

FLY LINES



DECEMBER 2014

The December meeting is our annual Christmas Dinner, with guest speaker Rick Keam. Rick is a member of our Association, and well known to us all. He is an accomplished and very experienced speaker and we are guaranteed a highly entertaining evening. His presentation will be a very light-hearted appraisal of a certain type of fly fisher and is entitled 'The Man From Showy River'.

Again at this year's dinner some of our 50 and 25 year members will have their years of membership acknowledged.

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

All members are encouraged to attend the Dinner, so if you haven't yet made your booking you need to be very prompt in completing the booking sheet included in this issue to let our hard-working treasurer know you will be there.



December – Christmas Dinner
with Rick Keam

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Christmas Dinner with Rick Keam

Our Christmas Dinner this year is on Friday December 12 – yes, please note the change from the traditional Thursday to a Friday evening. So Friday December 12 will see us gathering at the Celtic Club to enjoy a very pleasant traditional Christmas meal together and to be superbly entertained by guest speaker Rick Keam.

Rick is a gifted speaker and is certain to provide us with a presentation that is highly entertaining. He started trout fishing in 1961, fly fishing in 1962 and fly tying in 1963. In the early 1970s he began a long exploration of the use of synthetic materials, culminating more than ten years later in a series of highly innovative fly designs. When economic recession forced him into full-time fly-tying for several years in the 1990s, these quickly won him a huge reputation.

Rick has been editor of the *Australian & New Zealand Flyfishers Annual*, a columnist for *Freshwater Fishing*, and now edits many of the articles that appear in *FlyLife*. His own articles have also appeared in that wonderfully quirky English magazine *WaterLog*. He edited Tony Brothers' centennial VFFA history *The Country For*

An Angler, and before it the anthology *Geehi To Great Lake*. He is currently finalising what will become the third book in this VFFA trilogy, detailing fly patterns associated with VFFA members over the years.

Rick is also an accomplished songwriter, reciter and performer. In 2013, after surviving the recurrence of a life-threatening illness, he recorded *Ordinary Stories*, his first album in 30 years (some copies will be available at the Christmas Dinner). *'Saturday Town'* has received airplay on ABC Radio, while Dr Brendan Nelson of the Australian War Memorial describes the video for *'Home From The War'* as 'brilliant: the music, lyrics and images all combine powerfully' (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DulKq8Oq_6Y).

On December 12, however, Rick will be in festive mode and is going to revisit his satirical poem *'The Man From Showy River'*, which delighted the audience at Tasmania's Bronte Tie-In in 2003.

Don't miss this event – December 12 at the Celtic Club.

Advance Notice – February Liars’ Night

Thursday February 26 (2015 of course) will be our first meeting for the new year, and will again be our traditional ‘Liars’ Night’. This will undoubtedly be a great night of fabulous fishing stories, top secret fishing spots revealed, and lots of fine entertainment. Our crew will have just returned from the annual trip to Tasmania, so no doubt there will be heaps of stories of large Tassie trout defeated by our intrepid travellers.

Contributors to the night are again invited to back up their stories with photographic evidence. So those who have exciting reports of their exploits

over the holiday period are invited to show three or four photos to illustrate their experiences. How do we manage this? Those who have photos as digital files (ie taken on a digital camera – and that’s nearly all of them these days) should email their selection to the editor (editor@vffa.org.au) who will bring contributions to the meeting on one of those USB memory sticks. Those who have printed photos are welcome to post these to the editor who will scan them and then very promptly return them.

Mark this event in your diary – Thursday February 26.

Web Fish

Cast regularly at 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

The November Auction

The November Auction was attended by some 30 members who stayed the distance (until well after 10 pm) and saw several great books and items of fishing equipment sold. Bidding on many items was keen, and total sales exceeded \$4,000.

Our thanks to Peter Boag, auctioneer Hughie Maltby and their small team of helpers for the many hours spent in preparing the 122 lots, and their work on the night. Again a very successful VFFA event.



Lots of books for the auction



Treasurer Tony Mitchem was one of the team



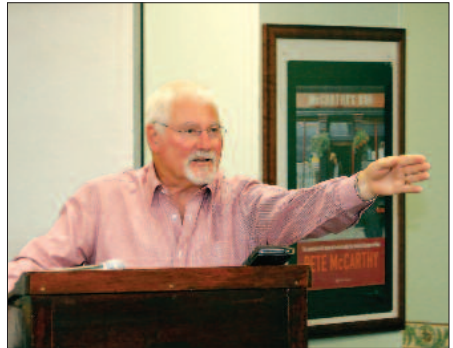
Auctioneer Hughie warming to the task



John Pilkington liked this one



There were some quite valuable reels for sale



Do I hear \$80? Going once, twice ...

The Rubicon River

The Rubicon is one of our favourites, and according to many reports it is fishing really well this season. Unfortunately we are also hearing that logging is being carried out in the upper reaches, and as well as effecting some of the small spawning tributaries it is also sending all sorts of rubbish down the river. Reports of dirty water and black material covering rocks are being

reported. Mick Hall has provided photos showing some of the mess and damage in the Tumbling Waters area.

Fortunately Rod Barford, the very active president of the Australian Trout Foundation, is making inquiries and taking action. Hopefully, for all of our sakes, the problem can be addressed and sorted.

President's Message



In the past when I have been asked where do I go fly-fishing, I often answered Tasmania, the South Island of New Zealand and various states of USA, before

adding "and in Victoria". More recently, being a proud member of the Victorian Fly Fishers' Association, I thought I should mend my ways and put Victoria first. And I have gone to the trouble to fish more in our beautiful state. The result is that I can't say where in Victoria I can actually catch anything.

This year five overnight trips to Thornton have proved fruitless when fishing on the Goulburn and Acheron Rivers, not only for me, but also for my more experienced companions. According to local experts the rivers were too high, too dirty or too fast. The culprits were either Goulburn-Murray Water or the weather. Just my luck to get the timing wrong every visit. Other Victorian days have been spent on other rivers feeding into Eildon. Results have been much the same. Fortunately I have had some modest success in stocked lakes in the Latrobe Valley and on the Steavenson River near Buxton.

Therefore, when I have been asked to show whether I actually catch anything, I have resorted to showing photos of fish caught recently in USA, Christmas Island or New Zealand. I have not had the chance to visit the Western District or the upper North-East Victorian waters this year. Maybe my results would have been better if I had. I have no experience fishing in NSW, but recent reports from

VFFA colleagues including Mike Jarvis, suggest that I should plan on doing so sometime. However being a loyal Victorian I shall persevere in my home state. The government has changed, maybe my luck will.

In this edition of *Fly Lines* you will read of our recent activities and plans for the future. The auction was well attended and most successful. Canny members snapped up some real bargains. I look forward to catching up with you at the Christmas Dinner where I know our guest speaker, Rick Keam, will entertain us all. We will also have badges to hand out to those who have just chalked up 50 and 25 years as VFFA members.

