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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

DECEMBER 2011

Organisation No. A0024750J

C/- The Kelvin Club, 14-30 Melbourne Place, Melbourne 3000

www.vffa.org.au

December Christmas Meeting – with Travis Dowling

Thursday, December 15, 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club



If you haven't yet booked, then a booking form is included as an insert. But please be prompt!

Travis is 'Director of Fisheries Management – DPI Fisheries, Victoria', so he has a critical role in the management and development of our Victorian trout fishery. This is an event you would not want to miss.

THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Christmas Dinner: Guest Speaker - Travis Dowling

Our guest speaker for this year's Christmas Dinner is Travis Dowling – who holds a pivotal role in the management of our Victorian trout fishery. Travis's official title is 'Director of Fisheries Management – DPI Fisheries, Victoria.' So this is an occasion that will provide members with a unique opportunity to hear the latest and most factual information on our current Victorian trout fishery.



Travis grew up in Victoria's north-east, and tells us that he was fishing as soon as he could walk, targeting the many species, including trout, in the streams to which he had access. He was educated at Melbourne's La Trobe University, and then worked within the Department of Justice in Victoria before moving to the Northern Territory. Here he fished (very successfully) for barramundi, whilst writing the recreational fishing policy for the Northern Territory's opposition party. He also worked for the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries in the Northern Territory.

He returned to Melbourne, worked for the Environment Minister for some time, and then moved to Fisheries in the DPI. He is married with two young daughters and a son, and describes himself as 'a very keen, but limited by talent, recreational angler'.

His talk at the Christmas Dinner will cover such topics as the State's very successful 'Fish Stocking Program', the implementation of the Victorian Government's new \$16.3million 'Recreational Fishing Initiative', Victoria's consultation arrangements with the recreational fishing sector, the creation of new fishing access to waters, and the success of the recreational fishing license fund. These are all matters of great relevance to Victorian fly-fishers. We are most fortunate to obtain Travis as our guest speaker, and would encourage all members to attend.

February Meeting: Our Traditional 'Liar's Night'

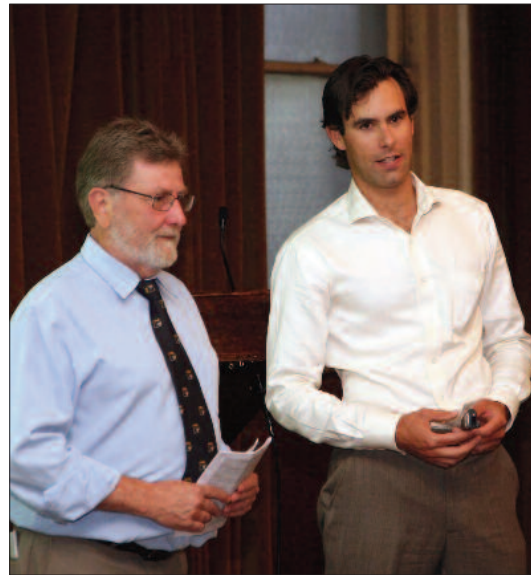
Our first meeting for 2012 is again our traditional 'Liar's Night', when members are able to wax eloquently and expansively on their victories and exploits from their holiday trouting. But don't be put off by the title – invariably our presenters are as honest as the February days are long, and more than willing to share tales of their recent successes. So the February meeting offers a number of attractions: it is a great opportunity to catch up with VFFA friends and colleagues and hear of their fishing excursions, it is invariably a riotous and entertaining affair filled with tantalising tales laced with plenty of humour, and if our presenters have had a few relaxing tongue-looseners at the bar prior to their comments, there is an excellent chance you'll get invaluable information on some top spots too. You'll certainly hear plenty about proven and successful tactics and strategies from some of our most accomplished fly-flickers. So there you have it – it's both great fun and quite informative. We'll see you there.

The November Meeting:

Julien Thomas from Exclusive Cast

Fly Fishing In The Limousin Region

Limousin is where I spent my childhood, and I caught my first trout on a dry fly under the proud eyes of my grandfather. This very fly was tied by my Grandfather with the hackles from “Le Coq de Pêche” (local rooster), and was cast using a 1954 “Pezon et Michel” bamboo rod, paired with a silk line. This memory will stay with me forever. As the years went by my passion for fly-fishing kept growing and has driven me to travel the world perfecting this art. In all my trips, I fished with enjoyment and great success using flies, silk lines, leaders, and rods hand made in the Limousin region. Interestingly, many anglers were astonished at the quality of these rare fly-fishing products, and would ask me where to find them. I have been living in Australia now for almost nine years, working in the agriculture industry, and my passion for fly-fishing has come with me.



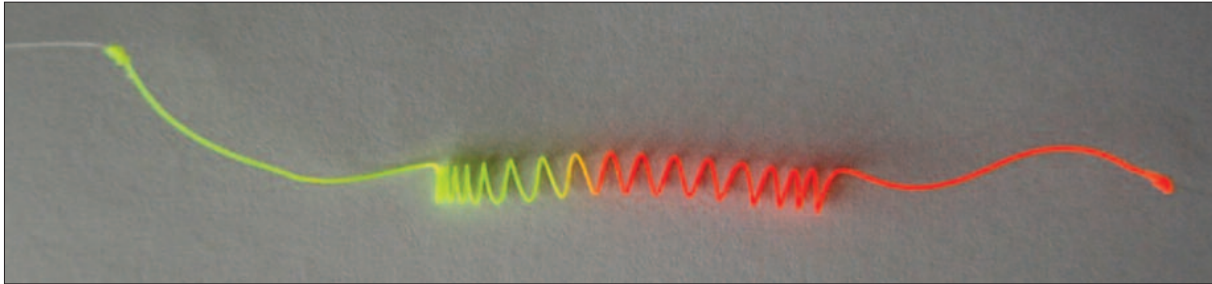
The President introduces our guest speaker

So let me tell you something about my life in fly-fishing, and the region in France where I grew up.

The Limousin region is located in the centre of France, some 500 km south of Paris and 250 km inland from Bordeaux. Part of Limousin has a relatively low population density of less than 15 people/square km, and so the region has remained unchanged in its natural aspect. What is impressive, from an angler’s point of view, is that there are over 8,000 km of creeks and rivers within 1½ hours drive from the house where I grew up! All these creeks and rivers hold healthy populations of brown trout and they share the pure native trout gene, as there has been no artificial introduction or stocking of foreign trout. This is a source of pride in the Limousin fishery. Another interesting point to note is that for the cost of a standard fishing license (about \$30 for four weeks), you can fish anywhere, and river access is a right by law (except, I should add, for the 2 km of the Correze River frontage owned by Mr Jacques Chirac!)

For all these reasons Limousin has a long history of trout fishing. Local farmers have been fishing for trout for centuries, and their technique, using rather long rods (3.5 – 4.0 metre bamboo poles), relied for its great success on one strong attribute - a drag-free presentation. In the mid-1800s Limousin anglers started tying artificial flies to imitate caddis grubs. These were constructed using wool, thread, and feathers, and were fished by drifting them down the current food lane to deceive the trout. This technique is the origin of the French Nymphing

technique, and was named in French: 'nymphé au fils'. Fils translates as 'line', and it must be understood that this refers to the leader and not to the fly line as such. In other words, nymphé au fils technique allows you to fish fast water drag free because, by using a long rod, you can manage the leader. As my grandfather used to tell me, part of the leader is under water, the rest is up in the air, but none of it is ever to float on the water surface. Also, the leader must be kept at the correct tension. Too much tension and you will be pulling and swinging the fly, while if it is too slack you will have drag and will not detect the take quickly enough.



Julien's coil bi-colour strike indicator

The leader traditionally used was a length of line made of very thin silk, and as such it was light, had no memory, and didn't stretch. It was also solid in colour, thus enhancing the visual control of the drift. The last metre or so was nylon line with a nymph attached to it. I still use this set up today with great success on the Australian rivers, although I've added a 'coil bi-colour strike indicator' that greatly facilitates detecting the take. The Limousin silk line French nymphing leader is available for purchase from *Exclusive Cast*.

