brook, or with the shimmer of sun on blue water. It brings meekness and inspiration from the decency of nature, charity toward tackle-makers, patience toward fish, a mockery of profits and egos, a quieting of hate, a rejoicing that you do not have to decide a darned thing until next week. And it is discipline in the equality of men - for all men are equal before fish." (Herbert Hoover)

"I now believe that fishing is far more important than the fish." (Arnold Gingrich)

Some weeks ago I spent a day with my grandson. He's 19, and we've been having these occasional days out together for some years now. We head off somewhere, have a relaxed lunch, sort out the world and all its problems, then head for home. These days are always enjoyable and I really love them.

But I mucked up our most recent outing. My grandson had been reading some VFFA newsletters, and this fly fishing caper had captured his interest. So I had suggested that we might head off to Marysville, have our usual sausage roll and coffee, then fish the little lake just outside the town. There are trout there, and from all reports they are sensibly co-operative. So I could cast a fly out, then pass the rod to my grandson for him to retrieve the fly. With an ounce of luck he'd connect, and hopefully wind up hooked on fly fishing himself.

That was the plan. But when the day arrived I was battling with a newsletter deadline that still needed some hours. I'd also heard that the Black Spur road was closed during the day for tree cutting, so wasn't sure we could even get through to Marysville. So I abandoned the fishing idea.

When I arrived to pick up my grandson he came bouncing out full of excitement, wearing his camouflage shirt and 'fishing boots', and asking if he could have a look in my fly box. I didn't feel very good.

This fiasco on my part actually caused me to reflect on how I'd got involved in fly fishing. I guess I'd taken the obvious route - bait fishing, then lures, then flies.

I grew up in Mildura on the Murray River, and in my early high school years sat with a mate whose father was a very keen angler. So I frequently heard stirring tales of big bags of fish caught by my mate and his dad over the previous weekend. Eventually I relented and decided to give this fishing business a go, so invested some of my hard-earned paper-round earnings on hooks and sinkers and 50 yards of 20 lb line. The line was wrapped round the neck of a lemonade bottle - rods and reels were way too expensive. As for bait, my elderly music teacher had a septic tank that leaked, so a few turns with a shovel at the back of his toilet produced heaps of fat worms.

An important factor in my angling education was that the river at Mildura at this time was fishing well. There >>>

were plenty of accommodating native species around and redfin were in plague numbers. So I caught fish most trips.

When I was fifteen we moved to Melbourne, which temporarily terminated my fishing career. A teenager with a pushbike who lived miles from the sea didn't have access to much fishing then. However I did find a copy of David Scholes' *The Way of an Angler* in our school library. I borrowed it, read it from cover to cover (several times), and decided then that at some stage I would have to give this fly fishing for trout a go.

School was followed by a science degree and my first teaching appointment – at Caulfield Tech in the Senior College. My teaching load included a Wednesday night class for mature age engineering students, and one of the class members just happened to be a fanatical fly fisher. During the trout season he drove from Melbourne to Bright nearly every Friday evening to fish the Buckland River, returning to Melbourne late on Sundays for work the next day. Such was his obsession that he purposely married a young lady from Tasmania. Thus his Christmas holidays were always spent with the in-laws in Tassie, where of course the best trout fishing was. His endless fishing tales were the highlight of my week.

In 1969 I was seconded to teach in Papua New Guinea, and spent two years on Buka, a tiny island at the western tip of the British Solomons. It was here that I purchased the only boat I've ever owned. It cost me \$15 and was constructed by the father of one of my students. I kept the boat, actually a canoe, at a small native village just down the road from the school. When I wanted to fish a young lad there happily acted as my guide and outboard motor, charging me 20 cents per session. He sat in the back and paddled, and I sat in the front and cast lures to



Your editor taking delivery of his new canoe

where he suggested. As part of the deal all fish caught were left at the village.

My guide was better than any electronic fish finder. He would dive overboard and have a look around. If he saw fish, we stayed. If he didn't, we paddled further along the reef and tried again. We were fishing Buka Passage, a strip of water separating Buka Island from Bougainville, and it was full of fish – tuna, Spanish mackerel, trevally, coral trout, and heaps more, including plenty of sharks. On one occasion my guide dived overboard, then immediately re-surfaced and frantically scrambled back into the canoe. His dive in had landed him on top of a couple of large black tip whalers that were quietly cruising the edge of the reef.

One memorable moment in my Buka Island fishing experiences was the day I got peeled. I had cast a lure that was snatched by something very large and very fast. Whatever it was headed north at enormous velocity. I had 200 metres of 15 lb line on my reel and it simply evaporated. The knot at the end pinged and my entire line plus an expensive lure headed for Fiji.

After Buka we spent another three years living in Port Moresby, then headed home - back to Victoria. My application for a teaching position back in Victoria listed 90 schools, and somehow I wound up in Warrnambool. This was most fortuitous. Warrnambool had rivers with trout in them, so I flogged all my spinning gear,

purchased some basic fly fishing bits, and joined the local fly fishing club where the very welcoming and generous members told me where to fish and how to go about it.

One of the most memorable of these veterans was the legendary Arthur Hogan. I was shown a cutting from the local paper where Arty was photographed with eight trout he'd caught in the Merri. The largest was just over 8 lb and the smallest about 2 lb lighter. The stories about him were countless and magnificent. He liked fishing a pool on the upper Merri near Grassmere, but a tree on the corner kept catching his back cast. So he took along a tin of petrol and burned the tree to the ground. The tree was gone, but so too was Arty. The farmer was furious and kicked him off the property.