February is Liar's Night where members will show and tell on the large screen. And March promises us a real treat with Simon Gawesworth addressing us at the special dinner on Friday March 20 and then demonstrating his famous casting skills at the Red Tag Pool the next day. Your family and fishing friends will be most welcome to join us at both events.

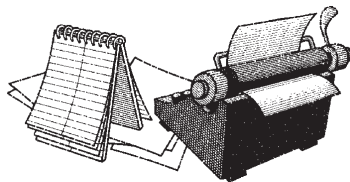
In closing I wish you all a merry Christmas, a happy and safe New Year and tight lines.

Hamish



Hamish with a magnificent brown caught on his recent New Zealand trip

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed ..." (Cecil Alexander, 1818 - 1895)

Forgive me, but I love Christmas Carols and especially Cecil's contribution to the collection. And yes, only a few weeks to go and it is indeed another Christmas. Where's the year gone?

Christmas is a time for giving, so I was wondering what I could offer in my final contribution for the year.

Perhaps I could start with some very welcome news – our river fishing this season is looking much better after a slow start. Just last week I headed off to a favourite little stream north of Melbourne with Milton Zeuschner, a regular fishing companion. We enjoyed a surprisingly good day out – about a dozen each hooked and landed, and about the same number that came off, or came up and had a careful look at Milton's dry fly before turning away. So between us we interviewed somewhere between 40 – 50 trout, and some good ones among them too. (But all returned I hasten to add.) Since then Hubert Reichelt collected a cricket score – 39 hooked and released before he gave it away, and Philip Weigall tells me he has been gathering similar very pleasing reports from rivers all over the state. On a recent blog Chris Bassano, well-known Tasmanian guide and member of the Australian international team, tells of a two-hour session he enjoyed on one of our north-east rivers where he hooked and landed over 30 fish. So maybe there's some good times ahead – just so long as those dreaded bushfires

can be kept at bay.

Christmas is also a time for a little self-indulgence; a time for sneaking into a tackle shop somewhere and purchasing a well-deserved Christmas present. My favourite purchase by far is always a new rod, though I can hardly justify yet another one. But perhaps I could make a suggestion here. Some months ago my dear wife and I celebrated a significant wedding anniversary. Of course all sorts of gifts to each other were being pondered to mark the great occasion, but when yet another fancy canteen of cutlery was being seriously proposed I raced off to make a pre-emptive strike. Into the nearest computer store, then home again with a pair of Apple iPads – one each. What a great idea!

If you haven't already purchased one of these gizmos they offer a lot of useful features for the keen fly fisher. They're great for storing all your favourite fishing photos and YouTube movies, and you might check out past issues of the VFFA newsletter. Of course there's all those fabulous applications telling you all about the weather, best fishing times, fly patterns, fishing knots, and podcasts. Try the Orvis site for a wonderful collection of these, or 'Ask About Fly Fishing' on <http://www.askaboutflyfishing.com> for some magnificent interviews with Gary Borger, Rick Hafele, and most of the other big names in US fly fishing. Zinio is great for subscribing to magazines at incredibly cheap prices, and Pocketmags.com gives access to heaps more. Kindle, Kobo, and iBooks are just three of the many sites that give access to digital copies of fishing

books at again very cheap prices. Most fly fishing magazines offer digital subscriptions at greatly reduced prices, and let's not forget our local digital FlyStream magazine - \$24 for a year's subscription to lots of comprehensive and well-informed articles on all our local fly fishing. And that's just scratching the surface. Talk to any serious iPad users and they'll offer suggestions for a heap of useful and interesting fishing-related material.

Finally - a confession. We are all familiar with the use of depth sounders on boats. They not only provide a useful picture of what's underneath, but will also find you some fish. In recent days there have been a number of 'castable' fish finders appearing on the market for shore-based anglers. Check <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wKfTStY9Uc> (on your iPad) to see a YouTube video of an item called the Deeper Smart Fishfinder being used by a carp angler in the UK to locate carp in a stillwater fishery. I had recently come across some adverts on USA sites on a small unit called an iBobber, which was certainly one of the cheaper units on offer. When I discovered that AFN were importing iBobbers I was unable to resist. (Other tackle stores may stock them too, but Bill Classon is a very supportive VFFA member.)

So what's it all about? It's about the size of a flattened golf ball and is a floating sonar fish detector with a few other tricks. It connects with an iPhone via a Bluetooth connection, and the iPhone app that allows you to read what the iBobber is discovering is a free download. I also purchased a cheap threadline rod and reel (\$15) for casting the iBobber, then loaded the reel with some spare fly line backing, charged up the battery in the iBobber, and raced off to the nearby Rowville Lakes to

see how it worked. The Rowville Lakes are stocked with trout during winter months and also provide a living for some redbfin, carp and roach (so I've been told).

I checked the connection of the backing line to my new iBobber to ensure it was nice and secure, then hurled the lot out to sea in the largest of the three Rowville lakes. Once the pictures started appearing on my iPhone screen I was told that the water temperature was 15°C. But you hardly need fancy technical stuff to discover that. The next trick was to wind the line in slowly while the iBobber mapped the lake bottom. Yes it was a bit over 3 metres deep out there and it got shallower closer to the edge. Hardly riveting or unexpected, but my new toy would have found other features if they were there to find. The really exciting stuff was in the fish finding mode. I turned on the beeper, and every time a fish swam under the iBobber my iPhone let out a loud beep. The screen showed fish swimming along, and it also told me that the fish were lingering fairly close to the lake bottom. Sadly it didn't tell me whether the fish were a trout, or how big they were, or what they were feeding on. And I don't think that the next software upgrade will include this info either. But gee, what do you want for \$100. It happily and enthusiastically counted 7 fish in 10 minutes, so there was indeed piscatorial life down there in those murky depths. It also told me that the fish traffic was heavier further out - the closer to the shore I pulled the iBobber the less fish it counted.

Have I used it to actually catch a fish? Not yet. Do I see a use for it? I think so. It's obviously a tool for stillwater, as I couldn't see it being much use in a fast flowing freestone river. But in a deeper section of a lake or reservoir you could certainly do some sampling. You could

>>>

hurl your little iBobber out, stick your iPhone in your pocket, and have a few casts. If the iPhone beeps then it's likely there are some fish there to catch. If after 20 minutes you haven't heard even a single apologetic squeak then it's probably time to pack up and move on. With a bit of imagination you could find all sorts of ways of incorporating an iBobber into your fishing. Mind you, you have to be a bit secretive about it. I've already been told I'm cheating. Proper fly fishers find their fish through skill and enterprise and careful observation and experience. Except when they're sitting in a boat – when sonar finders are apparently ok. I personally think that a device that tells me there are actually a

few fish swimming around where I'm fishing and how deep they are is useful.

So there it is. If you've got an empty corner in the bottom of your Christmas stocking that needs filling and your dear spouse or the kids are asking for suggestions then you could certainly do worse than suggest an iPad. If that's too expensive then get talked down to an iBobber.