Limousin also has a couple of larger rivers, such the mighty Dordogne River, where it is possible to catch huge double figure trout on a fly rod. The Caddis hatches on this river can be incredibly prolific at dusk or dawn during the summer months, and trout feed intensively on these Caddis, creating those magical moments that fly-fishers dream about. During the daytime, grayling (up to 3 lb) can be a lot of fun to cast to, using tiny colourful tag flies of sizes 18 and 20 on a 6 metre leader ending with a 0.08 mm tippet. We might also note that the Dordogne River was a prime fishery for large Atlantic salmon up until the first half of the 1900s. Sadly the population of these king salmonids declined and almost disappeared in the 1980s, but a government-funded project is aiming to restore the runs of salmon into the Dordogne. At the last count over 3,000 salmon swam through the fish scale, and this is very encouraging. A small number of professional guiding businesses have been established on the Dordogne (at Argentat), and these offer you local knowledge along with all the equipment you need.

But the hero of the Limousin region has to be the Coq de Peche, which translates into English as the "fishing rooster". The Limousin Coq de Peche produces the most beautiful web-free hackles in a full range of greys that makes them ideal for tying dry flies. It is interesting to note the circumstances in which the term "Coq de Peche" entered into French literature. It was in 1850, in an article about a court case where a farmer who was an avid and passionate fly-fisherman had to respond to a charge of assaulting a young boy. In fact the farmer had caught the boy trying to 'de-hackle' his beloved *Titi*, a magnificent Coq de Peche which, by reputation, produced exquisite hackle feathers with very special 'magical' properties. The Coq de Peche is not actually a proper breed of roosters, but is a genetic freak that is thrown

up occasionally, and to survive it has needed the tough climate and natural radio-activity present in the granitic soil of the Limousin high country. Thus the reason why it is very hard to source Coq de Peche hackles, and why the farmer mentioned above was so aggrieved at the boy stealing the feathers of his Coq de Peche, is that these are indeed very rare and exceptional hackles.

The Coq de Peche hackle feathers are collected by hand (plucking) every three months, and each delicate harvest, which does no harm to the rooster, yields some 250 prime hackle feathers. The fibres of the hackles are thin and extremely springy, and have a unique capacity for capturing and reflecting the light. The movement and light that these Coq de Peche hackles give to a dry fly - a most lively and realistic effect, even 'magical' - will fool the most selective trout. Interestingly, only Coq de Peche aged three years or older offer these features (movement and light), and like the best French wine, the older the Coq de Peche, the better the hackles.



A magnificent Coq de Peche

Hackles can be harvested from Coq de Peche as old as 12 years. Each year, on May 1st, the township of Neuvic hosts the National contest of Coq de Peche, during which over 100 specimens are reviewed and assessed on criteria such as hackle shape, colour, and sheen, in order to select the best Coq de Peche of the year. Needless to say, Coq de Peche hackles are available for purchase from *Exclusive Cast*.

If anyone would like more information about fly-fishing in the Limousin region, and/or details on organizing a trip there, or hot tips on French nymphing, or the Coq de Peche feathers and hackles, then please feel free to contact me directly on my email address (julien@exclusivecast.com.au). Finally, I take the opportunity to offer a 10% discount applicable until 28/02/2012 to any VFFA club members when shopping on the *Exclusive Cast* web site (www.exclusivecast.com.au). Simply enter the following coupon code: 'VFFA' (at the checkout page of the website), and your order will receive the discount.

New Members Welcomed...

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Steven Webb into our ranks as a new member. We trust that his membership brings many years of pleasure and fulfilling involvement. Steve has lived in Melbourne for a number of years, but spent his early days fishing the glorious trout streams of New Zealand's North Island.

President's Message

Christmas is almost upon us and so the shopping 'silly season' has begun. These days my family members are aware that "tackle" is the main item on my Christmas wish list, and with the fishing season now well underway there is no way they could miss the many hints strewn about.



I wrote this a little earlier than normal because the editor required this piece for the newsletter, and my party (team VFFA) is currently in New Zealand for 14 days, pillaging the waters of the beautiful South Island once again.

I purchased my license over the internet in advance of the trip because I like to carry the pretty plastic card that the Kiwis send me. At \$116 for two weeks it is not cheap by home standards, but I am happy to pay this amount for the stunning clarity of water and the absence of venomous wildlife on the ground. There has been some talk recently of raising the cost of licences substantially for international visitors to cover the cost of providing the resource. I don't have a problem with an increase in fees, but it should be for all anglers, not just the visitors.

I have been organising groups of VFFA members to fish New Zealand for many years now, and have noted the following issues. In the main the farmers are friendly people, but there are many who are ruining the water quality with chemicals and irrigation. The majority of visiting fly-fishers practice strong conservation measures, with "catch and release" and a much greater respect and appreciation for the resource than many of the locals. I must also add that I have stopped buying the F&G magazine since it started printing unsigned, poorly thought out articles obviously designed to inflame some of the less-thoughtful locals who put nothing into their fishing but are happy to take plenty out.

One last gripe - anyone who would consider building a cycle track along a pristine section of the Oreti River must surely have tripped over some of the boulders and suffered brain damage. There must be countless other areas better suited to these activities. Surely the ride from Garston to Cromwell once a year is enough to satisfy the ardent bikers. If the Kiwis keep running with these ideas the visitors will cease coming and the tourist dollars will dry up.

By the time members receive this newsletter the deadline for the Christmas Dinner RSVP will be upon us, so please check that you have replied. I am sorry to report that responses to recent general meeting dinner bookings have been rather dismal. This situation is causing your Council some concern and we are looking at ways to overcome this problem.

There are some exciting events coming up in the New Year, so check the calendar and contact the convenors if you wish to attend. If the events are fully subscribed and you miss out then please contact me via email, as we may be able to arrange alternative or additional activities to cater for the demand. As an example, I know the February Tassie trip has a waiting list but there is the possibility of a trip to Bronte Park where fellow member, Charles Wooley, has

accommodation. I, for one, am looking forward to going and fishing one of my favourite places at Bronte Lagoon once again.

The VFFA has not awarded a Jack Ritchie Medal for some years now, so Council is preparing to set up a committee to evaluate submissions and CVs for suitable candidates. Some very worthy names have been suggested in recent months and these will be considered when submissions are received.

Finally, in an effort to cut costs we are looking to distribute newsletters by email to members who would prefer to receive the electronic (pdf) file. Councillors have been getting these for some time and the 'colour version' has become quite popular. It is not intended that we cease producing printed copies, as many members have indicated they want the print version, and some don't have email access. I personally have a collection of printed newsletters going back to the 1980s and would like to keep the collection going, but I also enjoy reading the colour version - especially with the fly-tying items and photographs in colour. Send me your email address if you would like to receive the newsletter as a pdf file, and I will add your name to the database, with of course your details being kept in strict confidence.

Council has been working hard, through the leadership of Hamish Hughes, towards finalising a VFFA "Risk Management" statement. It will certainly help to make members aware of the dangers to which our fishing exposes us. I urge all members to consider fishing in pairs and to carry communication devices along with basic first aid equipment. One of our members recently had a close call when he lost his footing when wading across a river and was swept some distance downstream. Fortunately he managed to regain the safety of the river bank, but it could have ended very tragically. As it was, some expensive gear was lost, but this can be replaced. So - please take care out there!

I will sign off for this year by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I wish you and your families all the very best, and some good fishing.