Arty used to tie and fish (very successfully) large weighted Green Matukas. They were so large they were known locally as sparrows. And they required a special casting technique. On your final delivery you needed to duck, or you'd lose some of your scalp.

Arty enjoyed his fishing and loved telling you about it. He was an apology at a VFFA annual dinner one year. In his letter of apology, read out at the dinner by the president, Arty indicated that a few days earlier he had gone to fish Lake Purrumbete. He had put his boat in and soon hooked a really large rainbow. So large in fact that three days later he was still playing it. It was starting to weaken he thought, but he didn't think he could land it in time to then get home, put on best suit, and drive to Melbourne for the dinner.

Arnold Gingrich is right. There is so much more to fishing than just the fish. There are countless years of memorable characters and generous fishing colleagues and stunning lakes and rivers (because trout live in beautiful places) and the aggregation of so many wonderful memories. Let's hope we get to enjoy some more of it, and soon.

Take care and stay safe,

Lyndon



Be assured - there are still some massive fish in Purrumbete. Here is a rainbow trout caught a few weeks ago by our Warrnambool correspondent Jim Blakeslee. Jim wrote: "Adrian and I had a few hours on Lake Purrumbete today. We eventually worked out that they were taking stick caddis. Here is a hen fish that I picked up drifting through the shallows in front of the caravan park and casting into pockets of open water in the weed beds."



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Escape the Uncertainty - Trout Fish Tasmania

Chris Wisniewski, from the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service, has provided us with the following very detailed and informative season outlook. Many thanks Chris.

The Tasmanian brown trout season opened on Saturday, August 1, and the outlook for fishing looks great. Good rain in April allowed brown trout spawning to begin on the Central Highlands. Runs have been consistent and steady and this will result in excellent fishing in the coming seasons. The run started in Liawenee Canal in early April and continued well into July, with fresh fish arriving on each rain event. As of July 21 we had relocated over 10,600 wild adult brown trout from spawning traps at yingina/Great Lake. You can find the exact numbers of all stockings on the IFS website stocking database.

If yingina/Great Lake continues to rise, fish will be found close to shore. After spawning brown trout feed heavily on all manner of things, from stick caddis to galaxias, and even small trout. Large, protein rich food items are on the menu as they put condition back on. It is worth remembering that almost all fish that have spawned will take a few months to get back into condition.

The southern half of the lake often fishes best through late winter and early spring with rocky points and drop offs providing the best action for shore-based anglers. When looking for a good spot to cast a fly, a strong 'cross breeze' over

a submerged ledge is a hot spot for cruising trout. Although less comfortable, the windier days are usually the most productive. Onshore winds are also excellent if you can fish the seam between dirty and clean water. Fishing slowly with large Woolly Buggers and Yeti style flies rarely fails.

Lake King William is nearly full and provides an opportunity to target some great fishing early in the season. At this high level there is good access from the Lyell Highway at Derwent Bridge and from the south at Butlers Gorge. Those accessing the lake at Butlers Gorge would be well advised to use a boat and fish in the Gueff Basin. There is an abundance of bays and shallow water to the north and south once inside the basin. This provides shelter and ample water to chase the 0.5 kg fish that frequent the lake. Those who are unfamiliar with the area should note that the boat ramp is exposed to strong winds with any northerly direction in it. With safety as a priority, unless you have a large boat this area should be avoided in these conditions.

The brown trout spawning run at Arthurs Lake started in May and continued through into July. Traps were operated on Tumbledown, Scotch Bobs and Hydro creeks. To date 10,612 wild brown trout

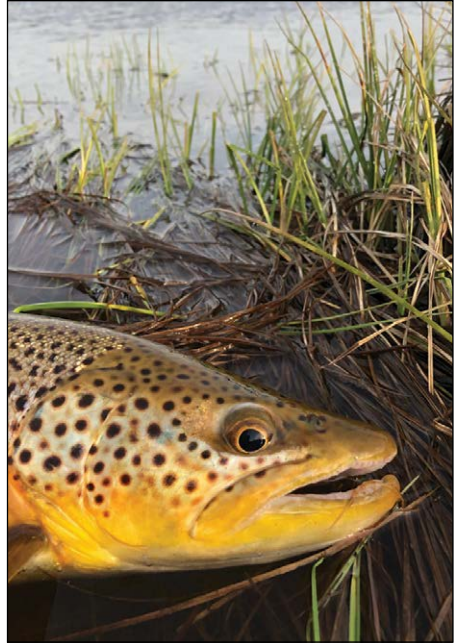
have been counted through these traps and allowed to progress upstream to spawn. Data from the traps in Arthurs Lake this winter showed that the spawning fish were in good condition and that this fishery should continue to build after some positive reports last season. The IFS has not removed any fish from Arthurs Lake this winter.

The start of the season will see many fish feeding in the deeper water but it won't be long before they are hard in on the bank looking for frogs. Targeting rocky shores with drop offs usually produces fish early in the season for those fishing a wet fly. Fishing deep will give you access to more fish but there will always be some fish close to shore in the Cowpaddock and other weedy areas of the lake.

The West Coast and most of the Central Highlands have both had good rainfall. The Nineteen Lagoons and greater Western Lakes have also benefited from this and there will be some excellent fishing for those that want to explore this area. The transfer of wild adult brown trout into these lakes this winter was done very early on, giving them a great chance to make the most of high water levels. We expect these fish to be in excellent condition at the start of the season.

Anglers who are brave enough to fish blindly with a wet fly in the cold and windy conditions will have great fishing in Carter Lakes. Those venturing a bit further afield will always find good numbers of hungry fish in Lake Botsford, but please remember that the lake has a one fish bag limit and that fish must be at least 500 mm long.