In the meantime very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. I trust the time is relaxing and refreshing, and if you get the chance to wet a line I hope you catch heaps.

Lyndon Webb



Simon Gawesworth

... World class casting champion

J.M. Gillies, in conjunction with RIO and Sage, are proud to announce that we are bringing Simon Gawesworth out from the US for a tour of Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. Simon will be conducting casting clinics and talks, and hosting some special nights over a two-week period. His highly entertaining promotion of fly fishing is a must for all keen fly fishers.

Simon is well known in fly fishing circles and is respected and acknowledged as being at the forefront of fly line design, as well as being a world-class casting champion. He will be conducting casting clinics, talks, and hosting some special nights over a one-week period. His highly entertaining promotion of fly fishing is a must for all keen fly fishers.

A full list of Simon's dates and venues will be available in January and will be published on the J.M. Gillies Facebook page as well as in fly fishing magazines and forums.

Biography

Simon learned to fish at the age of 6 and took up fly fishing when aged 8. He was trained by his father, well-known fly fishing instructor and author, John Gawesworth. By the time Simon left school at 16 to teach fly fishing he had become the British Junior Casting Champion, repeating this feat the next year. In the following years Simon broke seven British casting records and won the adult casting championships three times in succession, representing England in two European championships and one world team championship.

With the collapse of the British Casting Authority and the tournament casting scene in the UK, Simon turned his hand to competitive fly fishing. Over the following years he represented England in three home internationals (against Ireland, Scotland and Wales), two European championships and five world championships, culminating in the



prestige of becoming the England team captain and manager for the 2003 world championships in Spain.

During his career Simon has written numerous articles for the fishing press, published two books on Spey Casting, presented five instructional videos and DVDs, appeared on numerous television and radio shows, demonstrated casting at fly fishing shows around the world and became recognized as one of the leading authorities on fly casting and fly casting instruction.

He is a FFF (Federation of Fly Fishers) master and THCI (Two Handed Casting Instructor) certified instructor and also holds the APGAI (Association of Professional Game Angling Instructors) and Salmon and Trout Association National Instructor Certificate (STANIC) diplomas for fly fishing instruction in the UK.

Simon lives in SW Washington and works for RIO products, where he designs and tests fly lines, as well as being the brand manager for RIO. He conducts fly casting classes and seminars around the world.

Simon is married and has two children.

The VFFA is in the process of organizing a Dinner with Simon for VFFA members and guests on Friday, March 20, next year. There will also be a casting demonstration and clinic at the Red Tag Pool on the following day, Saturday March 21. Details are still being finalized, but be assured – these events will be a special highlight of our 2015 calendar.



Rick Williams in Select Company

The photo below was taken at the London Flyfishers' Club recently when Rick Williams visited there and was warmly welcomed. There was a copy of our VFFA newsletter on a desk for members to read.

He wrote: I'm not sure if it is OK to take photos in the club, but we did. We had a

fantastic lunch downstairs at the Saville Club which hosts Flyfishers' members when their own dining room is not open.

I recommend visiting this unique place to all fly fishermen who can make it.

Rick



Rick looked very comfortable in the London Fly Fishers' rooms

This Month's Yarn

(... another from the Rick Keam collection)

On their way through Droopdale, Alf and McTaggart saw a strange sight on the footpath outside the local Disposals Store. It resembled either a Yeti covered in leaves, or a tree dressed up as a Yeti.

"What the hell is *that*?" asked McTaggart. "It's a Yowie Suit," said Alf. "They wear it for camouflage. Could be just the thing for sneaking up on fish."

"Could be just the thing for getting shot by farmers," said McTaggart. "Anyone wearing even your ordinary army camo gear is fair game, let alone that thing. If y'didn't get shot by a farmer y'might get ringbarked. That could be painful. Or lopped by a chainsaw. Anyway, there's camouflage and camouflage. What hides you in one sort of place won't hide you in another. The best camouflage outfit I ever wore was black and white."

Alf swallowed very, very hard.

"Black and white?"

"Absolutely true, my boy. It was back when I used to fish the Wallanbah, a few miles west of The Humps, where it ran through old Kleindorf's place. There was a ford across it where his cows came down to drink. Made an awful mess of it. Bare banks, water's edge all pugged up, manure all over the place. Funny thing is, there was a good fish took up residence just downstream of it. Maybe there was insects stirred up in the mud or something. He was pretty safe because no one except me ever thought of fishing there, and as soon as I'd get within cooe he'd be off like a shot. There wasn't so much as a tussock I could sneak up behind.

Then one day I noticed something. If a cow came down to drink, it didn't worry him. I even saw him rise with a cow not thirty feet away. So I thought, what I have to do is look like a cow."

"What, grow another pair of legs?" asked Alf.

"No bones about it," said McTaggart. "If crawling was going to get me that fish, then crawling it'd have to be. But there's no doubt in my mind it was the outfit that did the trick. I few years previous I'd done a bit of goal umpiring in the local football league. That was back in the

days when we used to wear the long white coat and white hat and the black trousers, and I still had the gear. So I got working on that coat and hat with a can of black paint. Big black splotches. Then I did the same for the trousers, but with white paint. By the time I'd finished I was a pretty good-looking Holstein cow. Or calf, at any rate."

"You mean Friesian," said Alf.

"Same thing," said McTaggart. "Anyway, when the paint had dried I gave it a go. By the time I'd crawled into position to cast, my knees were killing me. I was just about a cot-case. But I got my fish. Well, on the third try anyhow. A nice one, too, for the Wallanbah. Just shy of 2½ pound."

"You leave me speechless, McT," declared Alf. "Totally speechless. And how many other fish did you catch while playing moo-cows in your cow-suit?"

"There were a few others, my word there were. But don't get me wrong—it wasn't always the answer. Up in the north-east, on the Kelly River where it runs through Bob McDermott's property, it was worse than useless. I should've thought to take my old gabardine overcoat."

"Your *gabardine overcoat*!?"

"It would've been just the ticket. No Holsteins up there, y'see. He runs Murray Greys."



Half A Bottle Of Red

... Graeme Leith

It was the last night of a fishing trip for myself, my son Cameron and my long time fishing companion Robert Roles. It was also the last night of a fishing trip for my friend Bill Morgan-Payler and his son Liam. Robert, Cameron and I had been fishing the Eucumbene area, including that fabulous and challenging stretch of the Eucumbene River from the gauging station to Rocky Plains. Bill and Liam had been fishing near Corryong, on the Nariel and other waters nearby.

Tom Edwards was staying with his wife Lorna in their caravan at the Colac Colac Caravan Park just south of Corryong. He had shot some ducks that he had generously offered to us, provided that Bill and Liam could collect them and convey them to our planned gathering at "Matoppo", Ian Mackintosh's sheep property on the Bobundra Creek in the Monaro. On one occasion when we were there I recall returning to the shearer's quarters a mere half hour after I had set out for a day's angling to put two good trout and a kilogram of mushrooms into the refrigerator before continuing on with my day's fishing. Those were the days!