Tight Lines, *Rick Dugina*

CRC and the KHV

Members will recall that recent issues of our newsletter have mentioned the importance of the Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) as the best way to control our exploding carp populations, and the November issue carried a letter written by our President, on behalf of the VFFA, urging our parliamentary representatives to continue the funding of the Invasive Animals Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) in their work on the virus. We are pleased to report that the following letter, in response, was recently received:



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Our Ref: MNMC2011-12237

Mr Rick Dugina
President
Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Inc.
c/- The Kelvin Club
14-30 Melbourne Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Dugina

Thank you for your letter of 21 October 2011 to the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, about the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). As the matter you have raised falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig, your letter was passed on to his office. Minister Ludwig has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of managing pest animals, and that research can help find ways of reducing their effects on agriculture, the environment and the community.

Since 1992 the government has supported research into vertebrate pest animals through the CRC program administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR). The application process for the program is administered by DIISR and does not involve the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

I understand that the Invasive Animals CRC's extension bid was successful and has progressed to the second stage of the CRC program's application process. I wish the CRC all the best with its bid and note that the successful applicants are expected to be announced in December 2011.

Thank you again for your letter. I have sent a copy of my response to your association's Junior Vice President, Mr Hamish T Hughes, who also wrote to Minister Burke on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Lauder
Assistant Secretary
Sustainable Resource Management

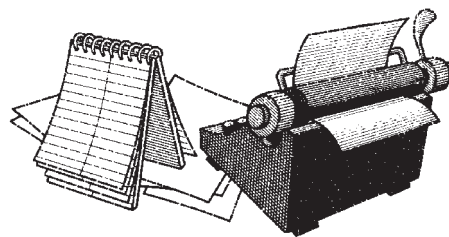
21 November 2011

cc Mr Hamish T Hughes, Junior Vice President, Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Inc

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

From the EDITOR'S DESK



A couple of months ago I was given some boxes of files and photos from the late Tony Brothers' estate. In hunting through the piles of material I came across some real treasures, including a copy of the very first VFFA newsletter. Yes - Volume 1, Number 1. Since then there have been, by my quick calculation, just over 650 subsequent newsletters. A scan of that first newsletter is on the following page, and makes interesting reading. You'll be pleased to know that our objectives haven't changed; our aim remains 'to keep members in touch with the activities of the Association; to publish items of interest concerning Fly-Fishing in Victoria; and to give members the opportunity of recording their views on any matter concerning their (angling) interests'.

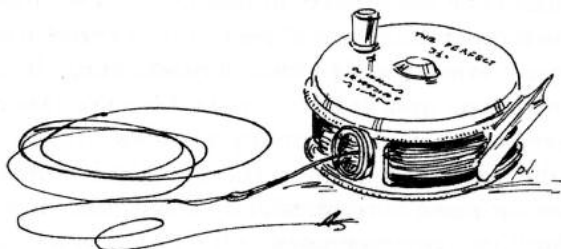
I confess that when I first took over as editor in 2008 my greatest worry was that I'd find myself with deadlines fast approaching and nothing to publish. Fortunately that has never been the case. We have a large membership with close to 300 members, and among our ranks many knowledgeable and skilled anglers who are more than willing to share their wisdom and experiences. And each month, it seems, the list of contributors grows. One of the strengths of our newsletter, I feel, is that because so many have been willing to contribute, there is a rich variety in the material we publish. This is certainly the case with this issue.

Hafey Rock, a very talented young fly-fisher and fly tier from Warrnambool has provided a fascinating account of his fishing experiences in Mexico, Peter McCabe takes us back to the Test River in the UK, Paul Squires' friend Yale Sacks has emailed fabulous photos and a captivating account of his battles with monster rainbows in Alaska, and Bernard Holbery brings us back home with his capture of a huge brown from the Acheron River here in Victoria. Richard Clark gives details of a top fly – Jack Kelly's Mudeye pattern, and Jeremy Lucas has provided another thought-provoking insight into the world of international championships with his report on the Australian team in Slovenia. Jeremy writes professionally for a number of UK and European angling publications, and is a regular monthly contributor to the top British journal *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying*. He also writes for our VFFA newsletter – for no fee, but just to contribute. Thank you so much Jeremy.

I hope you find plenty of interest in this final issue of our newsletter for 2011. My very best wishes to all our readers for a pleasant and relaxing (and safe) Christmas, and a great New Year, hopefully with plenty of good fishing along the way.

Take care and tight lines.

Lyndon Webb



VFFFA

NEWSLETTER

No. 1

October, 1955.

INTRODUCING OURSELVES ... This is our first venture in issuing a regular monthly publication, and it is necessarily a somewhat modest one. Our aim, in particular, is to keep members in touch with the activities of the Association; to publish items of interest concerning Fly Fishing in Victoria; and to give members the opportunity of recording their views on any matters concerning their (angling) interests.

To achieve this aim, we must naturally seek the co-operation of our members. We would especially like to receive from them accounts of interesting and reasonably authentic angling experiences; non-libellous pars about people; and stimulating ideas for the betterment of our sport, art or science.

Please send items (in the plural, if possible) either to your Secretary, Mr. A. Probert, C/- Brown & Dureau, 422 Collins Street (Phones MU 8621 - WF 1854) or our Editor, Mr. J.E.Pyke, C/- Vacuum Oil Co., 29 Market Street (Phones MY 230 - Hawthorn 2358).

NEXT MEETING ... The next meeting of the V.F.F.A. will be held at the Caris Club (McEwan House) 343 Little Collins Street on Friday, 28th October at 8 p.m. Although it is a monthly meeting it will be of Special Interest, for a number of well-known anglers will be exhibiting, with appropriate comments, Kodachrome slides of various fishing scenes and incidents which have come into their own experiences.

The "exhibitors" will include: Dr. Hubert Smith, Dr. Frank May, Dr. Michael Wilson; Messrs. Bill McAusland, Bill Medlycott, Theo Brunn, Clem Dowd and H. Tartakover.

It should be a pleasant and memorable evening.
Supper will be served.

Piscatorial Proverb - There's many a snag 'twixt the fish and the bag.

Farewell Ray Butterworth

(A tribute by David Grisold)

On Saturday, December 3, our dear friend Ray Butterworth passed away, following a long battle with prostate cancer. We will all remember Ray's happy, smiling face and the wonderful days that we spent fishing the dams at his property *Tranquil Rises* at Flowerdale and his beloved King Parrot Creek. VFFA members enjoyed many memorable opening weekends at *Tranquil Rises*.

I will personally miss Ray so much. He taught me to fly-fish. I think that I was his first or second pupil. I first fished with him ten years ago on the King Parrot Creek. It was a cold and bleak day in May, and Ray, who always wet waded the King Parrot regardless of the conditions, was dressed in bike shorts and a short-sleeved shirt. I was wearing full-length waders and was rugged up with thermals yet still shivered all day long with the cold. Ray, who never seemed to feel the cold, laughed several times about this 'Wuss' of a fly-fisherman called Choco.



Ray with Hugh and Choco

Ray loved the King Parrot. He knew every fish in it by name. Every pool, rock, pebble and bubble line was etched in his memory. I won't ever forget the Sunday barbecues I enjoyed at *Tranquil Rises* with Ray and my fishing buddy Hugh Maltby, particularly the afternoon when Hughie's new fishing trousers caught on fire. Ray and I laughed so hard we fell in the dam. The next time I visit the King Parrot I will stop and chat with a wonderful chap called Ray, and will ask him once again for his advice and guidance.

We extend our condolences and deepest sympathy to Ray's wife Anne and his family at their loss.

David Grisold

Who are these members?

Our treasurer has received a large number of annual subscription payments from members, and this is of course excellent news. However two of these payments – direct deposits – were from members who failed to identify themselves. So he is anxious for the following two members to contact him and identify themselves so that their 2011/2012 memberships can be confirmed – 'dw VFFA mshp1112' and 'DW VFFA subs'. If these two good folk (and only these two!) would contact Tony he would be greatly relieved.

Tony can be contacted on 0407 309 797 or email: Tony.mitchem@bellp.com.au

The Australian Team In Slovenia

(In recent months we've enjoyed a number of contributions from Jeremy Lucas, former member of the British Fly-fishing team and European Open Champion. Jeremy is currently the mentor and coach to the Australian team, and here is his report on the Australian team's performance at this year's World Championships in Slovenia.)