We always enjoy seeing Lake Ada full early in the season, as this will provide wonderful sight fishing around the



A fine brown trout from Tassie's Double Lagoon

flooded edges and undercut banks when the sun allows it.

Lake Sorell, Tooms Lake and Lake Leake in the east have had good rainfall and show signs of rebuilding after the previous dry years. Late winter and spring rains will see some excellent fishing in these fisheries. Many of the IFS staff have earmarked these waters for their own fishing trips early in the season. It pays to get some local knowledge before boating on these waters as rock bars (Lake Sorell) and an abundance of large stumps (Lake Leake and Tooms Lake) can cause issues. The installation of a floating pontoon at Lake Leake last season will be a welcome sight for boaters.

While the water at Lake Sorell and Tooms Lake is slightly murky, Lake Leake water is very clear. This does not seem to affect the trout's feeding habits as large >>>

flies are working well in all of these waters. Brighter colours that are often associated with catching rainbow trout can be used to good effect in these lakes. If success is not forthcoming, try to fish a bit deeper and more slowly.

Following on from its re-opening in February, Lake Sorell will be open to anglers on Saturday, August 1, in line with the start of the brown trout season. Temporary periods of closure will be required during spring and summer and these may occur at short notice to achieve carp eradication. Anglers should be aware that the trout population has been reduced by the intense carp fishing effort but is expected to rebuild naturally over coming years. We expect that the Lake Sorell trout fishery will take several years to recover after the carp are eradicated.

This is similar to the recovery in Lake Crescent, where anglers again have the chance to catch a trophy trout. Anglers should be mindful that these lakes are naturally shallow, so extra caution when boating is required. The opening of the 2020-21 trout season will be a great opportunity for anglers to re-acquaint themselves with Lake Sorell as the fishery

rebuilds. Anglers chasing a trophy trout from Lake Crescent should note that early in the season is the best time. Remember to keep an eye on the water level as it is still relatively low. You can follow lakes Sorell and Crescent water levels at <https://dpi.pwe.tas.gov.au/water/water-data/lake-levels>.

While many anglers immediately go to very large flies and lures when they see the colour of Lake Crescent water, it is often the standard sized imitations that work best. Remember that the trout grow very large while feeding on small galaxias (often found inside the trout at sizes about 6 cm early in the season) in the lake and clearly know how to hunt and catch their food in dirty water.

The water quality at Woods Lake is good and the water level is rising nicely. Based on the young fish that were seen coming through last season it will fish well again right from the start. As is usually the case when water temperatures are low, fish slowly and at depth if fish are not being caught. A Di 5 (sinking) fly line is often the best for the first month and a half of the season or when it is windy.



Here's one from Lake Sorrell – once one of Tasmania's most productive and popular lakes. Then it got infested with carp. But the carp are now gone, and the trout are now thriving again



A spawning brown from Scotch Bob's Creek

Another trophy trout chance is Blackmans Lagoon. Past transfers of adult brown trout and the stocking of young rainbows will see some good early season fishing. A fisheries performance assessment undertaken at Curries River Reservoir showed low numbers of fish that were in great condition. We have transferred 960 adult brown trout from the Central plateau and a further 1,520 rainbow trout. These fish should all grow quickly and provide good fishing. The water is very clear so a level of stealth is required. Flies that imitate bait fish patterns are the best options due to the abundance of galaxias in the lake.

Fishing on the opening and through the season will be popular at Four Springs Lake. This lake has become very reliable in recent years and rarely disappoints. We expect that another large crowd will be there on opening morning. This lake will fish really well for two or three weeks after opening before the fish 'wise up'. It will then come back into its own during late September and throughout the mayfly hatches later in the year. Fishing sinking fly lines with a team of streamers will get you onto the fish. As is the case elsewhere, if you are not catching fish, slow down your retrieve.

Talbots Lagoon fished really well last season and this is expected to continue this year. With the improved angler access, everyone is talking about how good a fishery it is. It will fish well all season but aim for the November mayfly hatch and you will see something special. The lake has a lot of submerged timber that gives many of the trout a better than even chance of getting away. Strong hooks and thicker tippets are required. You have been warned!

It is impossible to list all the fisheries expected to perform well this coming season. Beyond the well-known waters such as Great Lake, Woods Lake, Lake Echo, Bronte Lagoon, Little Pine Lagoon, Penstock Lagoon and Four Springs Lake, why not explore the Bradys Chain. It has had a large number of wild adult brown trout transferred into it over the last few years and has also received stockings of smaller rainbows too.

There are many other lakes that are underfished and exciting to explore, such as Pedder, King William, St Clair and Burbury. These are all reliable, but be prepared for some rough weather early in the season. For a more sheltered option with good numbers of fish, try Huntsman Lake. If you are able to combine rising water levels and temperatures, this lake will provide excellent shore >>>

based fishing with trout moving in shore throughout the day.

Rivers will provide great fishing this season and there are simply too many to mention here. Just how good these rivers are will depend on the rainfall for the rest of winter and then spring. If the major rivers aren't in flood, the sea run trout will be about in the estuaries and lower reaches from the start of August. This can provide exciting fishing right through to Christmas. Close to Hobart you have the River Derwent or Huon River. Of course the Lune, Pieman, Forth, Mersey, Great Forester, Duck and many other rivers around the state are great places to seek out a sea runner.

