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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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P.O. Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne 3001

[www.vffa.org.au](http://www.vffa.org.au)

## **December Christmas Dinner**

**Thursday, December 12, 6:00pm for 7:30pm at the Celtic Club**

Members are reminded that our next VFFA function is the annual Christmas Dinner. The guest speaker is John Diggle, who has been the Director of Inland Fisheries in Tasmania since 2003. He will be speaking on the topic 'Fisheries Management in Tasmania', a subject on which he is clearly extremely well informed. Those of us who fish Tasmania, or who have an interest in hearing about the best trout fishery in the country, will undoubtedly find John's presentation both informative and very entertaining.

The Dinner Invitation was an insert in the November newsletter, and is again included in this newsletter. All members are encouraged to attend this event and enjoy a fine meal in convivial company with an excellent guest speaker.



# THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

(info@vffa.org.au)

## **PRESIDENT**

Terry Rogers

Email:

president@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY TREASURER**

Tony Mitchem

Email:

treasurer@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY SECRETARY**

Richard Garvey

Email:

secretary@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY EDITOR**

Lyndon Webb

Email:

editor@vffa.org.au

## **VFFA WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR**

Kevin Finn

Email:

webadmin@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY LIBRARIAN**

Rick Dugina

Email:

librarian@vffa.org.au

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## Advance Notice – Christmas Dinner

All members are reminded to keep in mind our annual Christmas Dinner, which will be held at the Celtic Club on Thursday, December 12, 6:30pm for a 7:00pm commencement.

The cost will be the same as for last year - \$65 per person, with drinks available at bar prices. The official invitation is included as an insert in this newsletter.

Our guest speaker will be John Diggle, who has been the Director of Inland Fisheries for Tasmania since 2003. John has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tasmania, and since 1987 has occupied a number of key roles in the Inland Fisheries Service. He was Principal Investigator some 10 years ago in the eradication of carp from Tasmanian waterways. He is a very keen trout fisherman and caught his first trout on a fly when he was 12.

The theme of his presentation will be 'Fisheries Management in Tasmania', and he will discuss the current priority projects for the IFS, including Arthurs Lake, the Bradys Chain, Four Springs Lake, Penstock Lagoon and a number of significant rivers in Tasmania's trout fishery. If there is time he is happy to take questions on other issues from the floor.

For those of us interested in fishing Tasmania, and that's nearly all of us, this will be an occasion not to be missed. So mark it in your diary– Thursday, December 12.



*John Diggle at the IFS headquarters*

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## The February Meeting – 'Liars' Night'

All members are reminded that our first meeting in the new year will be on Thursday, February 27. It will again be our traditional 'Liars' Night' – the round up of stories, possibly fanciful but hopefully not too stretched, of the angling victories of members over the Christmas break.

For this first meeting of the year three members will be selected and primed and especially briefed to provide short and very entertaining accounts of their fabulous fishing ventures in exciting places. The projector will be well loaded and talks will be illustrated with captivating images of wonderful fishing.

Come along and join us for a great start to the year.

## The November Auction:



*Auctioneer Hughie*

The November General Meeting was an auction of some 114 lots, including both books and equipment. Hugh Maltby was again auctioneer, and with the help of Peter Boag and Tony Mitchem, and with Rick Dugina and Richard Kos collating the results, it all went very smoothly. Treasurer Tony Mitchem tells us that sales totalled just over \$4,000.

The auction was attended by 35 members, so inevitably there were some bargains to be had. Predictably quality items drew plenty of attention and vigorous bidding, while some of the equipment lots and many of the books went quite cheaply.

Overall it was a pleasant and entertaining evening. Our thanks to Hughie and his helpers for spending hours beforehand preparing the lots and the catalogue, and then running a very slick and enjoyable night.



*Some fine cane rods*



*Peter Boag suggested there were 30 flies in this box*



*Attentive bidders*



*Might bid for this one myself*

# President's Message

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Since the last Newsletter the VFFA has conducted a very enjoyable weekend in the west of the state. The Warrnambool Team again were very generous with their time and fly-fishing knowledge of the area to allow the VFFA boys to bag a total of four trout, all in excess of 3lbs. Special thanks again must go to Jim Blakeslee and his wife, Trish, along with their team of helpers, for their wonderful hospitality.

At our most recent General Meeting on Thursday, November 21, the Association conducted another very successful Auction. Thank you to Hughie Maltby and his very hard working team for a very profitable result for all concerned. It is hoped that we will conduct our next Auction during the winter of 2014.



This Issue of the VFFA Newsletter is the second of our now Full Colour Newsletters. The VFFA Council, in discussing the new format decided that it was now timely to conduct a complete review of the Newsletter and our general handling of Communications with our members and the world at large. As a result of these discussions Council has formed a sub-committee to carry out this review. Consequently all members are asked to put forward any suggestions or recommendations that they may have to further improve our already outstanding publication along with our Website.

The review has nothing to do with any dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. Its main purpose is to consider potential graphic design improvements, layout format changes, type face developments, logo design issues and the like and input from members is vital to such reviews. I would appreciate your assistance, particularly from any members who have expertise in graphic design and related fields. All information, suggestions and criticisms if any should be provided by email only to: [president@vffa.org.au](mailto:president@vffa.org.au)

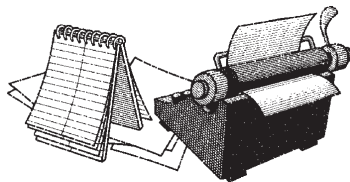
Whilst on important issues, please remember that the VFFA Christmas Dinner is at the Celtic Club on Thursday, December 12. Commemorative Badges will be presented to new 25 Year Members at the dinner. The Guest Speaker this year is John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries Services, Tasmania.

For those interested in fishing Tasmania, and that's nearly all of us, this will be an occasion not to be missed.

As the end of 2013 rapidly approaches, I wish all members of the VFFA a safe and Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year with much success in bringing numerous trout "to the net" in many exciting locations.

Best Wishes, *Terry Rogers (President)*

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



“The man who coined the phrase ‘Money can’t buy happiness’ never bought himself a good fly rod!” (Reg Baird, from his video *Labrador Trout*.)