Last August, immediately prior to the FIPS-Mouche World Championships in Italy, I spent a week with the Australian national team in neighbouring Slovenia. This was the absolute highlight in a great season for me. I mean, given the great company of highly skilled elite anglers, stunning scenery, my family nearby (we were travelling together around Europe) and some of the best mixed trout and grayling fishing on the planet, how could it be anything other than the brilliant experience it was. Not that it was all fun. With the championships the following week, in the Bolzano region of northern Italy, the team took the preparation process very seriously indeed, and I was charged with doing what I could to help in this process.

Captain Peter Dixon, along with team members Joe Riley and Max Vereshaka, were veterans of the team that did so well on the San, in Poland in 2010, while the rest of the team, including manager Rob Staples, were new, at least to me. Ian Donnachy, Craig Carey and Jim Williams had a perceived weakness of little or no experience with grayling, and it was this that we were to concentrate on in Slovenia (which has rivers very similar to the Italian championship venues). I was also to help with the leader-to-hand technique and perhaps to an extent with tactics for the crucial 'fifth session', which we have identified over the years as being able to turn results considerably, both for individuals and teams.

Not a single member of the team was unimpressed by the fishing in this beautiful country. We were fishing essentially for a mix of wild and stocked rainbows, brown trout and grayling. In the event, the rivers were very low and clear, after a long, dry summer, and in consequence the fish were often spooky, other than the most recently stocked rainbows. This actually gave us great opportunity to explore possibilities for the challenging fifth sessions – the last of a championship – and perfect conditions to introduce the state of the art 'leader-to-hand' technique. I should explain that the latter is NOT what you will have heard of as 'French nymphing', or



Beautiful Slovenian water



‘French leader’. This latter is a sub-set of leader-to-hand, designed principally for presenting one or two small nymphs, with an indicator section on the surface, at short range. Leader-to-hand accommodates this approach, but extends it to yield dry fly presentation that is astonishing in terms of control, contact, and duration of drag-free drift. Leader-to-hand is a quantum leap in terms of presentation compared with French leader, most especially for dry fly, and actually there are very few practitioners in Europe, and almost none, I suspect, in the rest of the world.

I noticed very early on that Joe had maintained and even improved on his skill with nymph presentation on the same rig that he had been using in Poland, while it was clear that Ian and Craig had worked hard on this technique in Australia and New Zealand. In all cases, though, and this included Max and Jim, it became apparent that when turning to dry fly they had no confidence unless there was fly line involved, and even then were reluctant to get in close enough to target fish. This is a common finding of mine whilst guiding or coaching in this technique on British and European rivers, and is the result mostly of anglers attempting to use the commercially available French leaders, such as the Hends Cameo, which while being reasonable for nymph presentation, are simply not designed for dry fly. Neither were the French leaders used by Team Australia suitable for this. I have written elsewhere (Fish & Fly, The Fly Fishing Point, and Fly Fishing and Fly Tying magazine) about suitable leader-to-hand construction, so will not go into it here. But I would urge those exploring this technique to use this as a starting point, because otherwise considerable frustration will ensue. It took me several years to get it right.

On the other hand, however, it was obvious that every single team member was solid with nymph technique and also adept in the use of streamers (which, nowadays, I am not). Indeed, I felt that there was something approaching the exceptional, if not moments of genius, in the way some of the team so quickly adapted to the differing needs of various river sections. I remember on one occasion when we were simulating a competition session when Joe – so camouflaged that from my stance on the opposite bank I barely saw him unless he moved – methodically worked through a section with utter precision. He caught several good fish, but one which he had spotted eluded him until later on in the session. It was in a lie that simply could not be reached by any conventional presentation with floating or sinking lines, nor with a leader-to-hand. I watched as he stole into position in slow motion like a sleeping astronaut in zero G, pushed his rod tip well below the surface, and gradually fed the fly down the current to where the trout hovered. It turned out to be the biggest rainbow of the session and I think that Joe was as delighted with it as the rest of us were impressed. Not many anglers would have caught that fish.

So, along with the huge motivation and summed pool of skills within the team, there was unquestionably great potential. The lack of grayling experience was a significant problem on European rivers, however, and I also perceived some loss of confidence with dry fly, or rather, with excellent dry fly presentation as is required in most places on the Continent. It was glaringly obvious to me that the team had done very little work with appropriate dry flies and appropriate presentation, and probably none at all with the same on leader-to-hand; simply, because there is comparatively little requirement for this in Antipodean rivers.

I recall an occasion when I moved from angler to angler, observing and advising where I could through the course of another simulated session. Arriving right at the top of the beat, I found Craig in a lovely deep pool beneath a waterfall. He had caught a few trout and grayling on nymph and was at that time starting with dry fly, having seen a few risers just off the main current and in the pool's gravelly tail. I watched as he rose and missed three good fish in succession. Then he pricked another. In frustration he looked around and asked, "Why am I missing them?" My immediate, somewhat impetuous reply was: "Because you are using a fly line!" We then analysed this. With Craig's fly line approach, he was casting too far to have reasonable control over, and keep contact with, his fly. He was probably placing the fly somewhere between 10 and 12 metres. The fast rises were seen and gone before the hook could be set, largely because of the inertia of comparatively heavy fly line lying on the surface (the noise of which was also spooking the fish). I suggested that Craig significantly shorten the range by wading out into the stream, and cast less distance. This had an immediate beneficial effect in that the next three rises were all converted into 'countable' trout in the net. I left Craig then to return to the others, but he told us later that he managed another six before the end of the session, hardly missing or losing a fish. It is odd, but actually this is a very common experience on European rivers. Shorten the range, improve the angle of presentation (minimising the inertia-creating mass of fly line) and presentation and control are vastly improved.



The ultimate team result of 13th was disappointing, particularly after the top ten placing of the previous year on the San. But even here there were positives which should be observed. Look at Team England: ending day one in second place, then collapsing over the last three sessions into 10th place, which is frankly dreadful. Australia, on the other hand, was almost at the bottom of the field after day one, but gradually climbed after this disastrous start and finished with a superb final session, so that the team could hold its collective head high even with the huge disappointment of the final placing. Also, there were so many lessons learned, such that the team will be ever stronger on European venues in future. Solidly and innovatively captained and managed, with a

skill set expected from elite competitors, along with generally excellent emotional and physical fitness, and - importantly - a knowledge of weaknesses and a will to turn these around: yes, there is great potential here. In my view, I perceive that on trout-only venues, Australia can realistically be looking at top five placings, with the possibility of an individual podium finish. On European mixed trout and grayling venues, it would still be unusual if the team missed out on the top ten (as in Italy this year); but again with the potential for an individual to be in at least the top ten (so narrowly missed by Jonathan Stagg on the San in 2010), if not the podium.

Good luck Team Australia in the Slovenian World Championships - only six months away!

The Test - Clear As Gin

(In the October issue Andrew Mossman told of his brief visit to the famous Test River in the UK. This prompted Peter McCabe to offer his account.)

It would seem that I was not the only Victorian to visit the Test in 2011. In September Patricia and I flew to the UK to see and enjoy our new grandson, Benjamin, who lives in London with our daughter Tara and husband Matt - all Aussies.

I was the baggage carrier of course - "BUT" - a condition for this service was to have two days fishing on the Test, which was a follow-up on last year's "research" on the Itchen, where I was introduced to the "Clear as Gin Chalk Streams" near Martyr Worthy. This is the stretch preferred by various keen fly-fishing USA Presidents and which just had to be near a very good pub called the *Chestnut Horse*.

This year I booked the same guide as for last year, Dave, who is the senior guide for South-East England for Orvis, and a very professional, quiet, and knowledgeable gent.

We had to go the long way round to get to the fishing via Lake Maggiore in Northern Italy, then Genoa to see a friend and catch a cruise. Then back to Marseille for a week before arriving on October 12 at Winchester - the ancient and first Capital of England. Thank heavens they moved it to London; the whole city and its surrounds are wonderful country and nice people straight out of post cards.