On this occasion everything went to plan, and in the late afternoon light the five of us were assembled at our traditional Bobundra camping spot under the willow tree at Matoppo, near the first ford of the river. The campfire was soon blazing, the camp oven was placed on it, and the now marinated ducks began their gastronomic journey. We of course exchanged stories of our exploits over the last few days; of fish we'd caught and those that had escaped.

I recounted how at one point Robert, Cam and I had paused for lunch when a birdcall rang out from the thick scrub behind us. "That sounds like a Shrike Thrush" said Roles, "What's one of them doing up here in the scrub?" I didn't know much about the Shrike Thrush, but at home, at Kingower, they would come to the trees in my garden and give their distinctive call. I would whistle a response, apparently convincingly, for they would come closer and we'd have a whistling courtship until they realized I was conning them and they'd fly off. I used to be able to manage the same trick at Three Mile Dam, not far from the Eucumbene river, where their call was similar, varying from their Kingower cousins 600 kilometres away by just one note at the end of their song.

But there and at home they perched in trees, and this sound had come from low scrub behind us. Shortly another birdcall came from the same location, and this time it was the unmistakable gurgle of a Pied Currawong. Then a third birdcall began from the invisible location. Roles dropped his sandwich onto a rock and raced into the scrub behind us. There was a bit of commotion and then we heard his muffled voice come from the scrub: "I thought so! Bloody lyrebird! Here's its mound!" The bush mimic had fooled Cameron and I, but it hadn't fooled Roles.

There was more talk about the days' activities as the ducks simmered away in the oven. We had some good red wine to drink, and some fairly ordinary stuff too. Bill, Cameron and Liam had grabbed their rods and gone for a stroll to look for a rising fish. I said to Robert, "I've only

got one really decent bottle of wine left, and I want to put some of it into the ducks." "Well," said Robert, "Bill will have a good bottle in the boot of his car."

"How's that?" I asked. "Well," said Robert, "He always stays at the motel at Corryong on his last night there. He has dinner there, then drives to Melbourne the next day - a very sensible and civilized way of doing things. He also finds it very sensible to have a bottle of decent red wine in the boot of his car so that he can drink it with his dinner and not risk some of the dodgy and overpriced bottles on the motel's wine list."

"So he's got a really good bottle of red wine in the boot of his car right now?" I asked, the possibility of a practical joke rearing its head. "Well, yes, he'll have one for sure," replied Robert.

"Now Bill is the most sincere and honest man I know," I said, "So it should be possible to use those virtues to play a joke on him. I'll try to get that bottle from him and pour it into the camp oven. If I succeed, just watch his face while I pour the wine in."

Shortly afterwards Bill returned with the boys. Robert was busy with the potatoes and greens, and I opened my bottle of wine and rather ostentatiously poured about half of it into the camp oven.

"We're a bit short of good wine Bill. You wouldn't happen to have a bottle in your car, would you?" Bill shuffled around somewhat sheepishly, then quietly conceded that he did, then went to get it. He returned with a bottle which he then presented to me. I unwrapped it and looked at the label: "Whoo, very good, Blackjack block 6, '04! That should be a very good marriage with the *Passing Clouds* blend of mine," I said, as I uncorked the bottle and again,

ostentatiously and slowly, poured a half bottle into the ducks, avoiding Bill's gaze. All was quiet as I replaced the cork and handed the bottle back to Bill, who seemed to have aged somewhat in the preceding minutes.

The meal was wonderful; the ducks sublime and reflecting the beauty of the wine in which they had been cooked. Taking Robert aside later I asked, "What was the look on Bill's face when I poured the Blackjack in?" "Utter devastation!" he replied. Whilst we were eating this magnificent meal I remarked, "The juice from this pan will turn to beautiful rich jelly overnight, so it will be superb on toast in the morning!"

I'm an early riser, and am usually first up, so I was surprised to be woken by the sound of someone scratching away at our cast iron camp oven near my tent. Horrified, I unzipped my tent to see Bill scraping out onto the grass the beautiful red-black jelly which smelled like something they could only cook in heaven. He looked at me and saw a man in a state of shock and horror who appeared to have aged somewhat in the last few seconds. "Oh, sorry," said Bill, "that's right. I'd forgotten that you wanted to eat this!"



Fish Pics

Fly Lines is now printed in full colour so we need lots of great colour photos. With this in mind your editor has had the temerity to offer a few suggestions for taking better fishing photos. Mind you, I am exceedingly grateful for all the photos that are sent to me, and a few members have been exceedingly generous with their time, their cameras and their skills.

In launching into this catalogue of suggestions I must start with a few disclaimers. First, I have no pretensions of great expertise; 'enthusiastic amateur' would be a generous description. None of what follows is particularly original – it has all been gleaned from countless magazines and books over many years, along with discussions at times with those who actually know what they're talking about. And there are really no rules as such for taking photos. What follows are merely the ideas and thoughts of good photographers.

Books and magazines offering advice on photography are invariably filled with pictures illustrating what the author is teaching. But photos take up a lot of space, and we're limited, so we'll have to get by mostly without them. I just hope what I say makes sense.

Well what sort of camera ought we use for our fishing pics. The three obvious categories are iPhones or similar, or one of those small point and shoot relatively cheap 'compact digital' cameras, or a dSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera. For me iPhones are for phone calls and photos ought to be taken on a camera. However the cameras in mobile phones are getting better and better, so when you're caught with a great photo opportunity and no camera at hand then I guess the phone is a fair backup.

At the other end of the camera scale are those big heavy impressive digital SLRs. They take photos of very high quality, have all sorts of useful tricks, and can use a variety of interchangeable lenses. So at one point the macro lens is on for a photo of some quivering bug, and a bit later the big telephoto lens is capturing something in the distance. And they have one more very useful feature – you can attach a polarizing filter on the front and take beaut pics of fish in the water just as you are seeing them with your Maui Jims.

But the obvious hassle with these big heavy cameras is exactly that – they're big and heavy and awkward to carry when you're already loaded up with a pile of fishing gear. They're also expensive and this brings a heap of grief when you slip and fall in with one hanging around your neck. A few years ago I was a member of the VFFA group that stayed at Nokomai in New Zealand's South Island, and because the event gave the opportunity for some great photos I invested in a new Olympus dSLR, along with some extra lenses. On my first day there I was paired with Richard Garvey and guide Nigel Black. Nigel took us to the Oreti and explained that we needed to wade across several braids to get to the best water. With the fancy new Olympus hanging around my neck I made it halfway across the first braid before I realised I was in big trouble. The water was thigh deep and getting deeper, the current was strong, and the bottom consisted of ball bearings that were rolling around under my feet. I was obviously on the verge of going under, new camera and all, when Nigel sized up the situation, charged back out to where I was teetering, and dragged me ashore. From then on every time we crossed a braid the camera was hanging around Nigel's neck.