This season anglers will have the opportunity to win up to \$50,000 in the Tasmanian Tagged Trout Promotion. Before the start of the 2020-21 season, five tagged brown trout will be released into lakes around Tasmania - one each into Arthurs Lake, Lake Burbury, Great Lake, Lake Pedder and Lake Rowallan. (Lake Rowallan is on the north-west coast and will open on October 3.) The Promotion is

aimed to assist recovery from COVID-19 restrictions in rural areas around the State. The tags are blue and have unique identifying details. Each tag is worth \$10,000 to the angler who returns the fish to the Inland Fisheries Service.

For more information and Terms and Conditions, go to www.ifs.tas.gov.au or go to the 2020/21 Angling Code.

We produced a number of short movies before and after the World Fly Fishing Championship 2019 that include access and fishing information for anglers. These may provide some inspiration for the coming season. To see these go to the IFS website video library.

If you want to buy a licence, learn more, or simply want to pass on your experience then visit the IFS website (www.ifs.tas.gov.au), or ring on 1300 INFISH, or email infish@ifs.tas.gov.au, as we do value your feedback.

So, come to Tassie - the only thing you will catch is a trout!



This old black & white photo is another from the archives, supplied originally by Tony Brothers. It includes a number of quite significant VFFA members –presidents, treasurers, and council members. Some have since died, others are still with us. How many can you name?

Rocks of Ages

... Alan Pilkington fishes Rock Creek, Montana

In the evocative, almost eerie last paragraph of Norman McLean's masterpiece, *A River Runs Through It*, are the lines:

"Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters."

These are words most fresh water fly fishermen can relate to, and many of us can recite them. McLean's novella was mostly set on the Big Blackfoot River, near his home in Missoula, a town (now a city), near *'the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana'* during the early to mid-part of the twentieth century. At its core it is a story of a father and his sons tied together by fly fishing, and among the delights of my life was a trip I made to these waters with my brother John in the summer of 2019, long after our father, a trout fisherman, had passed to the big river in the sky. A joy of that trip was our reaffirmation that these waters still exist in good shape, although now attended by crowds of summer anglers, many, perversely enough, introduced to our angling brotherhood by the early 1990s film of McLean's novella, directed by Robert Redford and starring a young Brad Pitt as Paul, McLean's wayward brother and budding fly fishing master.

My proximity to south western Montana is part of the glue that keeps me bound to Seattle; I can reach Missoula in eight hours or so on a good highway through the Cascade Mountains and across the Rockies, and this season I made a return visit to one of the rivers John and I had fished, Rock Creek. This river enters the mighty Clark Fork close to where the Big Blackfoot does, but from the south, and

is rated a *'blue ribbon'* stream, a slightly facetious classification; by my book all the south western Montana streams are blue ribbon.

In any event, Rock Creek, which flows at an altitude around 3,500 feet, is by no means a creek, with perhaps two or three times the flow of the Mitta, depending on the season, and sometimes considerably more. It is a bucket list river – it is scenic and rich with wild life, has a healthy population



Sundown at Alan's camp on Rock Creek

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of rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout, has abundant and varied aquatic life, is wild and undammed, is fairly easy to access and is served with decent campgrounds and pullouts here and there. It mixes rocky cascades with long pools and everything in between, and yes, it is rocky and slippery and at times dangerous. I'd not classify it as a river for beginners or even the lone angler if it is running high.

My partner on this summer's mid-June week-long trip was Ted Fortier, a fly fishing friend and anthropologist, a Professor at Seattle University who twenty-five years ago wrote his doctoral thesis on the *Coeur d'Alene* Native Americans. These people inhabit much of the country we traveled through in northern Idaho and western Montana and it was fascinating to have Ted as tour and cultural guide, richly informed of the history of the tribe and the area.

We left Interstate 90 east of Missoula to drive south up Rock Creek, thirty miles along a partly sealed but mostly gravel road to the campsite John and I had used the year before and



Brook trout up to 14 inches, like this one, are abundant in the quieter river braids and feeder creeks

lucked out, finding it empty. Along the way many campsites and bigger campgrounds were closed due to coronavirus restrictions, but we were lucky, until I discovered I had packed my tent's fly but not the tent itself. A late afternoon gale was gusting and light was fading as we pitched a small backpacking tent, and an open tarp-like shelter under which Ted slept, well-armed with mosquito and bear spray, while I crawled into the bivouac tent. Unintended social distancing, tent-wise!

These were small prices to pay as we made an otherwise comfortable camp by a Forest Service bench table and



The view downstream from Alan's camp – some very appealing water

fire pit above the river, surrounded by mature Ponderosa pines in one of which was an active bald eagle's nest. It was a picture-book campsite. We quickly learned, however, that the river was flowing one hundred per cent above its normal mid-June flow rate, due to recent rain and heavy snow in the Pintler Mountains where Rock Creek rises. The water was fast, clear and unwadeable, at least for the first three days, but we soon found trout in softer edges of the main stream and in longer pools in small feeder creeks and river braids.

It is beyond me to describe the beauty of the mountains and the rivers in this part of Montana. We had come up Rock Creek's valley past big horn rams feeding along the track by a salt lick, and had seen white tailed deer and bald eagles. Rain had washed the conifer forests and streamside willows clean, summer wildflowers were in bloom, and the early morning orchestra of birds reminded me of the Australian bush and of our cabin at Enoch's Point at dawn.

When the sun touched the water and the wind died there were regular hatches of varieties of mayflies, including large green drakes on which the fish feasted, caddis and stoneflies from large golden stones to small yellow sallys – all the insect richness that Rock Creek is famous for. By evening, as the days warmed and the afternoon winds abated, the hatches were quite prolific and we were treated to rising fish for the last two hours of sunlight in the long midsummer days. We were disappointed to have missed Rock Creek's fabled salmon fly hatch by a couple of weeks, but were well rewarded by Mother Nature's gifts of insects and active healthy fish rising to them.