There was plenty for non fly-fishers with an exhibition of the original King James Bible (organized by another Scot) at Winchester Cathedral and College.

We stayed at the King Alfred Pub (VG) which was just a short walk to town via the banks of the Itchen where G.E.M. Skues developed his concepts. The pub food was good and they do have cold beer and cider.



Peter fishing a delightful stretch of the Test

Day one of my introduction to the Test was at Wherwell on October 13. We entered the river at 9:45 am on the lowest section, near a twin sluice gate that split the stream. Initially I spent a little time getting my cast in order, as the stream fishing methods required a much lighter touch than used down under. I was fishing an Orvis 5-weight rod with a floating line to 3x tippet. Top fly was the Tup's Indispensable. I had a very good morning, followed by Bangers and Mash with a pint at the Pub, then back to the river. This was interesting as, with the consent



Nicely manicured edges

of the angler who was upstream, we continued fishing the same section, which quite suited me as we ended up with about 20 grayling, all of a good size, and two trout of 2 lb or better for the day. I fished dries all morning, then added Copper Johns and Pheasant Tail Nymphs in the afternoon. My guide Dave suggested he had rarely seen such activity, and had not expected it on that section of the stream, and neither did I.

Day two was at Longparish, which was on a private estate with a lovely and *very* large manor house in beautiful condition, with grounds that were more of a park than a garden. A small section of the Test was diverted through the house (yes – through!). It may have been an original millstream. The Test rolled along very smoothly through the property, being careful not to disturb the owners, and we were equally careful, as no one is allowed in before 10 am.

The day started very quietly with only a few rises and a number of fly changes. Eventually we closed the day with about six good-sized grayling and six trout of about 2 lb or better in really good condition. Flies used were similar to those for the previous day, except for a trout which took MY Fluorescent pink nymph (Cleo), complements of Spotlight stores. The flies used or planned for the two days included the following dries - Klinkhamers, Adams, Tups Indispensable, and the Griffiths Gnat (all size 16). Nymphs included the PTN, Goldhead Gold Rib Hare's Ear, Biot Yellow, and Copper Johns (in sizes 14 and 16).



This one passed the Test

I waded mostly, with some fishing from the side banks, and discovered how careful I needed to be to not spook the trout, *and they do spook!* The grayling were all in good condition, and the trout in very good condition at the end of the season. It was interesting to note that the sections of river where angling was permitted vary at this time of year. I was also advised that the whole length of the Test is controlled by sluice gates, which are not in regular use now but were use to flood acres to grow reeds for thatch and improve the grazing.



Hardly wilderness fishing but fabulous fishing anyway

We finished our UK visit with my new grandson being introduced to the smell of trout during a second visit to London, where we stayed at the Royal Thames Yacht Club in Knightsbridge (don't ask!) I also checked out the various fly stores and can assure you that using the fishing guide from Orvis is not the only reason why you should go to the Orvis store in London - it is very good, and an expatriate runs it. We returned home via Hong Kong where it was difficult to find a fly-fishing store.

(NB: I was told of a new fly-fisher who visited a private lake in the UK who had paid his fee and was allowed TWO fish. He caught a reasonable trout then a very small one, which he was releasing back into the lake when the lake manager addressed him from behind. That was not allowed - he should have brought it to the manager who would have then allowed him to catch another trout. *But now he had caught his two trout for the day!* The rules are 'catch and remove' with no exceptions!!)

Report From Out West

(For this month's Warrnambool report Hafey Rock, a very enthusiastic member of the Warrnambool Fly-fishers and a noted saltwater specialist, has provided the following account of his recent trip to Mexico. It was quite a successful expedition!)

The Plan

When winter hits the south-west corner of Victoria and it's time to take a break from fishing the flooded waters of the Merri and the Hopkins I usually try to make a break for a warmer climate. This year when locations were being bounced around with my girlfriend we kept coming back to Central America - Mexico to be exact. It met all the key criteria. It was somewhere new, it was hot, and (from what I had heard from friends and my reading) it has some amazing fishing.

After the tickets were booked the research began. Hours spent speaking with friends, searching the web, and sending countless emails saw a plan (loosely) hatched, with somehow a side trip to Belize added on. The plan was to spend the whole of September in Central America, flying into Mexico City then making our way to Ambergris Caye, Belize, for a week's fishing and relaxing. After Belize we planned to head back Mexico's Pacific Coast to relax and hopefully find some surf and more fishing.

Belize

Belize is situated on the Caribbean Sea, with Mexico bordering the north and Guatemala to the west and south. It is something of an oddity in Central America, in that owing to the country's British colonial heritage, English is the country's official language. This makes travel easier for the Spanish-speaking impaired.

Belize has the second largest barrier reef in the world. It spreads along the majority of the coast, and forms extensive inshore flats that are home to the 'big three' of the saltwater flats world - Bonefish, Tarpon and Permit. In the area around Ambergris Caye Tarpon are the main target species, with abundant 'babies' in the 30 lb to 50 lb range year round, and the 100 lb+ models appearing seasonally in the deeper water. For Tarpon a boat and guide are a necessity as most of the locations are a 20 to 40 minute boat ride.

During our time in Belize we stayed at El Pescador Lodge. It had a great reputation, and from our experience we could not fault its friendly staff and great facilities. The guides at the lodge span three generations, and during our stay we fished with Carlos, the longest-serving guide with 35 years of experience under his belt. At 70 it was amazing how he could pole after fish all day long in the heat. I felt knackered just watching him.



Kate's Bonefish

‘Babies’

Juvenile Tarpon were in good numbers in the waters around El Pescador, and on the days when the sun and wind were favourable it was not uncommon to get 30 or more shots at fish varying in numbers from singles to schools of 20+. The fish, while babies of the Tarpon world, were still big enough to bring on a case of ‘fish-induced’ shakes. Getting a good shot at them was one thing; getting them to eat was quite another. Their reaction to the fly was amazing to see.

In theory the idea was to cast the fly 3 to 4 feet in front of the fish, then with long continuous strips pull the fly away from them. The fish would then speed up and engulf the fly. Simple! The reality however, was somewhat different. Carlos would spot the fish a long way off, call the direction and distance, and then pole the boat toward the fish but not directly in its path. We would approach the fish head on, I would then make the cast, the fly would land, the fish would follow for a metre or two, but then with a look of absolute terror it would race off at a million miles an hour, taking the rest of the school with it. The fish around Ambergris Caye see a huge amount of pressure, with several lodges in the area targeting them for the majority of the year. As a result the fish are very skittish, and sensitive to any presentation not absolutely perfect.



Hafey's turn

After trying countless flies and retrieves, dropping down to 40 lb fluorocarbon shock tippet, and extending my leader out to 20 ft I finally managed three eats, a few jumps and no fish to the boat. It was exhilarating to see and a great learning experience, and it certainly lit a fire. While I didn't actually land a Tarpon I did end up with lots of Jack Crevalle, a fish similar in appearance to our Brassy Trevally. They work the same flats as the Tarpon, but unlike the Tarpon were happy to pounce on a fly. They were great fun on an 8 weight, and helped to ease the pain of not landing a Tarpon!

Backyard Bones

The early mornings spent waiting for the sun to get high enough to spot Tarpon were spent chasing ‘Bones’. While the average size of the Bonefish was on the small size, with most in the 1 - 3 lb range, they were happy to tail on all stages of the tide, which made for some great visual fishing. We fished a variety of locations for the tailing Bones, from backcountry lagoons, bayside flats, to the open ocean shoreline, with of course the largest fish typically found on the ocean side.

The Bones, unlike the Tarpon, were not that picky. If you could get your fly on their nose, at an angle that would bring the fly away from them, they would take most times. It was great fun on a 6 weight - so much so that I even managed to convince Kate to spend a day on the

water. The guide was extremely patient and encouraging, and Kate ended up catching her first fish on a fly, a Bonefish, and went on to catch another four for the day.