Fill-in flash helps on sunny days

So what's the third camera option? Those little point and shoot cameras ('compact digitals') do a fine job. Many are waterproof now, and they all have zoom lenses and built-in flashes. They are small enough to drop into a pocket, and they produce very acceptable images. Many of us are aware of the 'Catch' magazine site that displays each month the very best fly fishing pics from all round the world. I heard recently that just on 50% of the images they accept and use are taken on those small digital cameras.

I mentioned the issue of keeping your camera safe. If your camera isn't waterproof (and my little Sony Cybershot isn't) then you can put your little camera in a sealable plastic bag inside another slightly larger sealable plastic bag and hide it in your backpack. It will then stay dry when you fall in. The trouble is, I can then guarantee that you'll take very few photos. It's just too much trouble to keep pulling the camera out, and by the time you've retrieved it your mate has already landed his fish and put it back in the water. If you're serious about getting good photos of your fishing exploits then keep the camera handy. I carry mine in a

small camera bag with strap. It hangs around my neck and I can have it out and ready to go in just a few seconds. I only hide it away in my backpack when I'm about to wade where there's a chance I might slip and get wet. But that's only an occasional moment. For most of my fishing the camera stays handy.

Regardless of the camera you are using you must know how to use it. You need to investigate all the settings and tricks and options so that you don't get caught trying to take an important photo and find that you don't know how to get the thing to do what you want it to do. So read the manual and try out all the options to find what they do.

We live in the digital age. In the old days my trusty old Nikon was loaded with colour slide film and every time I pressed the button it cost me a dollar. So I was very careful and frugal and selective. But digital photos cost nothing, so a first clue for getting good photos is simply to take lots of them. The more the better. The more you take the more likely it is that one of those many images will be a real standout. To take just one pic of something important is always a risk – your mate might have blinked at the critical moment, or had a fly crawling up his nose.

My next suggestion is to get yourself some good processing software. Nearly all photos can be substantially improved with a bit of fiddling on a computer. I have a slightly old version of Photoshop, an expensive computer program described as a 'graphics-editing computer application used for manipulating images'. I acquired my copy of Photoshop in my teaching days when such applications could be purchased by teachers for a fraction of the 'non-educational' price. (A good reason for not retiring.) But you don't have to have use

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A bland scene made much more interesting with an angler in action

Photoshop. Photoshop Elements is a cut down version that is extremely good and costs just a bit over \$100. There are heaps of shareware programs too that will do the job satisfactorily, and these can be very cheap or even free. Sometimes one of these programs comes free when you buy a new camera.

So what sort of things might you do with your digital images? My first move is invariably to do some judicious cropping. When I load a photo from my camera onto my computer and open up the image what do I usually find? There will be some stuff in the middle that was the subject of the photo and the reason why I took it, but all around the edges are bits of other sundry items that add nothing to the photo and are really only distractions. So I use the software to draw a rectangle around the subject on the screen, then press a button and all the junk disappears. Now I'm left with only the subject of the photo and the image is much tighter and has more impact. What else can you do with this image manipulation? Here's a short list – you can sharpen your photos, make them

lighter or darker, change the contrast, change the colours and colour balance (which might do wonders for a classy sunset), square them up if you find crooked verticals or sloping horizontals, or lighten the shadows if they're too dark. You can also lighten faces that are in shadow under hats and you can erase or remove distractions such as a precocious twig sticking out of someone's ear. There are lots more tricks too, and a few minutes fiddling around can convert a fairly ordinary picture into something that has real impact

A good definition of photography is the suggestion that it is 'painting with light'. And indeed the quality and direction and intensity of the available light is critical to understanding how your photos will come out. Is there a best time to take photos? In terms of seasons, the books suggest that photos taken in autumn, winter and spring often look better than those taken in the summer, because in summer the daytime light is harsh and intense and cold in the sense that there's lots of blue. Winter light is soft and warm (more yellow).

What time of day is best? The professionals talk about the 'golden hour'. This, for scene photography, is the hour before sunset and the hour after sunrise – warm colours and long shadows that give great texture and the sense of three dimensions to photos.

Do you need bright sunlight for outdoor photos? Well sunshine does brighten up a scene shot, and the shadows in the image 'enhance the mood' and add a sense of dimension. On the other hand overcast days are great for taking photos of people – faces and groups. The soft even light illuminates faces evenly and you don't have those ugly dark shadows that bright sunlight produces.

Well what do you when it's midday in summer and you want to take a photo of your mate. You might be able to move your subject into a shaded area. Alternatively, use the flash on your camera to fill in those hard shadows. You need to do some experiments with this and investigate the results. You'll be pleasantly surprised to find what the added flash does in this situation. Which reminds me of another important point. A

scene shot without people in it somewhere is nowhere near as interesting as a scene shot with a person in it – a good reason to fish with a mate if you want to get top fishing photos.

Finally, what about the direction of the light? People often feel they should take outdoor photos with the sun located behind the photographer, so the sunlight lights up the subject. This is usually the worst option. It's far better to have the light coming from the left or right. This creates shadows and shadows in scene shots are good. Taking photos into the sun requires some care, but here's a suggestion. If you want to take a photo of someone on a bright sunny day get the person to stand with the sun behind them but slightly off to the side. Then take the photo with the flash turned on to fill in the shadows on the person's face. The sunlight from behind creates a type of halo around the person's head that looks very professional.

Well there's a few thoughts. I'll add some more next issue. In the meantime, get those cameras out and happy snapping.



Good Cop / Bad Cop

... by Humpty

Yep, as they say, "Beautiful one day, raining and windy the next". That about sums up Southland, New Zealand, this past spring. Hubert and I took our usual two-week holiday there and we found mixed fishing. In our first week we encountered fairly good weather and rivers that were high but dropping. The area had received a lot of rain before we arrived, so some rivers were fishable and some were not.

The mighty Mataura River was somewhat coloured, high and dropping. It was not a good proposition. Fortunately some of the tributaries such as the Otamitta, Waimea, Tomagalak and Waikaia were in reasonable shape and worth fishing. We made the decision to target them and had a fair amount of success. Most days we caught about 10 or 12 browns, typically ranging from 2½ to 3½ pounds, with the best being 4 pounds.

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Some quite comfortable accommodation on a backcountry farm

Some three quarters of these fish were caught on size 16 dry flies with Possum Emergers being quite successful. The remaining fish were taken on Hubert's excellent Bismarck nymph, again in size 16. We didn't come across any big hatches of mayflies, though we did see a few here and there. During the days we encountered rising fish that were quite keen to accept a Possum Emerger.

During the evenings we fished the Mataura and found rising fish every time, even in the dirty, high water. Not in big numbers but enough to keep us entertained for a couple of hours. We caught most of these evening risers on emergers. Hubert had trouble enticing a rising fish one night with the size 16 emerger so he changed to a size 22 midge that he had recently tied and was then delighted to land a 3 pound brown.

The second week was a different proposition all together. Cold front after cold front passed through the South Island, bringing with them rain, sleet and snow. We spent two fishless days on the Tierie River during that period with water temperatures of 7°C and daytime temperatures reaching 6°C. Snow fell on the nearby hills and the cold wind was fierce. We fished for a few hours but only spotted one fish that sulked away. There was no insect activity and no trout activity. We decided to return to Gore by the scenic route and have a sight-seeing day.



Hubert strikes again, and another brown bites the dust – or at least his well-tied emerger

Arriving back at Gore we found shocking weather that continued day after day. It rained every day and the wind pierced our clothing. There was not a river in the area that was fishable. We spoke with two other Australian fishermen who decided to head home early. However in all this gloom and doom you must keep trying. After all we were there to fish and not for a holiday. Day times were so bad that we could not even cast a fly, but the evenings saw the wind drop to manageable levels. But - where to fish?

Experience suggested that the Mataura River might produce fish in these conditions provided we could find some quiet sheltered water. This we managed and we caught fish on dry flies in the murky water. Not big numbers, but we were satisfied with two, three or four fish each evening. These were rising fish that were mostly taking mayflies.



A smallish brown from the Mataura

The upside of these conditions was that we did not encounter another fisherman on the rivers. Again the trout we took were about 2 to 3 pounds in size, and again the Possum Emerger was the most successful fly.

Then suddenly, on our second last day, things improved. The day dawned overcast and mild with little or no wind. We chose the headwaters of a small tributary and were delighted to find it in fairly good shape. Mayflies were visible and the trout were keen on a feed. We fished with Andrew Mossman's Possum Dun and landed ten browns up to 4 pounds. Following a hearty evening meal we again headed for the Mataura and encountered one of the best evening rises to mayflies that we have witnessed in years. The fish were on the job at 7:30 pm when we arrived and were still hard at it at 9:30 pm when we left.

During that time we caught 13 fish, ranging from 2 to 4 pounds, all on the Possum Dun. In total we caught and released 23 fish that day, all on dry flies.

The fishing gods obviously thought that we had seen enough good times for one trip as our last day saw a return to gale

force North-Westerly winds and more rain. We did manage one fish before calling it quits.

The other good thing about this second week was that all this spare time the foul weather generated allowed us to focus on preparing culinary delights and catching up with friends in New Zealand. Reviewing the overall tally of about 90 fish between us for the trip Hubert remarked, "There is unfinished business still to be done in New Zealand", which will be taken care of later in the season.



Another solid connection

Jeremy Lucas – a Top International Competitor

Jeremy Lucas represented England at the highest levels of international fly fishing competition for many years. He now works as a guide in both the UK and Europe, and has written countless articles for fly fishing magazines and websites. He has also written two books. In his recent book he devoted a lengthy chapter to his experiences as an international fly fishing competitor. The following are extracts from this second book, used with permission. So what's it like to represent your country in World Fly Fishing Championships?

I spent many years of my fishing life utterly focused on Team England duties, and it was an extraordinary experience, unimagined at the outset. It changed the way I fished, and it changed my life - in both senses not always for the better. It set me on a crash course in competitiveness; of technical, pragmatic angling, in all manner of contrived situations. My competitive international career ranged from the loch-style and river home internationals, to the European open events and then the formal European and World Championships. In fact, I enjoyed two long periods, separated by almost ten years, and they were incredibly intense, filled with a spectrum of emotions from utter despair to overwhelming euphoria.

I had dreamed of representing my country in my chosen sport for a very long time. I remember drifting over the expansive shallows of Loch Maree and Loch Hope in the north of Scotland, with dazzling catches of sea-trout; and the long drifts over Grafham ... I wandered the shores of numerous English reservoirs and lakes, and more than a hundred Highland lochs, in my pursuit of trout, and I caught thousands. I travelled to Ireland, Europe and Scandinavia, and began my discovery of the enormous variety of rivers; and all this was before I was really ready to attempt my personal sporting summit.

Having started fly fishing very early meant that I was comparatively experienced, especially on lakes, while still in my twenties. I did not, however, possess

the knowledge or the confidence - perhaps the courage - to go for it. Fortunately, I had my mentor figures to carry me over that hurdle - Arthur Cove, and particularly in the competitive sense, Tony Pawson, along with other members of the Confederation of English Fly Fishers. In any case, they encouraged me and I really was immensely lucky. In those days there was not the organization we have now in England, and in many other countries, which encourages youth up to international standard, so without the kindness and attention of these gentlemen it would have taken me far longer to begin to realize my aspiration, and indeed I might never have done so.

Through my own progress I want to illustrate those aspects which serious competitors need to be aware of. Here I am concentrating on the physical and mental aspects of preparation and participation in the top level of our competitive sport. In fact, I think that an awareness in this area is even more important than technical skill, and I suppose at the outset I should express some caution, because there are many personality traits which do not take well to such competitiveness. I realized very late that my own personality, even lifestyle, had been altered, in most ways detrimentally: while becoming a much more effective technical and tactical fisherman, which I still relish, I did not become a better person, though I hope to have recovered the situation in later years! On the credit side, the value of

companionship of one's teammates is immeasurable, and what one learns from those anglers is vast, far more than we can learn anywhere else. What we discover by being in close contact with team members of other nations is also huge, and in the World and European Championships we visit some of the most wonderful trout and grayling rivers that exist, which undoubtedly would be far more limited to us if we were not national team members. When it goes well, the feeling is utterly overwhelming, and sharing this with teammates, friends and family lasts forever and makes the world an altogether better place. But I am getting ahead of myself.

One of the first Championships:

In 1993 we were in British Columbia, Canada, and about to fish the World Championship entirely on still waters - the enormous lakes of the BC interior, centred at Kamloops. Even now, twenty years on, a blitz of memories crowd in on me: encounters with bears and snakes, and late-night chats in log cabins on the shores of lakes; of stetsons and beer bottles flying in bars packed with locals and members of teams from as far away as Poland and Australia; and the fishing - such incredible fishing for wild rainbows.

I was one of the most competitively inexperienced, and youngest, members of the team. There were veterans Chris Ogborne and John Lindsey, as well as former World Champion John Pawson and stillwater specialist Paul Miller, and team coach Mike Childs. Practice sessions were nothing short of remarkable, fishing on those enormous lakes where ospreys would dive at cruising rainbows within 10 metres of our drifting boats, and great northern divers would appear from the depths in pursuit of fish we were playing, right up to the side of the boat; like killer whales, huge and menacing at that range.

It was the time of our sporting lives; and for me one of its pinnacles. But as the actual championship drew closer I experienced an altogether new feeling - that of trepidation. It was not fun any more. A deep and profound realization of what we were about to attempt replaced all the euphoria and pride with dread. I did not know it at the time, but I was always to experience this in major internationals, and it grew even worse over the years, feeding on me both mentally and physically. The day before the first championship session John Pawson, who recognized what I was going through, took me to one side: "I know how you feel. You really don't want to go out there tomorrow. You hate the idea of it, what you and all of us have to do, putting ourselves right on the line. But you will never feel so alive as over the next few days, and when it's over you are going to miss it so very much. It will hurt."

The next day we all climbed on board the coaches that were to take us to the championship venues. Each team member fishes a different sector of river or lake, along with members of all the other national teams taking part. We shook hands, hugged, and climbed the steps, leaving each other to our individual sessions. It is always thus; one is suddenly taken away in the very early morning hours to the championship sectors, which are often far apart. Another teammate of future years, Baz Reece, referred to this feeling as the 'loneliness of the sessions', and this does sum it up appropriately. In that moment you travel out without the physical presence of your teammates with whom you have practised and lived for so long. You have, instead, only their best wishes as company. There is also a heavy responsibility, because they are relying on your performance as much as you rely on theirs. This being my first-ever World Championship session, Mike came out

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Jeremy fishing the San River in Poland

with me, so I was not completely alone, at least until the start of the session.

It was a strange, two-hour journey out from Kamloops to Lake Tunkwa, high in the BC interior. It was very quiet on board, each competitor lost in his own private preparations and emotions. Mike spoke very quietly, distracting me with ideas about setup, which we had rehearsed many times before in team briefings and practice sessions, and talking about matters such as fly selection and where I might aim to go on the lake. We had visited Tunkwa several times, though we were not allowed to fish it (like any other championship sector), so we had mapped it reasonably well and I certainly had my views on where I would like to go, if I could agree with my boat partner for the day. When Geoff had taken me up to Tunkwa a few days earlier we had stared out together over the expanse and he had confided: "This is why you are in the England team." Indeed, it had seemed that I was made for Tunkwa; to me it was like Grafham Water in England at almost 2,000 metres. That is how I viewed it, and surely it was bread-and-butter fishing for me; cruising rainbows on the nymph, long-casts from the boat.

I can still remember setting up, close to the boat mooring. Mike was so patient, because he just continued to talk softly and calmly, even though my hands were trembling and I could barely thread the line through the rod guides. I had already set up my leader, so it was merely a matter of attaching the fly. The rules in Canada were for a single fly, rather than teams of up to three flies as is more usual on lake venues. Mike went through the checklist of spare rods, lines and peripheral tackle for the sixth time, and then took it on himself to find my boatman, and the competitor who would be with me that day. (I was to learn later that my boatman had been asked to look after me as best he could out there, with Mike explaining that this was my first-ever World Championship session.)

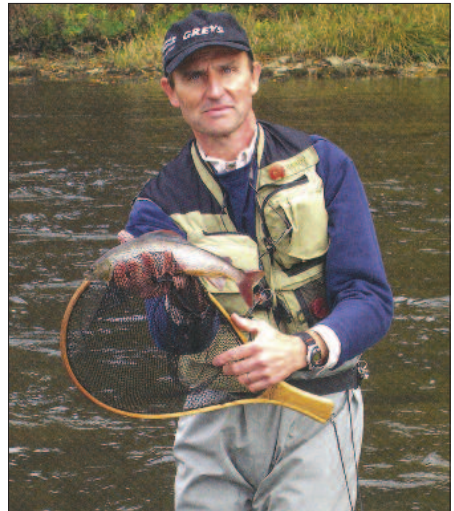
Introductions over, I was ushered into the boat and thus onward to those excruciating moments leading up to the start of the session. I have known competitors to be physically sick at this point, and I certainly came very close to it then and was probably saved this ignominy only because I had not eaten anything for almost twenty-four hours. This is when you are completely on your own; it is hostile territory right up to the

boundary of the competitive sport, and nothing really prepares a competitor for it. It is incapacitating, demolishing the structure of reason in the mind. One's skills, and former experiences, seem to evaporate and one feels like an absolute beginner. Competitors in most other sports also experience these horrible feelings.

That day, away on the far shores of Tunkwa, I realized that all the meticulous preparation, all the past experience of big lakes, all the support and teaching of my mentors and teammates, was there with me. So, I was not really alone. I fished a floating line on a 9½ foot Sage #6, alternating between a Cove-style pheasant tail, a Diawl Bach (little devil) and a black spider (remember that the rule was for a single fly), all of which had been effective for those wild rainbows during practice. I noticed that competitors on any boat we drew near during the session were using fast-sinking lines and pulling tactics, mostly with weighted streamer patterns. This was undoubtedly the percentage method and noticing this threw me back to Rutland Water and the National Finals. My first fish was a little undersize, and so would not count, but at least it gave me enough confidence to persist with the slowly retrieved nymph or spider on a long leader. Soon afterwards I was utterly elated because I boated a fish that measured, so in my first session had already avoided the dreaded blank. This completely settled me and at last I could really focus on putting myself in the places.

My chance came towards the end of that first session - 'never give up until the very end' - when a rainbow stabbed at my size 18 black spider, taken on the drop, and was hooked against the tight line. Knowing this was a big fish my boatman told me to take it very easy: "It'll go ballistic in a moment, and if you hold 'em too tight they often shed the hook." Well, it

did jump twice, but the hook held and after perhaps five minutes I netted a magnificent fish of some 1.8 kilograms, at 50 centimetres, 'scissored' by the spider. The two fish gave me a section win, because although one competitor from Poland had caught three trout, their overall measurement was less than my two fish by a single centimetre! Almost the entire field of twenty-two competitors (the number of nations taking part) had blanked.



A grayling caught by Jeremy during a practice session for the European Championships

It was a similar story in the second session that afternoon, during particularly difficult fishing conditions. I think there were three measurable trout caught, and I did not catch one of them, so suffered the blank. It was doubly infuriating for me because I did manage to hook a big rainbow that I had watched rising up a wind lane, intercepting it with the same black spider, only to lose it as it neared the net. It was with mixed emotions that I returned to the shore, where both Mike and Geoff were waiting for me. I could report the opposites of a session win and a blank.

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They passed on to me what they knew of my teammates' placings, which were fairly good. Here we were, now in the midst of the championship sessions with two days left to run, with new sectors to come for each of us. But the start had been reasonable. In fact, as we were to learn back at the hotel, we even had a team first placing overall, narrowly ahead of the Poles, Czechs and Italians.

Always rely on what one does best, never giving up to the end and overcoming the weaknesses. Just get through that feeling of not knowing what is going on – these are what carried our team through that championship. We could each overcome the loneliness of the sessions and could rely on each other to do the very best possible. Fishing each lake venue over the three days of the championship we could feed back to our team-mates a lot of information about their upcoming venue. This proved invaluable. I remember John Lindsey, who had fished Paul Lake on the second day, telling me that he had noticed some rising fish in a particular area where one of the top-placed competitors had fished. He felt there was enormous potential here and gave me incredibly accurate reference points so that I could find it in my sessions on the third day - this on a lake about ten times the size of Rutland Water! John told me: "Look for a log cabin behind which is an almost hidden, old green Chevrolet and move down the bank about 300 metres until you find an extensive shallow area with large weed-beds and marl (a white chalky clay bed) patches." It was better than having a GPS fix. I did find the place, along with my Polish boat partner, and managed several good rainbows, again on the deep, slow nymph, in each of the day's sessions, when, as on previous sectors and sessions, the general catches were poor.