A typical Rock Creek cutthroat trout

The native trout of this water are the westslope cutthroat and bull trout (a relative of the char and brook trout, and endangered on this river), but the river also holds good populations of brown, rainbow and brook trout, and the native whitefish. The arctic grayling, native to some streams in adjoining drainages, are not present. With the usual suspects – #14 and #16 Purple Haze, #12 and #14 Green Drake, #14 and #16 Tan Caddis, and similar sized stimulators, all dry - Ted and I managed perhaps eight fish each day up to eighteen inches, with one cutthroat of two to three pounds, which Ted kept to take home to his lady, the only fish not released. I had an occasional much larger fish come to the fly, and at times the fish were picky feeders. But once the warmer, windless and slightly humid evening conditions arrived, they were 'on', feeding >>>

on top, and my 8'6" 4-weight rod had a lovely arc, like the new moon we enjoyed as it grew each night, and the strong fish had my Hardy reel singing like a choir of angels!

I am reminded that the beauty of this river is not uncharacteristic of trout streams everywhere. It was Robert Traver who, among many others, observed that trout only flourish in clean, clear, cold water, which invariably flows in beautiful places. If I were not on Rock Creek in Montana I could equally have been on the Indi River in Kosciusko National Park, and instead of big horn rams I would have kangaroos at riverside, instead of eagles being bald they would be

wedge-tailed, and instead of scolding Stellar jays and croaking ravens they would be screeching cockatoos. I'd not be in a conifer forest but surrounded by eucalypts, not ponderosa pines but mountain ash and wattles, but I'd still be in a wild and beautiful place. The rivers would sing the same songs to me, sometimes faster, sometimes softer, and I would drink the same clean air, sit on the same timeless rocks.

It may be almost a hundred years since a young Norman McLean fished nearby waters like this, but a beautiful river – Rock Creek – runs through my memories, as did the Big Blackfoot run through his.



David Scholes' Final Article

This is the last article written by David Scholes. He died soon after and hence it wasn't published. However Andrew Braithwaite had the file and has very kindly passed it on for us to enjoy...

Between the time of Dame Juliana Berner's *Treatyse* and the much later writings of Izaak Walton, the essence of the few angling books written was purely practical – how to catch the greatest number of fish in the shortest possible time. For 157 years anglers had departed from the Dame's philosophy and had become pot-hunters. Her dainty stream fishing sport, which she passionately promoted as especially good for your soul and the goodness of your spirit with the merriment of catching some fish, also took two decades to take root and more still before it was as Wordsworth termed it "The contemplative man's recreation", when fly fishing came of age to be taken up with all its special delights.

Yet, unfortunately here in Australia today, the kill incentive still exceeds that of skill. Numeracy is an important part in

the average angler's catch. On returning home the first question asked is: "How many did you catch?" And the second is: "How big were they?" And the third: "How big was the biggest?" Pot-hunters pure and simple!

I once knew a young farmer who liked nothing better than to steal a few hours in the nearby creek, wading the stream up to his knees and using either floating worms or grasshoppers. Once by chance we met, and he watched me cast my fly with pure amazement; he watched as I was able to cast the weightless artificial so far with such accuracy. The seed was sown, and instead of the day being counted by numbers, sometimes ten little fish, sometimes twenty and occasionally thirty – instead it was now much more on Dame Juliana's terms.

We met on several occasions after that, each time his pleasure increasing, and he began to be less and less a numbers fisherman. It wasn't long before he became interested in the creatures to which the trout rose, taking the artificial fly so gently from the surface, and soon this interest expanded to learning how these flies were made and who made them.

And here began a new chapter in his fishing life, because I quickly introduced him to Noel Jetson, one of the best fly tiers Tasmania has ever known. Noel joined us enthusiastically on some of our outings and soon had my farmer friend well and truly hooked on fly fishing. His first fish caught on the fly was greeted with boundless enthusiasm as might be expected, the fish being taken from one of Noel's prettiest little rippling runs on a lovely lowland stream.

Noel frequently took him out and introduced him to some of the delightful little creeks that he loved so much. Together Noel and I fished some of these little streams and found unbounded joy in their special charms and closeness to nature. Did you ever, for instance, have a Fantail land on your rod while you were holding it out over a pool? Or watch a Skylark rise vertically all the way up into the sky, singing all the way, then close its wings and dive in silence to the ground?

And so time marched on and Noel and my farming friend became the closest of companions. He was much older than we were and he slowly lost his hearing. Next went his ability to walk steadily over rough ground. Then his sight failed to a large degree. Finally, there was a loss of memory and we knew that our dear friend was failing. Inevitably, the unhappy day came when he made his last cast, and sadly Noel and I sprinkled his ashes into the same pool from which he

had caught his first trout. So ends a gentle little story about a moderate pot-hunter who converted to become a dedicated fly fisher.

I fished a small lake in Wales once where the restrictions were so severe that they turned fishing into an art. One fly and one rod were allowed, no landing nets permitted, one paddle to each boat and only one trout could be kept. Fishing was permitted from dawn to dusk precisely. On that day my daughter rowed me around the lake like a Red Indian, and when a trout was caught, it was landed by cutting a hole in a plastic bag. One wonders if similar restrictions might be organized on Tasmanian waters. God forbid!

Me? Oh yes! I have had my days as a pot-hunter. Many years ago on the North Esk River fishing with Fred Stewart, we had nineteen trout between us. Both of us were easily in reach of our bag limit of twelve fish, when suddenly in his quiet Scottish brogue he called across the river to me, "If ye don't mind David I have had enough". From that day on Fred's words ring in my ears every time I go out. But I must confess that in those early years, my aim was always to catch as many fish as I could in the shortest possible time, whether it be a stream or a lake – in fact everywhere I went.

My worst pot-hunting performances took place at Lake King William in the 1960's, when the population of isopod crustaceans – *phreatoicids* to be precise – were literally in thousands along the shorelines. Reg Clayton and I spent many days and sometimes weekends committing nothing less than murder on the trout, which were easily caught on a well sunken wet fly. I estimate the average weight of the fish at about one and a half pound. The shameful result

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of a weekend's fishing was one hundred and four trout - which I have on movies!

My good friend Fred Stewart could hardly believe his ears, so over he came from Melbourne to join the fun. And I have him on movies too, playing a fish with Mount King William in the background. One of the troubles with catching all these fish was bagging them up after getting home to give them around to our friends.

The key to fly fishing is experience, and experience leads to skill. Watching a skilled angler in action is an education. His approach is like that of a panther, as he eyes off the fish already seen on its

rise. Kneeling on one knee, he gauges just where his fly must land, and then at the right moment, with one back cast, he drops the fly exactly in the right spot, executes the strike precisely and plays the fish, probably still kneeling. Certainly none of this comically holding the rod above one's head like a wireless mast and reeling like mad!

I have only known one skilled angler - and I mean skilled. His experience has been vast and this in turn has led to his superb ability. Who, you might ask? Noel Jetson is the man. So, out with the dictionary and turn up the word 'skill' - and study it thoroughly.



Trout Responsible for Tasmania's Knighthood

... provided by Andrew Braithwaite, taken from *Angling Notes*, and written by 'Ripple' - the pseudonym of Max Christensen, one of Tasmania's most inventive and creative fly tiers.

The Romans and ancient Greeks had a wide knowledge of the oyster and the trout, appreciating the former in a culinary line, while the latter was given prominence in their annals as rising to a fly. Since Roman times the trout has increasingly appeared in our literature to such an extent that books about this particular fish exceed in volume all other fishing literature.

Industrialists and even Governments are forced to take notice of the trout, especially where pollution is concerned. Mankind has become its benefactor, protector and, paradoxically, its killer. That the brown trout also should be responsible for creating a knighthood may seem fantastic but nevertheless true.

It is of added interest that this honour was conferred upon a Tasmanian. James A. Youl, later Sir James, the Agent for

Tasmania in England, was not only instrumental in shipping the first successfully transported brown trout ova to Tasmania (74 days England to Melbourne) but devised a method of packing and storing ova which is still in use today.

In 1852, a Mr Boccius tried to ship Atlantic Salmon ova to Tasmania but met with failure and the loss of 300 pounds. Two years later, Edward Wilson (President, Acclimatisation Society of Victoria) and James Youl became interested in the shipment of ova and with other colonists raised 600 pounds for this purpose. Their combined efforts resulted in a shipment leaving England in 1860, but after 68 days at sea the ova were dead.

In 1864 a shipping company offered free transport, and 100,000 Atlantic Salmon ova left England ingeniously packed,

along with 3,000 brown trout ova from the River Itchen. This shipment arrived in Melbourne after 74 days at sea and 30,000 ova were still alive. The trout ova, however, had been reduced to a mere 300, all of which were shipped by Edward Wilson to the Plenty Ponds at New Norfolk.

James Youl had achieved a well-deserved success. The shipment made history. Of the 300 brown trout ova six pairs became mature fish and their offspring made feasible the first stocking with brown trout of not only our Tasmanian waters but also those of Victoria and New Zealand.

According to the Director of Fisheries and Game for Victoria (Mr. A. Dunbavin Butcher) to whom I am indebted for the historical data and details contained herein, James Youl was the outstanding contributor to the successful

establishment of the brown trout in the Southern Hemisphere for which a knighthood was conferred upon him in 1891.

For sheer tenacity of purpose, Sir James was indeed a pioneer and his love for Tasmania, its lakes and rivers may well have been his inspiration. Here, surely, is the foundation stone to our Tasmanian angling.

It should be realised that all anglers have a heritage to honour and defend. The responsibility rests with the angler. We have, of course, such bodies as Fisheries Associations, Fisheries Commissioners and of late, a Research Department. These organisations were founded to promote good and orderly fishing and we should encourage and assist them for that purpose, and in a similar spirit and manner.

A Report from Rod Barford

When asked if he'd been out fishing, Rod's reply was ...

Yes mate, I have been to the Goulburn a few times as well as the Gibbo and around Angler's Rest, as well as spending some days in the Snowy Mountains a few weeks ago. The lakes were a bit tough in the fine weather, but as soon as the wind got up the fishing improved out of sight. I caught my share of trout but they were mostly on the rough days that had them feeding in close, especially where the shore dropped off steeply into the river arms of Jindabyne or the submerged creeks and gullies on Eucumbene. There weren't many anglers about, which was nice.

I always tote my car tying kit when away for more than a couple of days so I was able to get busy tying flies whenever it rained. But overall I had a thoroughly

enjoyable time fishing the lakes, and am planning another foray as soon as we're allowed over the border.

I'm headed over Ballarat way on Monday to collect some tools and equipment from my sister and then I'll head up to Talbot where they have a bush property. They need someone to mow the grass around the shack and check the security cameras for intruders. They've had a few jump the fence and go shooting there over the last year or so, so maybe the cameras will reveal who it is. Naturally I will be loaded up with my fly gear so I can refresh from my labours with a few hours on some of the local reservoirs. It's been quite a few years since I last fished them, so will probably look in on Greenhill at Ararat if the weather is reasonable. >>>

I fished the Tanjil a few times over summer, as well as some high country skinny water that was extremely productive, producing 2 - 3 lb trout from water you can step over. I am currently waiting on the delivery of two new custom splitcane rods, hoping to see them anytime soon. They will be the first custom cane rods I've had built since I got my 'Victoria' 6-weight from J. M. Turville in 1978. A 7 foot 3-weight and a 7'6" 4-weight – they will be wonderful for the skinny water / twig water I fish up high.

I've been keeping a very close eye on the insect life in the Goulburn over the years since I vacated the ATF presidency, and there are some very serious issues there. The once reliable hatches that we enjoyed for so long are but a memory in some instances. The kossie duns are almost gone. The red spinner hatch? I haven't sighted a single solitary insect since 1998. The long-horned caddis are now very sparse whereas they were plentiful only a few years ago.

Siltation is a major problem and I believe this is one of the two major culprits in the demise of the insects, coupled with the increasingly foul discharge from the trout farms and there's a perfect storm.

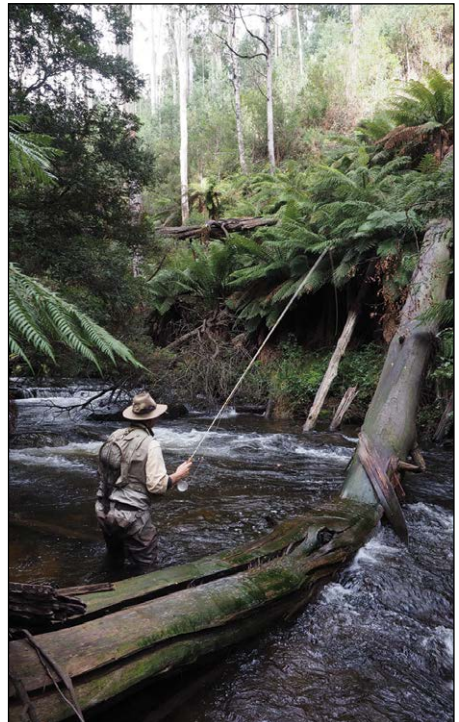
That said, I've been catching some nice trout within 200 metres of the bridge on both sides and in both directions. Not a lot. Eight was my best day, with an average of about five per day across the season. I am still haunted by that abiding image of an enormous brown that leapt from the water into a shaft of sunlight to snap a hovering egg-laying caddis. It keeps me going back to that spot time after time. Seeing a trout of 8 – 9 lbs does that.

One thing I have documented photographically is the steady and at times rapid encroachment of weed over

what has always been a fairly clean gravel bottom. You only need look over Gilmore's Bridge to get some idea of how bad it is. I experimented with ripping out large areas of weed to expose the clean gravel underneath, and within 24 hours there were several trout sitting over it. Clearly they prefer the gravel to the weed.

Lockdown is really irritating for a free spirit like myself, but this latest bout with the metro locked down I think will have real consequences for many. I'm still able to get out and about at the moment, but for how long who knows. Hopefully the new season will see a return to good fishing and fishing opportunities.

Cheers, Rod



This photo is from Bernard Holbery's fabulous collection. He fishes some tight and challenging water at times

FLY OF THE MONTH

... Karen's Squirrel Nymph



Karen Brooks was the guest speaker at our July meeting. She is one of our top female fly fishers and represented Australia at the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships in New Zealand last March. Her report on the Championships is given earlier in this issue.

Karen has also very kindly offered to contribute to our Fly of the Month section by describing one of her favourite flies – the Squirrel Nymph. Here is her description of this fly:

I felt it only right to propose a Squirrel as my Fly for the Month. It not only was an important inclusion in my fly box for the recent Commonwealth Championships in New Zealand but is a staple in my fly box for every day on the river. It has been a 'go to' fly for me for European Nymphing on a host of rivers in Tasmania and on the mainland, as well as some European and US destinations. This fly is worth taking anywhere!

From what I understand the fly originated in the Czech Republic. Overall it is a buggy, natural looking fly with the inclusion of CDC and Partridge to give it a natural movement. A fluoro pink Glo Brite rib gives a hot spot to make sure it's seen.

The Squirrel can be tied with a variety of tungsten bead sizes and colours. It has quite a large profile, which makes it ideal to use in cloudy or coloured water or low light conditions, as well as being a general searching fly in riffles, runs or pools.

Normally the Squirrel would be my point fly on my leader, with a smaller profile fly with a different colour bead on the top dropper.

There are many variations for tying a Squirrel but here is the method and materials that I use.

Materials for Karen's Squirrel:

- Hook:** Barbless Jig Hook, size 14 or 16 – Hanak 450BL or Dohiku Jig or Fulling Mill Jig.
- Bead:** Slotted Tungsten Bead in sizes 2.5, 3.0 or 3.5mm. Colour - Copper, Gold, Pink or Nickel.
- Thread:** Veevus 16/0 light brown.
- Tail:** Small tuft of partridge feathers.
- Body:** Natural coloured fox squirrel (I use Wapsi).
- Rib:** Fluoro pink Glo Brite – number 4
- Hackle:** Natural partridge feather matched with a CDC feather.
- Hotspot:** (Optional) Glo Brite orange thread

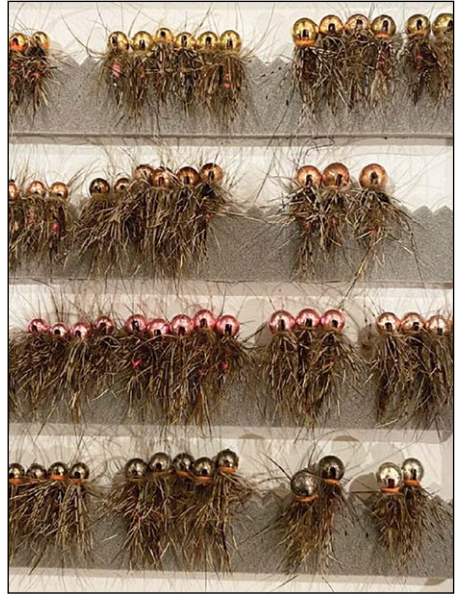
Tying Procedure:

1. Add the bead to the hook, put the hook in the vice and run thread from behind the bead to just before the hook bend.
2. Tie in a small tuft of partridge feathers to make a short tail.
3. Also at this point tie in a short length of pink Glo Brite for the rib.
4. Add some fox squirrel fur to the thread as dubbing and wind this on to form a scruffy, spikey body. Be generous here to form a reasonably fat body.
5. Wind the pink Glo Brite forward to form the rib – just three turns, then tie it off.
6. Take a CDC feather and a partridge feather and strip the fibres off one side of both feathers. Then lay the CDC feather on top of the partridge feather.

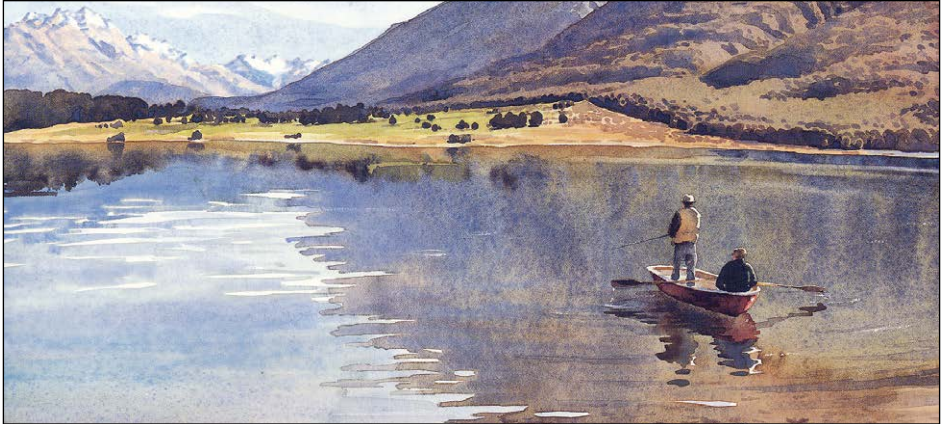


The ingredients for tying Karen's Squirrel

7. Split the tying thread and insert the two feathers together, or use a dubbing loop and insert the two feathers together, one on top of the other.
8. Spin the tying thread or dubbing loop and then wrap two turns behind the bead to form the hackle.
9. Finally, either dub a small amount of fox squirrel immediately behind the bead, or make a couple of turns of Glo Brite orange thread as a hotspot, then make a couple of turns with a whip finisher to complete the fly.



Textbooks tell us that a collection of squirrels is technically called a scurry or a dray. Here we could probably get away with calling them a fly box full.



Diamond Lake - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2019 Annual Dinner:

- AFN Fishing & Outdoors • Armadale Angling • Aussie Angler
- Australian Trout Foundation • Compleat Angler (CBD) • Essential Flyfisher
- The Flyfisher Melbourne • Fly Finz Fishing Tackle & Books
- FlyLife magazine • Hook Up Bait & Tackle • Hurley's Fly Fishing
- J.M. Gillies • Mayfly Tackle • Millbrook Lakes and Victorian Fisheries Authority.

VFFA 2020 meetings & other activities

August 2020

- 20 Thursday VFFA Annual General Meeting.
[Please note that this is a month earlier than normal. The three necessary AGM notices are included as inserts in this issue. This again will be a Zoom video presentation, commencing at 8:00 pm.]
- (23 Sunday Sunday Casting at the Red Tag Casting Pool has been cancelled)
- 26 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

September 2020

- 17 Thursday This was to be our Annual Dinner at the Kelvin Club with Guest Speakers Philip and Mark Weigall. However Covid-19 restrictions are very likely to prevent this happening, so instead we will have a Zoom video presentation with Philip and Mark as our guest speakers.
- (20 Sunday The President's Casting Day at the Red Tag Casting Pool. This will almost certainly be cancelled.)
- 30 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.

October 2020

- 15 Thursday General Meeting, with speaker Andrew Fuller from the Melbourne Flyfisher store – telling us about the best of fly fishing in Argentina and the latest and greatest in fly fishing equipment.
This again is very likely to be a Zoom video presentation, commencing at 8:00 pm.
- 28 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.

November 2020

- 19 Thursday General Meeting, commencing at 8:00 pm.
Speakers - John Billing from Mending Casts, and Jo Dobson from Casting for Recovery.
This again will probably be a Zoom video presentation.
- 18 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.

December 2020

- 2 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.
- 11 Friday Hopefully - our Annual Christmas Dinner, 6:30 for 7:00 pm, at the Kelvin Club. All details, including our guest speaker, will be confirmed in future newsletters.

February 2021

- 1 Monday First Council Meeting for 2021 – 6:30 pm.
- 13 – 21 Tasmania trip to Hayes on Brumby's.
Event Co-ordinator – Chris Gray.
- 25 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
“Liars' Night” – reports from members on their summer fishing.