On many occasions when we were fishing the ocean side of Ambergris Caye we fished for tailing Bones in what were affectively the backyards of people's holiday houses. These fish thus have to contend with the all too familiar issue of development. What was once vital mangrove habitat has been ripped out and replaced with manmade rock walls, jetties and mariners. While the mangroves are protected by law, the corrupt legal system means it is only a matter of providing sufficient money to get around the law. Thankfully in October 2008 the Belizean Government realised the economic and social benefits of a healthy fishery, and passed a law making the possession of these fish in any form, except for catch and release, illegal. The ground-breaking law was a world first, which the local people and especially the guides at El Pescador were very proud of and which will hopefully ensure the future of the fishery.

Sails of Puerto Escondido

After leaving Belize we headed back to the Pacific Coast of Mexico and made our way over the course a week to the sleepy beach town of Puerto Escondido. It was our keen desire to surf the famous beach break of Playa Zicatela (or Mexican Pipeline) that brought us to Puerto Escondido, but as it is by the sea I was hoping it may also offer some quality fishing. Before leaving Australia I had tried to find some information of the fly-fishing potential of the area but drew a blank.

Once there it was pretty clear from all the paintings and mounts of Marlin and Sailfish throughout the town that there had to be some pretty good game fishing in the area. A few hours talking about fly-fishing possibilities with several charter operators and fishing guides earned me lots of weird looks until I finally found a local who was an avid fly-fisher himself. He confirmed that there was good numbers of Sailfish and small Yellowfin Tuna, and they could be targeted with a fly. I booked a trip for the next day right there and then!



Nice work

During September the weather in the area is extremely predicible, with light offshore winds every morning until about 1 pm. This made access to the game fish grounds a comfortable 15 minute trip out. The fishing on the first day turned out to be sensational, with large schools of 5 -10 kg Yellowfin Tuna regularly balling bait on the surface for extended periods of time. The fish were not boat shy at all, and on many occasions while I was hooked up on a fish we were surrounded by boiling schools of tuna.

When the tuna schools eventual went down the guide suggested trolling for Sails. The set up was essentially the same as I had used when fishing for Sails with a friend at Broome. A Moldcraft teaser with a stitched belly flap was set out the back on the starboard side of the boat, with a small daisy chain of plastic squid in close.



Sailfish on a fly – too small to keep?

The idea is that when a fish is raised the teaser is kept just out of reach (or should I say the bill of the fish) while at the same time the daisy chain is pulled out of the water. Once the fish is within casting range the teaser is yanked out of the water and at the same time the fly is cast just beyond the fish. The fish is all revved up and turns to look for the teaser but finds your fly instead.

In my limited experience fishing for Sails, when a Sailfish is raised to the teaser it is pandemonium on board. So when we raised our first fish of the trip I was half expecting the same. However with this first fish behind the teaser the guide and decky made the process that followed look smooth and easy - in the kind of way that comes from many hours of practice and experience. It was impressive to see, and out of six fish raised that day we managed five hook ups and three Sails to the boat. It was a sensational day and one I won't easily forget.

Over the next week I managed two more trips and the fishing was equally as good as on that first day. It had me wondering how much better the fishing could be. The guide suggested that while the fishing for Sails was possible all year round the best time of the year was definitely February when the Sailfish were around in huge numbers and shots at ten or more fish a day quite common. He also mentioned that the area had many beaches offering excellent sight fishing for a multitude of other species, and with that the plan for the return trip was hatched. Mexico February 2013 - here we come!

Eildon Report

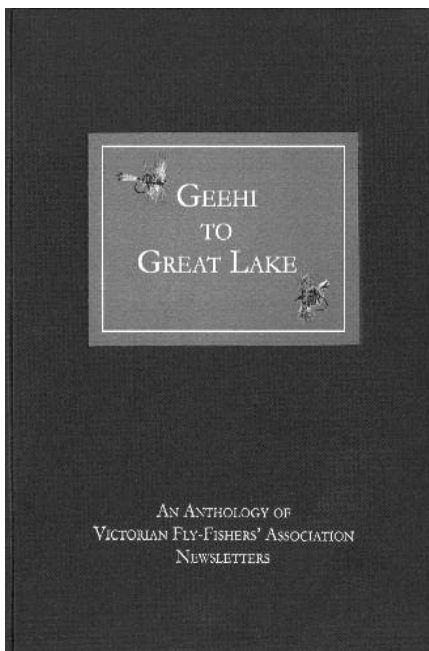
(ATF President Rod Barford provided the following account of some fishing he enjoyed recently at the Breakaway on the Goulburn)

I recently had a few days on the Breakaway with some friends from the US. The river was up to 7,000 ML/day and water was right out into the grasses and ditches. I found several large fish in the stretch between the park and the Acheron confluence - they were browsing the swampy bits. I had one around 3 lb swim between my feet in only 8 inches of water. Holger had a 5 lb fish he was stalking right beneath Gilmore's Bridge, but lost him in the surface glare. I caught 21 fish for the trip, all browns up to 3 lb. Holger caught 18 up to 3.5 lb. Kelly caught 11 fish to 2 lb, and my dear wife Kay did a lot of reading ...

With the announcement of some bad weather being forecasted, GMW dropped the flow back to 4,000 ML/day, which ruined the fishing no end. We struggled after that and really had to work hard to find fish. The rain seemed not to bother them at all. All in all a great time and some wonderful fishing. Most of mine were taken on the Green Matuka, as there was no surface activity at all, in spite of reasonable dun numbers. They were nymphing mostly, but the Green Matuka always works on them. Holger and Kelly used Copper Johns. Apart from ourselves, the river was largely deserted the whole time. Very nice indeed!

Cheers, *Rod*

Geehi to Great Lake- An Anthology of VFFA Newsletters



The VFFA has only three copies remaining of the Limited Edition of *Geehi to Great Lake*, these being numbers 97, 98, and 99 out of an edition limited to 100 copies. The book is a high quality production, enclosed in a Solander box. The top of the box includes both a Zwar's Geehi and a Great Lake Beetle in a compartment that runs the full length of the box. These flies were designed by VFFA members Keith Zwar and Malcolm Gillies, and have been tied by VFFA member and master fly tier Rick Keam.

It can be assuredly affirmed that this unique and wonderful production is something every VFFA member would wish to have on his bookshelf, and this is an opportunity to purchase one of the three remaining copies.

Contact Peter Boag on 0408 711 946. The cost is \$250, and payment is to the Honorary Treasurer, Tony Mitchem, PO Box 7424, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 8004.

The Acheron River - Sunday, November 6, 2011

I had decided to walk down to the river on evening with two mates - Anthony Scott and Christopher Pelly. I had assured them that after a warm day and with a late change coming through, there was certain to be a hatch of termites and caddis. A few years earlier the farmer had given me keys to the gate of this property, in return for my filling his freezer with beef (I am a butcher by trade.) Peter Campbell, Hubert Reichelt and Kevin Hindle have fished this section with me, but for Anthony and Chris it was their first visit to what is surely some of the nicest Acheron water you will see. At 6:30 pm we arrived at the river to find it running fast and high. But my focus was on a couple of big pools where I hoped to find some rising fish. Chris, with fly rod in hand, decided to go upstream and explore.

Sure enough, termites started to fall and caddis started coming off. Anthony cast to a lovely brown that fell victim to his Elk Hair Caddis. In the meantime I perched myself up on a high bank, pressed against an old gum tree. A fish was rising consistently below me in a deep pool, and from past experience I knew this pool was home to some great fish. I couldn't make out whether it was taking caddis or termites, but suggested to Anthony after watching for a while that caddis appeared to be on the menu. So armed with my treasured Peter McKean 7'6" 5-weight cane rod, I tied on a #16 snowflake caddis pattern. By this stage it was getting on towards 8:30 pm, and the fly was barely visible on the water in the gathering darkness. But I made my cast, the caddis was duly clipped off the surface, and the rod was bent double. My response was quite unrepeatable, and Anthony jumped back in alarm, not knowing what was on the end of my line.