I’m inclined to agree, especially as I’m rather enthralled with the news that my new Hardy Sintrix 5-weight rod is due to arrive soon, courtesy of Hughie Maltby and a very hard working Rick Dobson at Aussie Angler. For those members who took advantage of Hughie’s special offer (advertised in the October newsletter), and ordered an inscribed and numbered Hardy rod or reel (or both) I’ve been asked to inform these lucky anglers that their new gear should be arriving on or around December 6. As soon as their Christmas presents arrive they will be contacted by phone to arrange the delivery.

Do I need another 5-weight rod? Hardly – I have some (the number of which I’m too embarrassed to divulge). Am I excited about my new rod? I am indeed! My dear spouse has been suggesting that I should offload a few of my other 5-weights on Gumtree or eBay, as I’ll no longer need them. So she says.

But all this blather and hot air about some new equipment reminds us that fly fishing is an activity that has generated an unbelievable amount of associated gadgets and paraphernalia. It seems that no matter how much gear we’ve accumulated over the years a trip to any tackle shop will invariably discover some item or gizmo that looks useful and is thus worth a try. And so the personal pile grows.

Many of us seem to take a fair bit of it with us when we head out. I’m always curious to see what other anglers carry in their fishing vests. If they’re like me the vest is augmented with a backpack, and that increases the possibilities enormously. In go the obvious items – boxes of flies, spare leader material, nippers for cutting knots, dry fly floatant, and very likely for us older souls a pair of magnifying glasses to help with the knots. But that’s only the start. I occasionally take with me one of those complicated fancy vests that has pockets and crevices and secret compartments in all sorts of places. Because I don’t use it all that often I had trouble remembering where things had been put, so I eventually resorted to drawing up a storage diagram (personalised Melway) so I could look up the plan and see exactly where I’d hidden those spare leaders.

So what do you carry in your vest and/or back pack? Here’s a list of possibilities that I’ve compiled from a number of sources. Many are obvious – your fishing licence, a thermometer, a small torch, your phone and digital camera (hopefully wrapped in waterproof bags), indicators for nymphing, a hook sharpener, a leader straightener of some sort (small square of rubber or leather), a pair of scissors, medical kit of some sort, insect repellent, snake bandage, forceps for removing hooks from fish, some toilet paper (great for cleaning up soggy dry flies), dry fly desiccant, perhaps a light rain jacket, and a pair of those sun gloves.

If you want a more esoteric list try these: hay fever tablets, small compass, fob watch, magnifying glass, GPS device, Epirb or Personal Locator Beacon or Satellite Phone, a whistle or 2-way radio for contacting nearby colleagues, binoculars (especially handy for lakes), line

cleaner, nail knot tool, short length of plastic tube with a groove for climbing over electric and barbed wire fences (or try a thick square of carpet or rubber car mat), net, small stomach pump, pliers and split shot, cloth for cleaning your glasses or polaroids, small hand towel, small pack of hand wipes (useful if you don't want fish slime all over your new camera), small net for sampling bugs on the stream bottom, wader repair kit, pocket knife, pair of secateurs, spare torch batteries, a spare reel with a different line, a small notebook and pen, ... (the list continues but we're running out of space). And, no, I don't carry all of this with me, despite what some of my VFFA colleagues have suggested.

Of course, food and drink are always part of the kit. I was once told that if you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated.

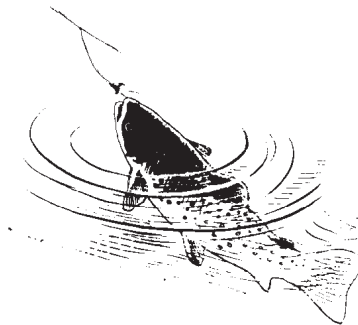
I well recall the year I lived in New Zealand. A regular fishing companion of mine there was George, whose wife Pat was one of those energetic and particular housewives who liked to do everything 'properly'. When George and I fished together we'd stop at some stage to eat, and I couldn't help but gape in admiration at his lunch. His streamside meals were immaculately organised in a plastic lunchbox, and he was invariably confronted with a selection of superb gourmet sandwiches, each individually and carefully wrapped in aluminium foil. How did he know what he was eating? Well of course, obviously attached to the aluminium foil around each sandwich was a neat little stick-on label where Pat had written the contents of the sandwich in her exquisite hand-writing. Now that lifted stream fishing to a new level.

Tight lines, and best wishes for a safe and relaxing Christmas break, with lots of pleasant days catching fish.

Do I have a Christmas present for you? Yes – just released. Philip Weigall has just launched a new online fly fishing magazine. It looks great too. Have a look at [www.flystream.com](http://www.flystream.com). I think you'll be impressed. The cover of the first issue is shown here.

Finally - peace and goodwill to all members and your families. Enjoy your Christmas.

*Lyndon Webb*



# Web Fish

Cast regularly at [vffa.org.au](http://vffa.org.au)

## About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings , trips, ...updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

## Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format that can be read and saved on iPads and tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities that can be synced with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos and Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

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## Midge Fishing on Bronte Lagoon

(from Andrew Braithwaite)

It's always nice to receive an invitation to go fishing. Better still, it's even more pleasant to be asked to be on the water for a specific event. It was in early November 2008 when a phone call from a friend suggested we meet in Tasmania's highlands to fish for 'midge feeders' at Bronte Lagoon. Little did I know that at that time of the season in the lake country it would still be quite cold and frost was part of the picture!

I arrived at Brady's Lake the afternoon before our agreed fishing day to find the weather warm and pleasantly mild - which was so very different from the following morning! Dinner was completed and an early night committed to, as an early start of 4:45 am had been planned.

I woke at the scheduled time, and after dressing and a quick look outside at a heavy frost, we departed from the shack to a selected shore at Bronte Lagoon. We arrived just as dawn was breaking. The grass was white with frost and the temperature was checked at minus 5°C. However it was immediately apparent that a wind-lane had already formed on the lagoon and was close in to shore. The grass crunched under our waders as we made our way down to the

water and the stillness was palpable at that time of morning. A faint breeze moved the leaves of the closest gums as we made our way to where the wind-lane came right into the edge. The gathering light aided our powers of observation, and we were able to spot trout working along the edges of the wind-lane. So we geared up and moved towards the shore. Damn, it was cold!!