England won the team gold comfortably, while I was top England rod with the

individual bronze medal at my first attempt. It was only possible because of my incredible teammates, our pooled experience on a huge variety of still waters elsewhere, and our ability to share this. Furthermore, it would not have been possible without a shared history of a variety of mentor figures, including our manager and coach, who had lifted us individually and collectively to truly internationally competitive standing.

There was also the enormously good luck we had, such as that big rainbow staying hooked on Tunkwa. We fishermen should never ignore the value of plain good luck - and bad luck. There is a lot of both in fishing.

Later in my career I discovered something in my own competitive make-up that had hitherto been only glimpsed. Any young competitor should be aware of this. In my early fifties I kept myself fit by long-distance running almost daily. I was always blessed with reasonable stamina, which had served me well for the marathon, loch-style domestic internationals and rapid movement and wading over treacherous river terrains. Mentally, however, in spite of the experience of numerous internationals in all the competitive disciplines, I suppose I had reached a point beyond which is the unknown, where few can successfully venture. This is consistent with all competitive sport. At the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award in 1993 I had a discussion with Damon Hill (who in 1996 was to become Formula 1 World Champion) about this and we both echoed each other's thoughts about this single-most intangible competitive component. Without it, no matter what skills one might possess, one can get nowhere, but with that competitive ferocity within ...

I think this is independent of the actual sport.



Warrnambool 2014

There is no doubt about the fact that Hugh Maltby is a brilliant organiser of fishing adventures but he does tend to punish the successful piscator with duties as scribe. However I write not resentfully but reluctantly because the Warrnambool trip should be a best kept secret.

Nine gentleman fishers travelled to the south-west (eight overland and one par avion) including three newbies. Out fishing the visitors hooked and landed two whereas the four locals caught three. I leave you to ponder the asymmetry. The weather was unexpectedly favourable until much needed rain arrived on Saturday evening. That prompted a display of Warrnambool generosity from our principal host, President Adrian; with brolly unfurled, protecting the barbie and

partly himself from a drenching, he cooked the steaks to perfection.

Of course the hospitality of Jim (aka Jimbo) and Tricia is legendary and very gratefully received. The ribs in hoisin were sublime and Jim certainly still has his vintner mojo - thank you.

A first for me was bicycle angling and I'm hooked. Like many, my feelings for cyclists are ambivalent but looks on the faces of the lycra-clad passers by when confronted with two wader-wearing riders (JB also waving a fully assembled fly rod) was priceless.

It was, as usual, a magnificent weekend. It is etched in my calendar for next year, if that is the right reference to an iPad entry, but you others, well, best forget about it.



Bob Loch with a typical upper Merri River brown. Bob lives in Warrnambool so he knows where they all live



The Saturday evening meal at the Blakeslee winery is a top feature of this trip



The VFFA Visit To Thorpdale

In October a small contingent of VFFA members was welcomed at Thorpdale by members of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers. The Latrobe Valley members have access to a number of local farmers' dams that they stock each year and fish to 9 lb have been caught in past years, so a visit to Thorpdale is keenly anticipated. VFFA members can in fact join the Latrobe Valley Club as affiliated members for the princely sum of \$35 per

year, all of which is used to buy fish for stocking the dams. A number of VFFA members have taken advantage of this offer, and have discovered in the process that the Latrobe Valley members are exceptionally friendly and hospitable. Again this year they put on a fine barbecue lunch for their visitors. Our VFFA team were guided by the Latrobe Valley members and some fine fish were caught.



The team – Latrobe Valley members and their mostly city-based VFFA guests



Past president Terry Rogers hasn't lost his touch!



Those Latrobe Valley dams are mostly reasonably large and attractive stillwaters

FLY OF THE MONTH - 2

Black & Peacock Spider



Here's another fly recommended by David Featherstone. In fact in a list of his favourite flies this was his top choice. He suggests that 'with a very slow retrieve it will trick a monster!'

The pattern is also described in Daniel Hackett and Brad Harris's very popular book *In Season – Tasmania*, where it is described as 'an awesome all-round fly anywhere that trout swim'. Daniel ties it mostly with a 2mm copper bead 'that makes a fish-attracting plink on landing' (top right photo is from their book).

Spider flies are among the oldest of trout flies, dating from the time of Isaac Walton and are still very effective these days. The Black and Peacock Spider was designed by British still water fly fishing expert Tom Ivens. Ivens is considered by many to be 'the father of still water fly fishing in England'. His book, *Still Water Fly Fishing*, was written in the 1960s when reservoir fishing was growing rapidly in popularity in England, and became the authoritative text on this type of fishing. He was a keen proponent of fishing imitative patterns very slowly – 'a 30 yard cast should take 2 minutes to retrieve'. The Black and Peacock Spider is often described as a snail pattern, but it can represent beetles and a host of other fish-attracting bugs.

Materials for The Black & Peacock Spider

Hook: Standard wet fly or nymph hook, sizes 8 – 16 (with 12 and 14 being the popular choices).

Bead: 2mm copper bead (optional).

Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0 for the smaller sizes.

Body: Peacock herl.

Hackle: Two or three turns of black hen hackle with longish fibres.

Tying the Black & Peacock

1. Slide the copper bead onto the shank if you are adding the bead.
2. Place the hook in the vise and wrap some tying thread along the shank. If some extra weight is needed to help the fly sink more quickly a few turns of lead can be added at this point to the middle of the shank.
3. Select two or three good quality peacock herls and tie them in just above the barb. To improve durability the herls can be wrapped around the thread to form a type of rope.
4. Wind the herls around the hook shank towards the eye to form a fat body. Then tie them off leaving room to tie in the hackle.
5. Select and tie in a black hen hackle, wind two or three turns, then tie it off.
6. Whip finish the head and add a drop of varnish to complete the fly.



*Tichborne watercolour -
Te Wairoa Stream Mouth*



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
<i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie	\$20.00
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 2014 Annual Dinner:

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

VFFA Meetings & Activities

December 2014

- 12 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00
Speaker: Rick Keam

January 2015

- 28 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm

February 2015

- 14 – 20 Tasmanian Trip at Hayes on Brumbys
Event co-ordinator - Hamish Hughes
- 26 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Members Liars' Night

March 2015

- 20 Special Dinner – 6.30 for 7:00 pm
Speaker: Simon Gawesworth,
Master Casting Instructor &
Marketing Manager for RIO Fly Lines USA
- 21 Casting demonstration by Simon Gawesworth, Red Tag Pool, Fairfield
Time to be advised
- 25 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm
- 28 & 29 Bairnsdale 'Donger' Weekend
Event co-ordinator - Mike Jarvis

April 2015

- 3 – 5 Easter
- 16 General Meeting - 8:00 pm
Speaker: Neil Hyatt, Program Leader Fish Production, Fisheries Victoria