The fish was heavy and strong and took me down through three pools. It was now quite dark and I had to scramble madly along the bank by feel and from past knowledge of the terrain. Anthony rushed after me, his tiny head torch flickering in the darkness as he tried to catch up. The fish finished its run in a pool that was relatively free of logs and bushes, and this was a relief as the next pool down was a raging torrent well decorated with fallen trees. In all this time the fish had stayed deep and I was starting to worry about my light tippet. At this point Chris caught up with us and asked why we were so far downstream from our starting point. He then saw the bend in my rod and his explosive response was also unrepeatable.

"Have you seen it yet?" he asked. I didn't respond; I was fully focused on the task in hand, but Anthony indicated that the fish hadn't yet shown itself. I was becoming increasingly concerned with the thought that something must surely give – either the rod or the fine tippet. Eventually the rod convulsed as the fish came up and rolled on the surface. It thrashed around a couple of times, so I asked Anthony to turn off his torch in case it took off for the next pool. I then asked him to edge out into the water with his landing net and I would try to steer the fish toward him. All went well, and with one scoop Anthony netted the trout and lifted it up out of the current. Then the handle snapped. He instantly snatched at the mesh and dragged a huge brown trout safely up onto the bank. We pulled out the scales, hoisted the net, and stared in disbelief at the reading: 10¼ pounds. Chris removed my camera from my fly vest and took a photo. I then unhooked the caddis pattern, held this magnificent fish in the current for a few moments, and then released him. He slowly disappeared back out into the deep water.

Then came the celebrations. We danced around with arms around each other, as I shook with excitement. Just prior to the bushfires in 2009 I had caught a brown of 7½ lb from this river



Not the 10 pounder but a nice Acheron brown anyway

and was convinced that there was no way I would ever match that catch. Anything larger than 7½ lb on this river was most unlikely. Anthony rested his arms on my shoulders and said: “Bernie, that’s your reward for all those long years you’ve spent on this stream. You’ve spent countless hours here, waiting for fish to rise.” I suggested that I could now put my rods away forever. My creel was full.

However, my precious Peter McKean rod now had a set in the tip, so the following day I called Peter to tell him about my capture and to report on the set in my rod. He told me to return it and he’d fix it. However, and rather amazingly the trout gods were smiling, for when I took it out of the tube the next day and gave it a shake or two, the bamboo straightened and the rod was now perfectly straight again. How fittingly that a brown trout of 10¼ lb was caught on a Peter McKean rod labelled “The Acheron River”. The 7’6” 5-weight rod is built on a Jim Payne 101 taper, and I agree with Peter’s suggestion that a 7’6” 5-weight is one of the greatest trout fishing tools ever devised. A photo of my capture is now with the taxidermist so that he can do a fibreglass cast of the fish for me. Hopefully he will capture those beautiful colours.

Thank you Chris and Anthony for insisting that I take you out that evening. It certainly was an evening to remember!

Giant Rainbow Trout

(Yale Sacks is a friend of Paul Squires. He recently sent us some spectacular photos and a short note on his experiences fishing for Steelhead in Alaska last October.)

Here is a brief synopsis of the Rainbow Trout fishing I enjoyed on the Naknek River at King Salmon, Alaska, in the first week of October. I have been a dedicated Steelhead fly-fisherman since moving to Oregon 41 years ago. I live quite close to the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers in southern Oregon, and except for local trout fishing, trips to the Rio Grande in Tierra del Fuego (Brown trout), occasional Atlantic salmon fishing in Quebec, and some saltwater fly-fishing, I have pursued Steelhead in rivers throughout British Columbia, Washington and Alaska. I have been intrigued with the giant Rainbows of Alaska for several years, and having booked a trip for Steelhead on Kodiak Island I decided to take a second week to try my hand at the Rainbow Trout fishing on the Naknek.



Yale in action

I booked my trip with accommodation at the BlueFly B&B, a small (six guest) lodge, right in King Salmon and a two minute ride from the airport. The Lodge was clean, comfortable and easily accessible to the boat launch sites on the river. The river is accessed by jet boats, and fishing is done either from the boat or by wading. It's a river where Spey rods are indispensable if wading, as there is little room to false cast with a single-handed rod (which is my preference and which I used). It's not a quiet river as boat traffic is very heavy and the sound of jet boats is always present.



Another superb Alaskan rainbow

When I was told that the tackle included 8-weight rods and 12 -15 lb tippets I was surprised, but it was good advice. The fishing is like our Steelhead fishing - casting and quartering downstream swinging the fly. I used a Type III 12 foot sink tip and "flesh flies" that the guides provided. I tied quite a few but really had no guideline to follow, so didn't use any of the flies I had tied. All the flies were weighted either with cone heads or lead eyes (thus "Chuck and Duck" casting!)

The Willie Nelson fly is also fished and although I tied some, I used the "flesh flies" exclusively. The flesh flies imitate pieces of decomposing Sockeye Salmon that have spawned, and the Rainbows gorge themselves on the flesh as it is washed to the sea (these are not anadromous fish). The fish that have been in the river for a period of time have true Rainbow colors, while those recently migrating down the river from the Lake are real "chromers" and are the prettiest fish imaginable except perhaps for Dean River Steelhead!

Wow, was I in for a surprise!! The first "hog" I hooked ripped the rod out of my right hand and I caught my Hardy Perfect with my left hand as it flew by and was heading towards the ocean. I have never experienced strikes as vicious as these when the fish ate the fly - truly amazing and much more powerful than Steelhead! The big fish, those 30 inches or better, were not acrobatic but were incredibly powerful, with long sustained runs almost immediately into the backing. The smaller fish relatively were as strong too. I landed eight or nine fish from 28 - 33 inches, hooked many fish 10 - 16 inches, and then a bunch of fish 21 - 24 inches. (It would be a blast to fish for these smaller fish with a 4 or 5 weight rod). Of course the Hardy was wonderful and performed well as usual. It's good that palming is second nature to me, having fished my Hardy for years. (Drag?? What drag?)

All in all it was a great trip, a new experience, and something I'll try again. As noted, the BlueFly was a good choice and the guides were excellent and knowledgeable and a joy to share the day with on the river. The only drawback was that one had to eat dinner in town since it's a B&B, but shuttle service was provided and the food was good, although don't go looking for a gourmet meal!

Tight lines, *Yale Sacks*

ATF PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Year 2010 – 2011

(The following is a summary of Rod Barford's *President's Report* at the recent ATF Annual General Meeting)

With the return of good rainfalls, 2011 has been a very different year for trout anglers, and one with plenty of promise for the year to come. Impoundments that were dry dust bowls only a few years ago are now filled to overflowing, and are once again viable trout fisheries. Some of our Western District lakes are providing amazing fishing for trophy trout, with growth rates not seen since the halcyon days of Lake Greenhill in the early '90s.

Therein of course lies a subtle danger - that in times of plenty we relax and ignore the less obvious threats to our trout fisheries around the country. The same people who were working to eliminate trout from our waters are still out there, so we cannot be any less diligent, and must work to ensure we don't have to re-fight battles we've already won.

Interstate Branches

Last year we began earnest discussion on the establishment of interstate branches of the Foundation, and some warm responses were received from at least two states. I personally view this as one of our most important objectives, as we are, after all, the AUSTRALIAN Trout Foundation, and at some point we must function as such. In 2012 we must make a concerted effort to set up working parties in both Tasmania and New South Wales. Already we have many members in both states, so it is natural that matters be handled within each of those states by resident anglers who have a sense of ownership over their trout fisheries.