We followed trout as they moved up and down the wind-lane, but with little success. They were feeding on midges (chironomids for those familiar with Lake Eucumbene in the Snowy Mountains). Interestingly, unlike Eucumbene midges, these insects didn't 'ball-up' but remained single, so trout generally plotted a path and swam along gathering up as many individual insects as possible.

The morning warmed ever so slightly as the eastern sky gradually lit with the approach of sunrise. As the light increased the breeze dropped and conditions became absolutely still. The wind-lane flattened out to a perfectly still lagoon surface, thus aiding us to see feeding trout along the entire shore and up to a distance of about fifty feet out into the lake.

And there were not just a few trout; they were feeding in numbers. We estimated there to be upwards of 30 to 40 fish feeding between the edge where we stood and some distance out into the lake. Trevor was trying out two new midge patterns he was in the process of developing - small green-bodied patterns tied on size 16 hooks, but with different wings. It was then a matter of picking out a particular fish and running after it along the shore, casting ahead of the feeding fish until it either took the fly, refused it, or changed direction, which was often the case.

The morning brightened, the temperature slowly rose, the frost vanished and the trout continued to feed right across the bay we had chosen. The sun eventually appeared above the horizon and at around 8 o'clock the rise appeared to be slowing. We walked back up to our vehicle which was parked some distance from the shore and disassembled our tackle, all the while keeping one eye on the water.

Gear was all but put away when we noticed a few new distinctive rises just out from the shoreline, and then more and more until some 30 fish were actively feeding again within easy casting range. "They've started again," I said to Trevor. He retrieved his rod with some haste and we raced down to the closest part of the shore. Taking turns we chased feeding fish up and down the bank using one rod between the two of us. As one person caught a fish and landed it, the other one took over, and so it went on. At about 9:30 am the rise tapered off and we retired to the vehicle with our catch. Nine fish in the bag with eight more hooked and lost - not a bad morning's effort. The best was a two pound brown in excellent condition.

As we drove back to the shack at 9:45 am we passed a number of cars heading off to where we had been. Trevor's comment to each was, "Good morning, but you're too late!" accompanied by a small wave as we passed.

Midge fishing here in Tasmania is every bit as exciting as it was all those many years ago in the Snowy Mountains. It's just a matter of being prepared to go that one step further and be on the water when the fish are feeding, and then to use the correct fly pattern. If you receive an invitation to go fishing, never refuse - you never know what you may find!

*Andrew Braithwaite April 2009*

# Casting with Cane

(This is an article written by Nick Taransky. Nick needs no introduction to VFFA members – he is a member of our Association and many of our members have purchased Taransky rods. Nick is without doubt one of the top manufacturers of cane fly fishing rods in the country.)

## *Key Points*

- Good casting fundamentals are universal. All the elements of technique apply to whatever type of rod you use.
- Bamboo is a little heavier and more flexible than graphite.
- Bamboo rods load easily – less effort is needed to load the rod.
- Apply power SMOOTHLY - if in doubt back off the brute power.
- Most Bamboo rods are shorter (6½ - 7½ feet) than you may be used to.
- Focus on short (stream fishing) range casts, particularly to begin with.
- Try to get the feeling of keeping the load in the rod at all times.



\*\* Extended notes can be found at [www.taranskybamboo.com.au](http://www.taranskybamboo.com.au) (Under “Why Bamboo”)

The beauty, craftsmanship and history associated with bamboo rods attract many people to them. The ease of loading and ability to cast short distances with accurate, delicate presentation continue to make bamboo rods relevant today despite all the advances in technology.

## *The Fundamentals*

First and foremost, casting with bamboo shares the same principles of physics and fundamentals of technique for casting any other fly rod.

### **Good technique is good technique, regardless of the rod!**

Elements such as smoothly loading the rod, stopping the casting stroke to unload the rod and transfer the energy into the line, hauling and shooting are common to all good casting.

A key thing to remember here is to understand that the power in a rod comes from it loading, and to load it needs to **BEND!**

### *What's Different About Bamboo?*

Where, if anywhere, does casting bamboo differ to casting rods made from other modern (stiffer) materials?



### **Bamboo as a material**

To understand this it helps to consider the difference between bamboo and graphite as rod-making materials. Bamboo is:

1. Less stiff (easier to BEND) than graphite
2. Heavier in weight than graphite (partly due to solid cane rod construction compared to hollow graphite rods)

### **Elements of Loading a Rod**

The amount a rod loads is basically determined by:

1. The application of power in the casting stroke, and the interaction with...
2. The weight of the line through the guides of the rod and outside the tip
3. The natural amount of flex in the rod
4. The physical weight of the rod material

For a given length of cast (line loading), bamboo will have more inherent load from its natural flex and weight.

### **How does this translate to casting style?**

What this means is that bamboo rods in general require less force in the casting stroke to load them, and have more momentum due to their weight. This results in what many people describe as a fluid, “easy” casting feel. (Long time Snowy Mountains guide Paul Bourne describes this as a “Swing”).

This also means that bamboo rods generally respond well to a more relaxed and smoother casting stroke than with a stiffer rod.

### ***Key Points***

#### **Getting to know a rod...**

There’s great feel in all good casting. Here are some points that will help you get started with bamboo.

### **Start Short and Smooth**

To try and connect with this feeling, particularly if you are new to bamboo, start with a shortish line, say 1-3 rod lengths, and experiment with the timing and amount of power you apply in your casting stroke. See how much you can back off the power and still form a smooth, efficient loop. This doesn't mean go sloppy or limp. Still maintain the correct technique – just relax a bit, let the rod do the work, and try to feel it.

### **Lift off smoothly**

When picking up the line off the water into the initial backcast, a smooth lift, resulting in the “Waterfall Lift-off” helps to load the rod smoothly. Ripping the line off the water overloads the rod right from the start and then you're in recovery mode right from the start. Of course there are many times on the stream that wiggle, roll, snap or spiral liftoffs may be used for various reasons, but never with an overpowering violence that would disrupt the flow of the cast.