Stocking

ATF was able, through the generosity of Mitch McCrae (Buxton Trout Farm), to provide an additional 10,000 rainbow trout for Hepburn Lagoon. Already the first stockings are providing first class angling opportunities, and Spring 2012 is promising to be an exciting one on this water, with the ATF fish promising to be real reel-strippers. Other waters that had not held fish for several years are now also once again viable trout fisheries. Suburban lakes are also being optimised for city anglers, with tens of thousands of trout released into waters that will bring fishing opportunities to potentially millions of Melbournians, especially kids, pensioners and the disabled. It's a different sight now when you're driving along a major arterial road and you spot a fly-fisherman crouching by a suburban lagoon, looped line in the air!

Guardians Of The Marysville Trout Barrier

The Foundation has spent some time working on a very significant project on Leary's Creek in Marysville, a town that suffered terribly in 2009. The highly endangered Galaxiid, *Fuscus*, is now protected by a trout barrier that ensures the survival of this rare species that is found only in this region. This small project signifies the working partnership of the ATF and Fern Hames, Native Fish Strategy & Community Engagement Co-ordinator for the Murray Darling Basin Authority. Fern has been an absolute pleasure to work with, and we look forward to many years of close association.

Fishing Show

Again this year we were able to show our talents at the annual Melbourne Fishing & 4WD Show, thanks largely to Secretary Tom White, who set up the display and provided most of the manpower who attended during the show. It is vital for us to be a presence at such shows,

as it is one of the few opportunities we have to engage anglers face-to-face, and recruit new members.

Projects

For Projects Manager Merv McGuire, 2011 was a year for finalising some \$80,000 in ongoing projects in the State's north-east. The completion of the Howqua River walking trail and similar projects on other nearby waters marked the end of a significant effort by ATF in opening up water that had been previously difficult to access. These projects have also shown a marked increase in cooperation between anglers and government, particularly with DSE and Parks Victoria.

Fisheries Victoria

We continue to work closely with the Inland Fisheries branch of Fisheries Victoria, and to good effect. I believe we are well on our way towards achieving our highest ever productivity levels through cooperative achievement between anglers and fishery managers. The Recreational Fishing Roundtable Forum is an outstanding success in this regard, with some of our committee members also key members of the Forum. I would congratulate Travis Dowling on his leadership of the Forum, as I believe his sensitive handling of many important matters, some potentially divisive, has been key to its success over the past year.

Good Work Continues

We continue to represent trout anglers on a number of forums, including the Roundtable Forum, the Goulburn-Broken Fishery Management Plan committee, the Macquarie Perch Recovery Program, within Native Fish Australia, and with every Government organization charged with management of our waterways and the land surrounding them.

Mick Hall

It is timely to acknowledge the singular efforts of our past President and founding member, Mick Hall. With Mick announcing his retirement from committee, I would take this opportunity to thank him for the countless hours of selfless effort he has expended on behalf of anyone who considered themselves a trout fisherman. Mick's love for trout fishing has benefited a great many people in Victoria, and it would be fair to say that he has left an indelible mark on the fishery and on the way it is managed. It is also probably timely to reflect on how much one person can effect something much bigger than themselves, and I hope this will stand as an inspiration to all anglers who might be considering 'getting involved'. This is, after all, how the ATF works.

To everyone on the committee, thank you for all your support and hard work over the past year. I am happy to conclude 2011 having presided over a committee of very fine people who have provided great service to our members and to trout fishing in general. Our trout fishery today is in great shape, and everything we do within the ATF has contributed to that. In particular I would single out our hard-working secretary Tom White, who has performed above and beyond the call of official duty, and he deserves a very big thank you. All of you on our committee have done the jobs you were elected to do, and done them well. For your support to me personally, I thank you.

I wish each and every one a great fishing season, a merry Christmas, and tight lines.

Rod Barford, President 2011

FLY OF THE MONTH

Black Duck Mudeye (Jack Kelly)



The Black Duck Mudeye is the second important fly that Jack Kelly introduced me to, and my fly box is never without one or two of these very effective flies. To my knowledge this fly has never been recorded, even by G. E.P. Rowney at the SFFA, and it certainly hasn't been sold commercially. It is another Jack Kelly original and like the 'Kelly Hopper' featured in the November newsletter, is generally tied rough.

The fly is fundamentally tied and fished as a wet fly and is a good all-rounder that can be fished in lakes, slow-flowing streams or fast streams alike. It is particularly good early in the season in streams where there is still good flow and some colour. It is usually taken fast and hard. It is also an excellent all season searching fly, particularly when the warm weather keeps the fish down deeper in the pools on the streams. It is an especially good choice to fish around the tree stumps and reeds where the mudeye feeders cruise in lakes such as Penstock Lagoon and Arthurs Lake in Tasmania, along with those many lakes in the Central Highlands of Victoria.

Jack and I fished the Rubicon and Acheron Rivers together on many occasions, and also the north-east streams including the Kiewa, Murray, Mitta, and Snowy Creek areas, and this fly regularly produced good fish.

In tying this fly Jack again preferred the very robust Partridge Captain Hamilton DE hook in size No 8 (wide gape) for this pattern. As I have written before Jack was a man of many flies, but would use this fly throughout the season, although generally not during the those hot days when hoppers were present, preferring to fish dry where possible to rising fish. But his Mudeye remained always a fly of choice when fishing deeper in pools.

From late February to May, when crickets are plentiful, the Black Duck Mudeye again



*Mudeyes
from Jack's
flybox*

comes into its own as a cricket imitation (wet). It will entice the best fish in the pool to move. It is best fished in streams with a natural drift, and with a slow retrieve in lakes. Jack's tie was simple and did not use any added weight. (However, Reg Cabalzar, a good mate of Jack's, used heavily weighted mudeye patterns very effectively at Brumbys Weir).

The Kelly tying materials are as follows:

Hook: Partridge Captain Hamilton DE No 8 (wide gape).

Thread: Brown or black nylon thread.

Body: Brown mohair wool.

Tail: Small strip of black duck wing feather or substitute (Grey goose quill).

Wing: Two or three black duck breast feathers tied flat over the body (as in the 'Craig's Night-time').

Head: Brown mohair wool.

Variant: Jack would occasionally dye the fly black or green.

Note: The Black Duck breast feathers are really grey and can vary in markings, often with a light grey edge. These provide good variants to the natural colour and look darker when wet.

Again it is not necessary to tell experienced tiers how to tie this pattern, other than to say the body is one layer of the mohair wool and the head is not bulky. The fly proportions can be seen in the photo, which is of one of Jack's original ties.

Richard (Dick) Clark.



LIBRARY NEWS

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

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

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

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

OVERDUE BOOKS

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

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

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

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

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2011 Annual Dinner:

- Armadale Angler • Aussie Angler • Australian Fishing Network • Bernard Holbery
- Compleat Angler, Box Hill • Fly Life Publications • Hookup Bait & Tackle,
- Ferntree Gully • J M Gillies • Lowes Furniture • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall •
- Michael Steven's Publishing • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Nick Taransky - Bamboo
- Rod Maker • Peter Hayes, Cressy • Pro Angler Fishing Tackle • Ray Brown,
- Onkaparinga Flies & Cane Rods • The Flyfisher, Melbourne • Vision Fly Fishing

VFFA Meetings & Activities

December 2011

- 7 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club
- 15 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm at the Kelvin: Guest Speaker – Travis Dowling**

February 2012

- 8 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club
- 16 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Kelvin: Traditional Liar's Night**
- 17 – 19 Bairnsdale Dudley Lee Donger Weekend and Bairnsdale Fly-fishers' Annual Dinner
- 18 – 24 Annual Trip to Tasmania – staying at Hayes on Brumby's

March 2012

- 15 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Kelvin: Fly Tier's Night**
- 21 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club

April 2012

- 19 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Kelvin: Guest Speakers – Mark and Philip Weigall* (*TBC)**
- 20 – 22 Big River Trip to Enoch's Point
(Convenor: John Pilkington, phone 0407 356 676 or A/H 9489 2186)
- 25 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club
- (Note: Easter 2012 is April 6 – 8)**

May 2012

- 17 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Kelvin: Speaker - TBC**
- 23 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club