### **Work your way out gradually**

When slowly working into longer casts, or using more speed/power, focus on a smooth accelerating application of power – pull the load into the rod rather than pushing the power all at once from the start. When you lose the feel and control in the cast, shorten the line and cast short again. Keep your form, technique and smoothness. Try to execute a fishing length cast perfectly, rather than the longest cast you can manage raggedly!

### **Stay smooth**

Power and speed are great, but not at the expense of staying smooth. Do some casting with your eyes closed and focus on the feel of the rod loading smoothly. The Driggs River taper rod (with a #5 line) is a great taper to feel the full action of bamboo flowing through into the grip of the rod. Mel Krieger used to use the term “Oily”, to describe the smooth feeling that you should try and achieve in your casting stroke.

Bingo!

When really tuned to a rod there seems to be a constant connection and flow between your hand and the fly, and it is hard to tell where the rod ends and the line starts. Nirvana!

### **Key Points - Summary**

All the basics of technique still apply.

Bamboo is a little heavier and more flexible than graphite.

Bamboo rods load easily – apply power SMOOTHLY - if in doubt back off the brute power.

Focus on short (stream fishing) range casts, particularly to begin with.

Try to get the feeling of keeping the load in the rod at all times.

### ***Further Discussion and More Casts***

#### **Leader-only Casting**

This is one feature of the “self loading” of bamboo, created by the natural flex and weight of the rod. The rod is going to flex (load) with or without the line. This means that the rod can be used to deliver a leader on its own, with no line at all through the guides.

This “rod only” loading (without any line loading) is best achieved with a fairly short, firm (but still smooth) casting stroke. Without the aid of the line to load the rod you will have to do a little

work to get the rod loading under its own natural weight and flex. A smooth stop on the back cast is important in creating this load. With such a short line it will feel like you will be stopping early – even before 11 O’Clock – in the casting stroke.

Really try to connect with the feel of this rod loading. The aim is to hold the load in the rod at the end of both the forward and back cast. The “Circles, Eights and Straights” drill that Peter Hayes teaches is a good way to find this feel.

**Exercise** - A good way to practise is without a line through the guides at all. Watch the rod load and unload while you practise your casting stroke back and forth. Focus on watching and feeling the rod staying flexed at the end of both the forward and back cast. Wait too long at the end of the stroke and the rod will unload (straighten). Too fast of course, and there won’t be enough time for a leader to unroll/turnover in a fishing situation. Try a variety of different strokes while maintaining the same tight, heavy, oily, loaded feel – small stroke, larger stroke, tiny stroke, slow, medium, fast tempo...

**Exercise** - Try this as a drill. With a short, firm casting stroke, cast with only a foot or two of line out through the guides. When you have the feel of this, shorten the line until you can turn over the leader on its own. The light-tipped ‘Payne 98’ rod is a great rod to try this on.



### **The Open Power Loop and Constant Load Casting**

You’ll notice when casting with cane that the flex and weight means that it’s natural for the tip to deflect more than on stiffer rods during the cast. This results in slightly wider loops, while still maintaining plenty of power and control for presentation. With this open loop (U shaped as opposed to V shaped), particularly on short to medium length casts, it feels like you can hold the load in the rod all the way through the cast. This “Constant Load Casting” is being discussed more widely in casting with all types of rods.

Note, though, that it is still possible (through control and technique) to throw little “candy cane” loops with the softest of cane rods, should you want or need to do so.

### **Rod Lengths**

One consequence of the weight and flex of bamboo is that it is best suited to rods that are a little shorter than those made from stiffer materials. I believe that rods in the 6½ to 7½ foot #3-5 weight range bring out the best in bamboo. Again, good technique still applies in casting these rods, but for most of us who have come from a background of 9 foot graphites, it takes a little getting used to. This is another reason for gaining the feel of the rod while casting a shortish line, and then gradually working out to longer casts.

One thing to take note of when fishing shorter rods is that you will want to watch the height of your backcast in clearing obstacles behind you. Once you’ve made this adjustment, the

advantages of fishing a short rod, particularly in tight streams, can really revolutionize the way you fish.

These short rods can still turn over long leaders if required. I use a knotless superglue leader connection that passes easily back and forth through the guides and tip.

In my view, in cane rods much beyond 8 feet in length or built for line weights above #6, the weight and flex of bamboo starts to work against the rod, rather than for it. When casting for long periods with these rods casting fatigue can become a factor. That's not to say there aren't many anglers out there who love to fish rods in this category.

### **Grip Location and Casting Balance**

A point worth touching on is how far up or down the grip you should hold the rod. In general, "crowding the reel" with your rod hand (i.e. keeping your hand as close as practical to the reel), aids casting stroke integrity. If the reel is too far from your hand, the reel weight works as a pendulum in the cast, tending to cause unwanted rotation of the rod, or unwanted effort in fighting against it. This is one reason why many rods are now fitted with uplocking seats.

My personal choice of grip/reel-seat configuration is a 5½ inch cigar grip with a simple down-locking cap and ring reel-seat. This allows me to squeeze the maximum length out of a short, 6½ foot, rod by dropping the rod hand down off the back of the grip onto the reel-seat, almost on top of the reel.

As an exercise, try some different hand positions on the grip and feel how the rod changes.

Some proponents of longer, heavier rods do like a little separation between hand and reel to offset the top-heavy nature of the rod.

### **Bow and Arrow Casting**

Bow and Arrow Casts are perfectly OK to perform with a Cane rod. ALWAYS make sure you separate the rod hand and fly hand before loading the rod. Angle your rod arm right forward and down towards the ground, cock your wrist, with the rod angled up and the hand with the fly held up high, to create a large (open) angle between the rod and flyline/leader. Try to get the initial rod/line angle close to 90 degrees if you can. This loads the rod evenly and allows for a more accurate, controlled presentation. NEVER pull the leader straight back along the rod.

If you haven't 'bow and arrowed' cast before you will notice that you don't need to load the rod much at all in order to roll over the leader and deliver the fly. If you haven't tried this cast before you may initially find that you have too much leader out – your arms won't seem long enough.

WARNING – an incorrectly performed Bow and Arrow cast is a great way to damage a rod!

### ***Other Fishing Considerations with Bamboo***

Aside from casting, there are some other points of difference between bamboo and graphite rods.

### **Line Management**

As mentioned previously, modern bamboo rods tend to be shorter than the current graphite rods. This takes a little getting used to. A long rod allows a little more leeway than a short rod when picking up slack line when you're striking or lifting off to cast. This means you should be diligent in keeping excess slack out of the line while fishing.



## **Rod Care**

Bamboo rods are remarkably resilient, but definitely not indestructible. If cared for properly a bamboo rod can last a lifetime of fishing.

Many of the same rod care principles apply to both bamboo and graphite rods, but there are a few slight differences, for example, regarding how to best assemble and disassemble a bamboo rod compared with a graphite rod. The amount of work involved in making a bamboo rod (40-60 hours) also precludes the “unlimited” Warrantees offered by some major rod companies.

The “Rod Care” sheet I provide with the rods I make is included with these notes to detail the best way of looking after a bamboo rod. My column in *Flyfisher #7* also discusses bamboo rod care.

## **Playing Fish**

The best way to harness the deep fish playing power of a bamboo rod, as well as to protect the rod, is to use a relatively low rod angle. During a long fight it is a good idea to turn the rod over with the guides on top to balance the strain on both sides of the rod. High sticking (playing a fish with the rod pointed up or even back) is inefficient in terms of putting strain on the fish as well as being a good way to damage a rod! These points are covered in the “Rod Care” sheet as well.

## **Practise and Drills**

While there are few better teachers than a spooked trout, it’s far less painful to do some practice at home or down at the park.

### **At home**

A good place to practise the fundamentals of casting is in an open area, so you can focus on the basics without worrying about obstacles. In addition to this, though, I really recommend scenario-based. If you fish small, bushy streams, for example, practise around trees or other obstacles. Do some casting from a kneeling or even lying position. Set out or choose targets at different angles as well as different lengths (and concentrate on close, fishing length ranges). See how quickly you can change from one target to another, with little or no false casting. Curve some casts around your car, and do some slack line /mend/dump casts.

Try some casts starting with the line reeled up as you would on the stream. Try some casts around all angles of the wind. Short to medium casts into the wind seem to challenge a lot of people, but are often encountered on the stream.

## **On the Stream**

If you've made a poor presentation on the stream and missed a chance at a fish, probably the last thing on your mind is to try the cast again once the fish is gone. It is an ideal opportunity, however, to take a little time to practise the cast to the same lie, to give yourself a better chance next time.

## ***Tackle Issues***

### **Line Selection**

Bamboo rods are usually quite versatile when it comes to line weight, due to their easy/self loading nature. Experiment with different line weights or taper profiles to see what suits you.

Some like the feel of going down a line weight. The rod will still self-load and deliver the line, but you won't feel that snug "line loading" pull of the line against the rod. Some smooth, compact double hauling will increase the line speed and add a little to the rod loading. If for some reason you're likely to be consistently casting a longer line than normal, a lighter line is worth trying.

A middle line weight balances the rod and line loading and for many, this is the way to go.

Going up a line weight (or a half, like with a Scientific Anglers' GPX) obviously increases the line loading on the rod. This can be a good idea when learning or teaching beginners, as it really magnifies the feel of loading the rod with the line. This is also often done with stiffer rods when fishing a short line, where the rod won't self-load and the extra line weight is needed to load the rod effectively.

**Exercise** - Try one of the 7 foot #4 weights listed at the end of the notes with #3, #4, and #5 weight lines and see what you think. Feel the difference between rod loading and line loading.

Regarding Double Taper versus Weight Forward lines, again it comes down to choice and there is no rule one way or the other for bamboo. The front taper of most WF and DT lines are generally the same, so it's pretty irrelevant for stream length presentations.

When using plastic lines for stream fishing I use a Double Taper and cut it in half, using one half and storing the other half for future use. I splice 10-15 metres of thick, hollow braid to the back of the half I'm using.

This gives me:

A long front taper and belly for stream casting

Thick, long, low memory shooting line that is easy to manage

A smaller volume of line, thus allowing use of a compact reel

Two lines for the price of one!

### **Silk or Plastic?**

I get asked a lot about Silk versus Plastic lines on bamboo. Each has its pros and cons and it really comes down to personal choice.

Here is a table with a basic comparison, including the Artificial Silk Lines made by Terenzio Zandri.

<b>SILK or PLASTIC</b>	Pros	Cons
Plastic	Cheap(er) Don't require Dressing Low Maintenance Easy to Procure	Line Memory – Coiling Don't last very long Thicker than silk
Silk (Natural)	No Memory/Stretch Thin Profile Last for many Seasons	Require Dressing Higher Maintenance Expensive (up front cost)
Artificial Silk (Terenzio)	No Memory/Stretch Thin Profile Long Lasting Medium Cost Medium Maintenance	Still require some dressing Take some use to “soften up” Not quite as “slick” as natural silk

In truth it's a bit more complicated than this. For example Silk lines cost more up front, but last longer than plastic if cared for, so may end up being cheaper in the long run.

I've started using the Artificial Silk lines for a lot of my fishing. While not quite as thin and smooth as a Natural Silk, I find that when properly dressed they float better and longer than modern plastic lines. The total lack of line memory I also rate as a big plus.

**Reels**

Reels again come down to personal preference. When it comes to trout, I personally don't feel the need for Disc Drags or Large Arbors. With Silk (no memory/coiling) or a 1/2 DT line I like the balance, feel and look of a compact reel of 4-5 ozs and 2 3/4 - 3 inch diameter on the 6'6" – 7'0" #4/5 rods that I do most of my fishing with. Classic Hardy or the handmade Peerless style reels fit into this category, but to a large extent, reels are reels...

**Rods to Try**

If you have the opportunity, say, at a VFFA Cane Day then try some casts with each of these rods:



**7'0" #3** A full loading, easy casting three weight with a smooth butt section and fine tips. This rod casts small flies and light leaders with a silky feel. A very nice light rod for small streams, or small stillwaters, with presentations up to 30-40 feet.

**6'6" #3/4/5 "Bush Creek"**. With a light tip, progressive mid, and smooth butt section, this rod loads sweetly in close, but is also deceptive in it's ability to throw a long line. I have been doing a lot of fishing with one of these (in three piece configuration) over the last few seasons. It has become the rod I fish with more than any other. Designed for small streams and dry fly presentation to 40 feet, it can cast a long fly line when required.

**6'6" #4/5/6 "Monaro 45"**. A very fast dry fly action #4/5 weight, which can also handle a DT 6 weight line. Suited to sight casting for cruising fish to distances of 60 feet and beyond. Don't let the size fool you. This rod is built for big Monaro trout, and has loads of power in the butt, both for long distance presentations and playing fish.

**7'0" #4 Payne 97**. A full loading, easy casting 4 weight from one of the American masters. Casts small flies and light leaders with a silky smooth feel. A very nice light rod for small streams, or small stillwaters, with presentations up to 30-40 feet.

**7'0" #4 Garrison 201**. A medium/progressive taper from one of the best known makers from the Classic American rod-making era. Buttery smooth action, but deceptively powerful

when the wind picks up or some distance is required, for delicate presentations up to 40-50 feet.

**7'0" #4/5 Digger DeGere"Fast".** A crisp dry fly action, with medium-fine tips and a powerful butt section. This rod has the feel to present the fly at close range, and also the power to cope with the inevitable Australian High Country wind and cover fish to 40-50 feet or more. A very versatile rod for streams, or small stillwaters.

**7'0" #4/5 Driggs River.** This is a medium taper, modified from the Paul Young "Driggs River Special". A very sweet rod, able to cast a short line with accuracy and delicacy, while still having the power to cover fish at distances of 40-50 feet and beyond. A nice taper for dry fly fishing, but with a supple action also suited for nymphing or fishing small wets.

**7'3" #5/6 "Monaro 56".** This is a fast action, powerful rod, capable of casting a #5 or #6 in medium to large streams and in wind, for presentation up to and beyond 80 feet. It has a powerful swell in the butt, and can pick up a long line from the water, but still maintains feel for shorter presentations.



*Nick and Meri Taransky met a fellow rod builder in Japan*

**7'6" #5 PHY Perfectionist.** This smooth, full loading Paul Young taper is a similar style rod to the Driggs River, but with a little more reach. With a full loading butt section, it is a very sweet rod, able to cast a short line with accuracy and delicacy, while still having the power to cover fish at distances of 40-50 feet and beyond. A nice taper for dry fly fishing, but with a supple action also suited for nymphing or fishing small wets.

**7'6" #6 PHY Martha Marie.** This rod was the choice of Michigan rod-maker Paul Young's wife (hence the name). This rod has a faster taper and stiffer butt section than most others from Paul Young. Its weight and power lend itself to larger waters as well as smaller streams, as well as casting weighted nymphs and bulky flies, while still having the ability to present small flies delicately too.

**7'9" #5 PHY Para 14.** This full loading "semi parabolic" taper from Paul Young sits between the 7'6" #4 Perfectionist, and the 8' #6 Para 15. A very versatile rod which is not out of place in small meadow streams, but also fishes well in larger flowing or stillwaters. Like the other full loading Parabolic rods, it casts weighted flies very smoothly, cushioning the feel of the fly, while also being able to generate the line speed to dry and present dry flies accurately.

**8' #6 "Para 15".** This is another very smooth casting rod from the American master Paul Young. At the opposite extreme to modern graphite, these rods have a reserve power deep in the butt. The full action rewards a relaxed, slower, casting stroke, but is still capable of tight loops and high line speed. The rod is supplied as standard with a light (dry) and heavy (wet) tip to cover a variety of fishing situations. An ultralight (#5) tip is also available for this rod for small flies and spring creek fishing.

**8' #6/7 "Paul Young Boat Rod".** A fast action, powerful rod, which will cast a full DT7 line, still with the bamboo qualities to allow short, accurate presentations. This is an ideal rod for larger rivers or lakes, with the backbone for pushing large flies into the wind.

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## This Month's Yarn

(... from November 1960)

The talk in the bar at the Upper Whitmeadow hotel finally got around to stories of animals catching fish. Rick Dugina, who had recently returned from fishing in Alaska, described how he had seen brown bears there on a number of occasions scooping salmon very adroitly out of the rivers. Kevin Finn told how he had heard on one of his many Tasmanian trips that water rats and Tassie Devils often pursued and caught small trout.

By this stage all present were waiting on McTaggart to come on board, but he wasn't contributing until Terry Rogers had seen to the refilling of his lunch glass."

"The neatest thing I have known along these lines," mused McTaggart finally, "was something I saw some years ago when I was fishing a short tributary of the Murray. I was fishing on the property of a dairy farmer up that way and one of his cows had waded across the river. When the old girl came out the other side she had five fish hanging off her udder." "Surely they weren't trout!" exclaimed Terry in astonishment. "No, of course not!" replied McTaggart, "They were catfish – and obviously after a feed of milk".

# Heaven

(A poem by Steve Suitor)

If I could choose my heaven  
Let me tell you what t'would be,  
There would be no city highrise  
And no condos by the sea.

There would be no crowded suburbs  
And no quarter acre blocks,  
No factories or offices,  
No watches and no clocks.

The lakes would all be crystal clear  
With rivers running free,  
Unfettered by both weirs and dams  
From source down to the sea.

There would be no water skiers  
And no floatplanes on the lakes,  
There would be no roaring speedboats  
With their rolling, frothy wakes.

There'd be tailing trout in August,  
There'd be spinners all through spring,  
We'd have clouds of duns all summer  
And gum beetles on the wing.

The hoppers swarm at midday,  
And caddis in the afternoon,  
With a mudeye hatch each evening  
As we fish into the gloom.

And when the autumn rolled around  
There'd be jassids every year,  
With mottled wings and scarlet bodies  
That trout and anglers both hold dear.

And May would bring the soaking rains,  
The creeks and streams would flow,  
And spawning trout would cloak the redds  
With colours all aglow.

While we wait for wind and snow  
And rainfall to abate,  
We anglers all would pause and rest,  
Tie flies and cogitate.

As opening day grows nearer  
We would mooch around the house,  
Annoy the pets and children  
And irritate the spouse.

You can keep your twelve month seasons,  
Let the scientists have their say,  
But I just can't imagine trouting  
Without an opening day.



*Tichborne  
watercolour  
Tongariro River  
- Poutu Pool*

## VFFA 2013 Warrnambool Weekend Report

On Friday, November 15, nine members of the VFFA headed to Warrnambool in anticipation of another very successful fishing venture with our brothers in the “Wild West”. Most members gathered at Bojangles Pizza Café for dinner prior to retreating to the Surfside Holiday Cabins for a night cap prior to a reasonably early night for most of the party.

On Saturday morning we woke to a fine clear day and headed to Jim Blakeslee’s beautiful property for a pre-fishing chat and to have each of us assigned to an experienced “Warrnambool Man”. Whilst the writer had a most enjoyable day on the Mount Emu Creek, I regret to advise that, after much fly changing and many, many casts to the one and only fish sighted all day, the end result for me was zero.

I am happy to report that other members of the VFFA party had more success. Bill Thomas bagged two, Lester Walton one, and Richard Kos one, with all of these fish weighing in at better than 3lbs. Kossy added a bit of drama to his catch whilst demonstrating to Adrian how he went about it. In the process he managed to step into hole and sank into the Merri up to his neck. At the time of writing this report I hope, but I am not sure, that the editor has photographic evidence of his swim. [editor – no such luck!]

Jim and Trish Blakeslee, along with their team of willing workers, again provided a wonderful feast to round off another great weekend at Warrnambool. Our sincere thanks from all the VFFA team to “The Warrnambool Team”.

*Terry Rogers. President.*



*Bill Thomas's fine brown*



*Gathering at the Blakeslee's for the barbecue*



*Bill Thomas's other one*



*A scarecrow fly fisher marked the Blakeslee entrance*



*Kossy enjoyed himself ...*



*... and so did Lester*



*It was a great social event, even if fish were a bit scarce*



*The Warrnambool fly fishers were very warm and friendly hosts*



## Paul Squire's Permit

(from Paul Squires)

Permit had been on my list of saltwater fish to catch on a fly for sometime. Scott Terrey and I had tried to catch them in the Gulf of Carpentaria a few years ago, but without success. We booked seven days in November with Brett Wolf of "True Blue Bones" at Exmouth, with instructions that we wanted to only chase permit (Snub Nosed Dart).

Without exception Permit have been the hardest fish I have ever tried to catch on a fly. And they lived up to their reputation when we fished with Brett. He would put us onto Permit regularly, and without exaggeration we would have seen at least 50 each day. We didn't land one until the 5th day! For the whole seven days we landed only four of them. The record is three Permit landed in a day. They spook at the slightest disturbance and disappear.



I fished with a Sage ZXL 9' 9-weight rod and Rio Tropical Outbound short WF10F/I 425gram line given to me by Harry Robertson. It's the first time I have used a Rio line and it was outstanding. The fly was a very heavily weighted Grand Slam crab pattern tied by Brett, who is a wonderful guide. During our time there we stayed at the Novotel Ningaloo.

*Scott Terrey with a fine Permit*

*And Paul ticked this box too*

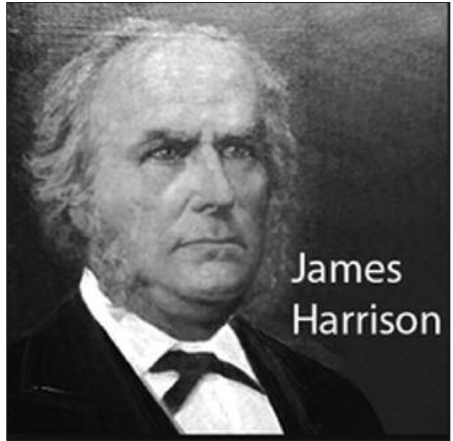


# The Ice Man (or how did our trout get here)

(... a fascinating contribution from Peter McCabe)

Way back when steamships were new and the fastest ships were Tea Clippers, James Harrison, the son of a fisherman near Dumbarton on the Clyde, became an apprentice printer. This was the beginning of the industrial age when steam and electricity came on line through the minds of others. In Glasgow Lord Kelvin, James Watt and their friends were working on the future. Iron and steel, boilers, propellers and electricity were the future, and ideas expanded, as did commerce.

James Harrison attended one of the earliest mechanics (engineering) institutes in the world. Located in Glasgow, it was a centre of excellence. He specialized in chemistry and was awarded prizes for his outstanding achievements.



Time went by and after becoming a highly skilled craftsman in his profession Harrison took the opportunity in 1837 to travel to Sydney, Australia, to set up a new printing press for the *Literary News*, edited by William a'Beckett. He then moved to the *Sydney Monitor* and also worked for the *Sydney Herald*.

In 1839 Harrison joined J.P. Fawkner, who in 1842 founded and edited the *Geelong Advertiser*. During the next 20 years, whilst still involved in publishing, he became interested in refrigeration and ice making. Whilst cleaning movable type with ether, he noticed that the evaporating fluid would leave the metal type cold to the touch. (If you want to find more data on James Harrison then refer to the Australian Dictionary of Biography item that closely follows the Australian Institute of Air-conditioning and Refrigeration's History of Mr Harrison.)

When the sailing ship *Norfolk* (with those precious salmonid eggs on board) arrived in Melbourne she was quickly moved from Williamstown to Station Pier. In April 1864 Her Majesty's Colonial Steam Sloop *Victoria* came and anchored alongside to take onboard the salmon ova for conveyance to Hobart Town, as described in the *Argus* of April 18, 1864.

It seems simple now, but there had been several attempts to deliver ova to Australia. HMCS *Victoria* was the last critical step in the process. For days Mr Edward Wilson (owner of the *Age* newspaper) had been steaming up and down Port Phillip on the *Victoria*, checking that the mechanical vibrations would not effect the ova. (I don't know why he did this, as steam propulsion is very smooth.) All of this was supported by the efforts of the State Secretary who had ensured Mr Harrison supplied adequate quantities of his locally manufactured ice in lieu of the imported ice from USA and Canada.

The *Victoria* was ready and precooled by ice from the Victorian Ice Works in Franklin Street, the only ice factory in the world! On the journey from England the *Norfolk* had used ice blocks from Canada packed in a lower hold to minimize high temperatures. Twenty-five to thirty tons were

taken on board to last the voyage. (Note: a ton of ice is 12,000 BTU's - remember buying your early air-conditioner!)

Now the *Norfolk* left London in January – so not much chance of the ice melting! The *Norfolk* arrived in Melbourne on April 16 at 3pm, where the temperature was 60.5°F. If she came via the shortest route she would have come down the coast of West Australia. Via the ‘Roaring Forties’ may have been quicker and cooler.

The reason for this article is to note that without the ice supplied by James Harrison there would be no trout in Australia. We might also note that we may have been lucky that Tasmania proved such a success for brown trout, despite the fact we were not really supposed to have any trout.

Other important users of Mr Harrison’s refrigeration process included brewers, meatworks and the fishing industry. There can be no doubt that Australia, Victoria and Tasmania should recognize the service and ingenuity of James Harrison, the son of a fisherman and the owner of the newspaper that announced the discovery of gold in Victoria. Maybe we should erect a Bronze Plaque in Dumbarton, and it would be nice to let the local citizens of Dumbarton and Glasgow be aware of our appreciation.

It is also interesting to note that R.H. (Dick) Wigram was a member of the family that owned the *Norfolk*, and of course R.H. Wigram is the same chap G.E.M. Skues had such high regard for.

There are other links in the story of Australian trout, such as Alfred Ronalds, who shared the same profession as James Harrison, and who on March 26, 1849, advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser* as being available for business in Geelong. Maybe he was an acquaintance of James Harrison?

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## VFFA Glasses

Hugh Maltby has indicated that new stocks of our VFFA glasses are available. Fine sets of wine glasses and whisky glasses carrying the VFFA logo will be available for purchase at the Christmas Dinner. These are of excellent quality, and come in sets of six, and can be purchased for the very modest cost of \$40 per set. These are an excellent gift – for yourself, spouse or colleague.

Stocks are kept in the VFFA room at the Celtic Club, so members wishing to purchase a set (or two) of these fine glasses merely need to bring their money to the Christmas Dinner.



# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *Peter Lapsley's Nymph*



In our next newsletter we'll be featuring Richard Kos's new shrimp pattern. But it's still in the preliminary stages of design and development and needs a fair bit of field testing according to Kossy before he's prepared to release the details.

So for this month we'll feature another fly from the UK. For a number of years I've enjoyed the British magazine *'Fly Fishing & Fly Tying'*, and particularly the many articles by writer Peter Lapsley. Sadly Peter passed away in August of this year, a victim of leukaemia. According to his obituary in *The Times*, "He was one of Britain's leading writers on fly fishing. In a career spanning more than 35 years he produced ten books and hundreds of articles, demystifying the sport in clear, crisp prose. Many thousands of anglers were inspired and encouraged by his work."

Peter started fishing on his sixth birthday and was to become an authority on British trout fishing. One of his books carries the title: *River Fly-fishing: The Complete Guide*. He was also actively involved as editor and in an advisory capacity to the *British Medical Journal*, as well as writing for and editing the *Flyfishers' Journal*. According to his friends he was a man of great intelligence and wit, very charming, self-effacing and a great story teller.

Peter Lapsley was also a superb fly tier, and designed and tied a number of successful patterns. One that proved particularly popular and effective was his variation of the famous Pheasant Tail Nymph.

### **Peter Lapsley's PTN:**

Hook: Barbless size 16 nymph hook.

Thread: Brown 8/0.

Bead: A small black (or dark grey) tungsten bead.

Tail: Four pheasant tail fibres

Body: A small bunch of pheasant tail fibres.

Rib: Fine gold wire.

Thorax: A small amount of dark hare's ear fur tied in, then teased out.

**Tying Procedure (as described by Neil Patterson, a close friend of Peter Lapsley's and another prominent writer and fly tier in the UK. For more details see the October 2013 issue of Fly Fishing & Fly Tying).**

1. Thread a small lead-coloured tungsten bead on to a barbless #16 nymph hook.
2. Wind the brown thread down the hook shank and tie in four pheasant tail fibres as a tail. (A few camel-coloured Antron fibres can be used instead.)
3. Also tie in a small bunch of pheasant tail fibres to form a body and a length of fine gold wire as ribbing.
4. Wind the pheasant tail fibres to just behind the bead, leaving a small space to put the thorax. Rib with the wire and tie it off.
5. Dub a small amount of dark hare's ear fur behind the bead. Tease it up so that some loose fibres can suggest legs.
6. Whip finish, then with a dubbing needle place a blob of varnish on the thread and let it run down to secure the whipping.



*Tichborne watercolour - Hakataramea River*



# 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 or one of his assistants 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.

## 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
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges.....	\$7.00 each
<b><i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie .....</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
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 0423 283 079.

VALUED DONORS

### The following made donations for the raffle at the 2013 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Magazine • Hayes on Brumbys • Hookup Bait and Tackle
- J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Mountain Stream Company • Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker • Pro-Angler Tackle • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Compleat Angler Box Hill
- The Flyfisher Tackle Store • Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

## VFFA Meetings & Activities

### December 2013

- 12**      **Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club – Guest Speaker: John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries, Tasmania**

### February 2014

- 12      Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club  
15 – 21    Annual Trip to Tasmania, staying at Hayes on Brumby's  
**27**      **General Meeting: 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – ‘Liars’ Night’ with invited speakers.**

### March 2014

- 20**      **General Meeting: 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Speaker: TBC**  
26      Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

### April 2014

- 10 – 13    Big River trip – staying at Enoch's Point  
**16**      **General Meeting on the Wednesday - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Speaker: TBC**  
**(18**      **Good Friday)**  
23      Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

### May 2014

- 15**      **General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Speaker: TBC**  
21      Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

### June 2014

- 1      Sunday Casting commences – at the Red Tag Casting Pools, with competition for the Tom and Frank McDonough Memorial Trophy  
5      Dinner with Partners – at the Celtic Club (Date to be confirmed).  
8      Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools  
15      Annual Cane Day – at the Red Tag Casting Pools  
**19**      **General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Speaker: TBC**  
22      Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools  
25      Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club  
29      Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools