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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Organisation No. A0024750J

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

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

## February Liars' Night

**Thursday, February 27, 8:00pm at the Celtic Club**

All members are reminded that our first meeting for the New Year is on Thursday, February 27. It will again be our traditional 'Liars' Night' – the airing of tall tales and true of the angling exploits and adventures of members over the Christmas break.



Some selected members will be primed and briefed to provide short and entertaining accounts of their fabulous fishing in exciting places. Come and join us for a convivial and entertaining start to the year.

The Meeting will be preceded by Dinner at the Celtic Club, which commences at 6:00 pm.

All members are invited to attend the Dinner, but PLEASE make a booking by 5 pm on Wednesday, February 26 – either by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message, or by sending a **text message** to President Terry Rogers on his mobile: 0438 553 326.

# THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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## The February Meeting – ‘Liars’ Night’



*Bernard loves the Steavenson River*

All members are reminded that our first meeting in the New Year will be on Thursday, February 27. It will again be the traditional ‘Liars’ Night’ – the round up of stories, possibly a tad fanciful but hopefully not too stretched, of the angling exploits and adventures of members over the Christmas break.

Some selected members will be primed and briefed to provide short and entertaining accounts of their fabulous fishing in exciting places over recent days. The projector will be pre-loaded with photos, so talks will be illustrated with captivating images of wonderful places and fabulous fish.

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

(Please note that this meeting is on the **fourth** Thursday of the month - a week later than our normal monthly meeting time to allow members on the annual Tassie trip time to return home and attend the meeting. And we need these members there – they will undoubtedly have great tales to tell.)

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## Advance Notice – March Meeting

Our guest speaker for the March Meeting is our own Mick Hall, a VFFA member who has become widely known and highly respected among trout fishers for his work as President of the Australian Trout Foundation. In recognition of his considerable efforts in promoting our trout fishery he was awarded the Jack Ritchie Medal in 2012.

Mick worked for many years as a professional guide in the Thornton area, and during this time developed a well-deserved reputation as one of our most credentialed fly tiers. He has written the fly tying notes for *Freshwater Fishing* magazine for many years, has made regular contributions to *Flyfisher* magazine, and has demonstrated his skills to hundreds of angler meetings and groups both here and overseas.



*Mick Hall – a master fly tier*

In an effort to understand the bugs that feed the trout in the Eildon area Mick has spent countless hours researching and photographing these insects. At our March meeting he will focus on the Mayflies of the Thornton area and will show us the flies he has designed to imitate them. His talk will include a PowerPoint presentation of just some of the superb photos he has collected. Mick is a lively and entertaining speaker with a profound knowledge of the trout fishing around the Eildon area, and will be happy to answer questions on any aspects of fly fishing and fly tying.

The March meeting on March 20 is one that serious trout fishers will not want to miss.

## December Christmas Dinner – Guest Speaker John Diggle:

(John Diggle is the Director of Inland Fisheries in Tasmania. He spoke on the topic '*Fisheries Management in Tasmania*', a subject on which he was clearly well informed. Here is a summary of his presentation.)

Thank you for the invitation to speak to address you this evening. I would like to speak about some of the fisheries management issues that we are currently facing in Tasmania. And we have quite a few, though possibly not as many as you have here in Victoria. We face plenty of challenges, and perhaps our approach to meeting these challenges is a little different to what you do here in Victoria. So I am going to work through some of these issues. Hopefully they will be of interest to you, as I know that many of you fish, at least occasionally, in Tasmania.

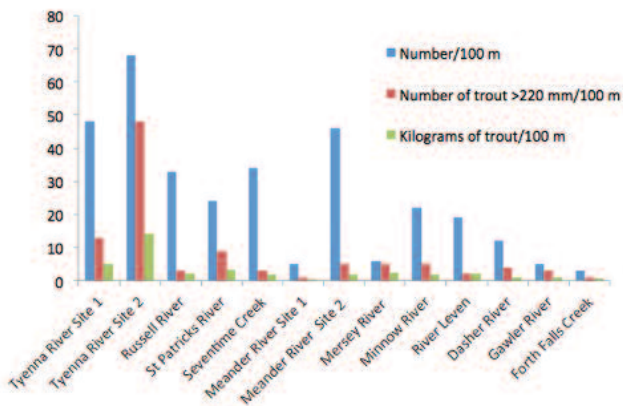
An issue that has affected our river fisheries over the past two years has been a very damaging plague of cormorants, a phenomenon that we think is related to the breaking of the drought. In 2009 we saw the end of 15 years of drought and a consequent boom in the fish population, soon followed by a boom in the cormorant population. So over the past two seasons we have seen a major depletion of trout stocks in many rivers across the state. The cormorants initially struck in the south of the state and then worked their way through eventually to the north-west. We received many reports from anglers that confirmed our own observations: high numbers of cormorants were sighted on rivers right across the state, at fish farms, and even at the IFS fish traps at Liawenee where they seriously depleted our rainbow trout spawning run. At Meadowbank an estimated 500 cormorants were seen at the base of the dam.

So as you would expect the river fishing has been poor. Unfortunately there is not a lot that we could do about it. There used to be a bounty on cormorants, but we can't shoot them these days. It's not a new issue either, as cormorants affected our fisheries in the 1950s, in the 1970s, and again in the 1990s. They seem to be associated with wet cycles in our weather. We have five species of cormorants in Tasmania and it has become a balancing act between a native species (our cormorants) and an introduced species (our trout). Discussing the balance between introduced trout and native wildlife is not a good argument to be having in the public arena in this day and age.

So we decided to survey our fishery to get some sort of feel for the impact the cormorants have had. Significant surveys of our fisheries had been done in the past by Rob Sloane and others, so we used their data as a base level and compared it with the cormorant episode we had in the 1970s. The cormorant plague in the late 1970s was about as bad as it gets, so we were keen to see how it compared with the current episode. We selected rivers in the south, north and north-west regions of the state as these represented our most significant river fisheries. The rivers selected were the St Patricks and Meander rivers and Seven Time Creek in the north; the Gawler, Minnow, Dasher, Mersey and Leven rivers and Forth Falls Creek in the north-west; and the Russell and Tyenna rivers in the south. Studies by the Inland Fisheries Commission in the 1970s and 1980s examined similar cormorant issues and provided data on both "depleted" and "normal" years.

Our survey was carried out by electrofishing during the last two weeks of February 2013, with three runs at each site to get an estimate of the fish populations. The survey was conducted under optimal conditions with low flow, good visibility and reasonable but variable weather. The results gave the number of trout per a hundred metres of stream, along with the number of trout that were size and the estimated kilograms of trout present. Overall the numbers of fish caught were low, and in general mid-sized fish (from 180 mm to 350 mm) were scarce. A 400 mm fish is the upper limit that a

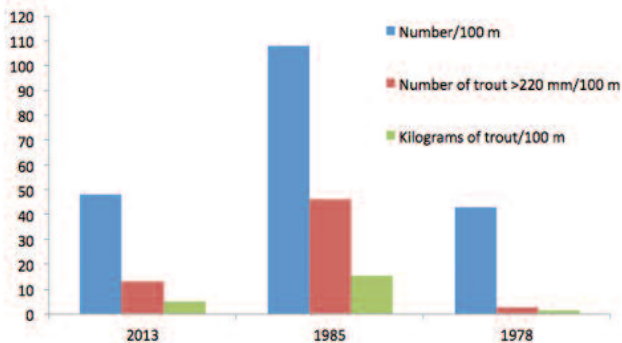
## Results of the 2013 electrofishing survey at all sites



cormorant can get down its neck, so fish from 150 mm – 400 mm were the sizes that were depleted.

In looking, for example, at the results for the Tyenna River, our most productive river fishery in the state, we found that it was not totally decimated but the results were still quite low. We also found that the Meander at some sites was poor.

## Tyenna River at Site 1 for 2013, 1985 and 1978 surveys



Compare the data for the Tyenna in 2013, 1985 and 1978:

On the right hand side you can see the results for the late 1970s with its very bad cormorant problem, and on the left hand side you can see what we found in 2013. You can see they are similar in terms of the impact on size trout and the biomass of trout. But in the middle we have the good part of the story, because following that episode in the late 70s by the mid-1980s the trout population had clearly recovered, and this was the case right across the state.

So the rivers do bounce back and there is some light at the end of the tunnel. And these figures are all from natural recruitment. Well-populated systems such as the Tyenna and the St Pats will



*The Christmas Dinner drew a good crowd*

recover quite quickly. However it is not clear that some of the other systems will come back as quickly, so we are considering stocking some of the rivers with lighter populations, such as the Nile and the Rubicon, and a few others that have been struggling for other reasons. We'll try to give them a boost and then we'll go back and survey them to see how they're going.

It also seems that when cormorants are around trout develop some avoidance behaviours, as the observations of anglers suggest a worse situation than the actual situation suggested by the data. It appears that trout will shift to night feeding and other strategies to avoid predators in the system, and thus they will avoid anglers at the same time. That's why their numbers can recover fairly quickly - in all of these rivers the trout aren't all eaten, and those remaining will disperse back through the systems. Predation by cormorants is mainly of the middle ranges of size in the trout population, so small fish (50 mm – 150 mm) avoid capture, as do the large fish (greater than 400 mm).

The cormorant numbers will drop of course when they have eaten themselves out. The fish populations boom and bust, and the cormorant population will then boom and then bust because the fish numbers aren't there to sustain them. They are predatory populations so will either starve or move on. (They may well leave and come back over here to Victoria!) This appears to be happening as this year there are fewer cormorants around and already the indications are that some of the rivers are fishing satisfactorily again. Hopefully we will not have to wait another seven years for the rivers to come back to a decent fishing standard; it might be just three or four years and they will be back to what they should be.

Another fishery of great interest to us is Arthurs Lake. We have lots of lakes in Tasmania and some of them are overpopulated. Lakes such as Pedder, King William, and even Burbury have very high populations of trout, so their sizes are not great and hence we find low numbers of anglers fishing them. Clearly there is a connection here between fish size and angler satisfaction: in Tasmania we find that anglers turn away from lake fisheries if the average fish sizes come down too far.

This is one of the challenges we are confronting with the Arthurs Lake fishery. Since 2009 we have had highly successful recruitment years, so the trout population has increased and consequently the average size of fish has decreased significantly. Last season Arthurs Lake dropped from being our most popular fishery to number two behind the Great Lake, and it may possibly drop further. This issue is further complicated by the lake levels - recent high water levels have made it more difficult

for anglers to fish the lake. So there are two issues here - fish size and angler accessibility.

Our data on the spawning fish going up Hydro Creek shows that since 2008 the average size of these fish has dropped from about 900 grams down to 360 gram. This is a significant issue, as we suspect that the number of anglers coming to Tasmania to fish will drop because of the decline in the river fisheries and in the fishing offered by popular fisheries such as Arthurs Lake.

In 2006/07 anglers took 160,000 fish out of Arthurs Lake, but last season this had dropped to about half this number. The data also shows that the number of anglers fishing Arthurs had dropped significantly too. So the harvest has dropped just when we don't want it to. Unfortunately there is not a lot that we can do. We can't go in and pull trout out without considerable cost and a lot of damage, so we are looking instead at a strategy to manage the recruitment. We plan to build barriers in the spawning streams to limit and control the access of spawning fish to the spawning areas. In good spawning years we will be able stop access to the spawning areas, and thus hopefully manage recruitment. In association with these barriers we will also install fish traps so that we can transfer adult fish to other lakes that need stocking, as we now do with fish from the Great Lake. At this stage in the planning we are dealing with aboriginal heritage issues and other matters associated with the sites. Hopefully we will be able to commence this work next summer. We will also do a couple more in the following year.

Another fishery dear to your hearts I'm sure is Penstock Lagoon. This fishery has presented quite a few challenges in terms of water quality, but we've been successful in managing this issue by controlling the lake level, and the fish there are fantastic. Penstock has been a stocked fishery since it was taken out of Hydro Tasmania operations in the 1990s. The original stockings were of adult brown trout, but in 2005 we stocked both brown trout and juvenile rainbows. This improved angler visitation, catch rates and the overall harvest.

The big issue we've confronted at Penstock is overfishing. During the drought years when other fisheries were drying up Penstock had water and the number of anglers skyrocketed. Just prior to the drought breaking we had up to 4,000 anglers fishing there each season, which is a lot of anglers on one of the smallest waters in the state. So our approach was to try to educate anglers and to encourage them to think about environmental issues such as using four-stroke motors rather than two-stroke motors, using electric motors if they had them, using smaller boats, and limiting traversing around the lake under power.



*A fine meal and some great service*



*John Diggle – our guest speaker*

Our data shows that the fishery has performed well in terms of the harvest, despite the pressure it has sustained. People seem to have accepted our suggestions and we haven't copped too many complaints and grizzles. We would have had a lot more grizzles if we had gone down a regulatory path, as anglers don't like being told what they have to do. So we think the self-regulatory approach has worked thus far at Penstock. And the pressure there has been relieved since the drought has broken, as fewer anglers are fishing there.

The other strategy we have tried at Penstock, which you are probably aware of, is stocking exclusively with triploid trout, as there are no spawning streams associated with the lagoon. Triploids are sterile fish and hence they put their energy into growing body mass rather than into trying to spawn; they spend more time feeding and growing and less time thinking about reproduction.

Bradys is another interesting lake system. Over a period of years the fishery had declined. The catch rate was poor, the fish were poor, and we really couldn't figure out what was going on. During the drought years I think we contributed to the problems by doing supplementary stockings of Atlantic salmon and large rainbow trout to try to encourage people back to Bradys. But the outcome of that strategy was a big upturn in effort that smashed the remaining brown trout population. Angler numbers jumped dramatically in response to our stocking program in 2003 and 2004. People went there to fish for these other species but in the process they took a lot of brown trout out of the system, thus confounding what we were trying to do in rebuilding the brown trout population. We have since stopped the Atlantic salmon and large rainbow stockings and instead have focused on putting more browns in, and this seems to be paying off. This season we've started to see the first signs that this system is coming back as a fishery with decent catch rates.

And what about Little Pine Lagoon? I know that there has been a lot of discussion about Little Pine but the things going on there are simply beyond our control. We can't do much about what is happening there as it's dependent upon these two issues: variable recruitment and fly life. These are the two drivers in this system, and depending on the overall combination of these two, people will say that Little Pine is either really good or really bad. Typically the bad episodes happen at Little Pine in January when we have the lowest inflows into the system. Thus we see declining water quality and declining angler satisfaction. However there are no storages upstream that we can release from, so there is not much that we can do to flush it. There has also been good recruitment, so it relies on anglers taking fish out, and there's not much we can do about that either.

No one is ever satisfied with Little Pine. It has drawn lots of discussion and lots of thoughts. We have undertaken some water level management to improve the water quality and maintain access for boating, but other than that there is not a lot we can do in that system. As happened at Penstock, it became very popular when Arthurs Lake, Woods Lake and other systems were down during the drought. Large numbers of anglers were fishing there and impacting the fishery. Since the drought has broken the effort has dispersed and it now seems fairly sustainable.

Woods Lake is one of our successes. We improved access to that fishery and as a result angler numbers have increased from 800 per season to about 5,000 per season. So by improving the access road we have got people into it and the fishery has managed to cope with all this extra fishing pressure really well.

That's about it; time for questions.

(At this point John was given a very lengthy and enthusiastic round of applause for his entertaining and illuminating presentation.)

# President's Message

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With 2014 well and truly up and running, I wish all VFFA members a happy and prosperous New Year, and great success with all of their fly-fishing adventures across the globe. I am presently in the process of arranging the services of Guest Speakers for the months ahead and am happy to receive suggestions from members as to who they would like to hear.

Liars' Night is scheduled for the February Meeting on Thursday, February 27, and again I would appreciate hearing from those who would like to entertain us with tales of their recent conquests (fishing only), preferably supported with photographic evidence. Please call me on Mobile 0438 553 326 to arrange the details.



Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club was again a huge success. The Dinner was attended by 50 members, who enjoyed an excellent talk by John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries for Tasmania. John has indicated his willingness to address the VFFA whenever we invite him, and based on the enthusiastic reception he received, I intend taking him up on his offer.

As this issue of the Newsletter goes to press final arrangements are being made for the Annual Tasmanian Trip, February 15 – 21, which, again this year, is fully booked. Another trip to think about, and to act upon urgently if you are considering attending, is the Big River Weekend, April 10 – 13, at “Chateau Pilkington”. Numbers for this adventure are limited and filling rapidly.

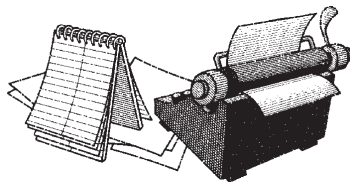
For the March Meeting our guest speaker will be Mick Hall, a VFFA member and highly skilled fly tier. Mick is going to tell us all about the mayflies in the Thornton area and the best flies to imitate them. He is an authority on these insects and this will be a very informative and entertaining night. Don't miss it.

I am sad to report the recent death of Malcolm Elms, a Past President of the VFFA and for many years the organiser and morning tea provider at Sunday Casting at the Red Tag Casting Pond. Malcolm provided invaluable casting tuition to a considerable number of VFFA members ranging from raw beginners to polished performers. For his tireless efforts in this regard Malcolm was affectionately known to all as “The Master Caster”. On behalf of the Council and all members of the VFFA I offer my sincere condolences to his wife Nancy and all of their family. Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a formal Tribute to our dear friend Malcolm, who in my mind epitomised the true meaning of the word “Gentleman”.

Finally, members wishing to dine at the Celtic Club prior to any of our meetings must remember to advise of their intentions up to the day before, by phoning the VFFA Message Service on 0498 254 497 and leaving their name and the names of any others in their party. Alternatively members can send a text message to me on my mobile: 0438 553 326.

Best Wishes, *Terry Rogers (President)*

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



'The fishing was good; it was the catching that was bad.' (A.K. Best - professional fly tier and speaker.)

Now there's a comment that's a bit too close to the truth for me, and which might also reflect the angling fortunes of a number of fellow travellers. Despite some great fishing in 2011 and 2012 and the promise of this continuing, many reports coming my way recently would suggest that fish have been hard to find. Then again there has been good fishing too in a number of rivers this past spring, so I guess it has been patchy.

The important thing of course is to maintain optimism and confidence. I can remember fishing Brumbys Creek in Tasmania many years ago, and recall watching a young angler working along a bank towards me with intense effort and focus. When he got within earshot I asked how he was doing. "Nothing yet, but I'm about to connect." "How can you be so sure?" "Well, I've been out here six nights in a row now and haven't touched a fish. That sort of atrocious luck can't continue. So I'm certain to crack it for a couple tonight!" I liked his form.

Tom Rosenbauer is a well-known fishing writer and commentator working for the Orvis Company in the USA. He has a weekly podcast (always worth listening to and found at <http://www.orvis.com/intro.aspx?subject=4047>), and in one of his podcasts last year he confessed to 'getting skunked', or as the Scots would have it, returned home with a "toom creel." He gave his ten favourite excuses for catching nothing, so if you're looking for a plausible alibi to offer to those who inquire when you've had a tough day out, take your pick from this list:

The first three were to do with the water – too cold, or too high, or too dirty. Trout are cold-blooded, so in really cold water their metabolism slows down and they don't feed as much. In high water they're inclined to stay hidden out of the heavy current, and of course in dirty water they don't see the fly unless it's close. If the water is really cold, high and dirty then take your wife shopping and build up some credits.

Tom's fourth excuse is that "there just weren't any fish there." Sometimes this is actually true. He tells us that generally speaking trout occupy only 10% - 25% of the water in a river, so of course it's vital to identify the lies and locations where trout are most likely to be found.

Excuse number five: "the fish were spooked". Perhaps another angler has already fished the water or waded up ahead, or a canoeist has put them down. Excuse six relates to a lack of hatches or possible lack of food. Tom suggests that trout don't generally become active unless food is present and active. "They start moving when the bugs start moving."

Number seven: "It's too bright." According to Tom trout generally don't feed as well on bright days. All else being equal the fishing is better on 'lousy days' with plenty of cloud, a low ceiling, and even drizzly rain. Insects (at least American species) hatch better on dark days and thus the fish feed better on such days. If the water warms up and you have a cloudy day then the fishing is likely to improve. However if the day is warm and bright with no wind then while the day

fishing might be slow the evening fishing will be better, with evening rises and caddis moving.

Excuse eight – your presentation is wrong. Tom suggests that if you're not catching fish then change your presentation before changing your fly. Change from a dry fly to a nymph or streamer, or change the angle of your cast, or add more weight to your fly, or use a longer tippet. Ensure your nymph is 'ticking' the bottom. Fish deeper or slower. Above all, try harder to eliminate drag.

His ninth excuse is that 'the barometer or moon phase was wrong'. However he's not too impressed with this one, claiming he has had good fishing in all moon phases and with both high and low barometers. For him, water temperature and water flow are much more important. He does confess however that he's not keen on fishing around the time of the full moon.

Finally – 'the wrong fly was used'. Tom puts this one last, as trout are mostly opportunistic feeders and will take most well-presented flies, except perhaps in a hatch. But size is important; usually more important than the pattern. Often a change, say, from a size 12 fly to a size 14 or 16 will bring success. If you're not sure what to fish and nothing is hatching then his advice is to look under rocks close to the river edge because 'nymphs go there prior to hatching'. But worry more about where and how you are fishing than the fly you are using.

So there you have a fine ready-made set of excuses if you need something to offer a sceptical spouse or non-fly fishing mate. I'd add a couple more. Last December I was in Warrnambool for a few days, and Jim Blakeslee, our regular correspondent there, took me out for a day. We fished the upper Merri, which is heavily overgrown in many places, and the open pools were littered with lots of little islands of strap-weed and were bordered with thick stands of reeds. That's the downside. The upside was that the water was clear so we were able to spot fish easily and there is heaps of food in the river so the average size of the browns there is close to 3 lb, with plenty bigger. The day was overcast but the clouds disappeared by lunchtime to give a warm sunny day with a light breeze. The water temperature was an ideal 17°C.

We walked down a fair way and then fished back to the bridge. The first pool we fished was heavily shaded and on Jim's suggestion I used a bow and arrow cast to flip my fly out. The fly was immediately snatched by something heavy and clearly disgruntled. There was much thrashing on the surface and then a dive into the depths – and then nothing. Fish gone.

Further down the river we flopped on a grassy bank for some lunch. But not for long – Jim spotted a fish poking along the far bank, so he rushed downstream a bit, waded across with water lapping into his waders, crept along the bank, and soon had the fish in his net. A 3½ lb brown in great condition. A short time later as we worked our way back upstream Jim spotted a fish again cruising the far bank. We were again in under a pile of trees with no room behind, so with an easy relaxed roll cast Jim plopped his shrimp pattern a metre in front of the fish. It vacuumed the shrimp in, so with another one in the net Jim put his rod away. Time to get me a couple.

In an open pool we (i.e. Jim) spotted another fish casually heading out the top end into some messy timber so I raised my rod for the cast. But the fly caught and gathered some weed as I lifted it and my hurried cast deposited shrubbery on the departing fish's head. He departed more quickly. Jim soon found another fish, this one hidden under a pile of weed and rubbish but with its head and shoulders out facing upstream into the current. My delicate bow and arrow cast dropped the dry fly and weighted stick caddis pattern nicely ahead. It all drifted back in the gentle current and his nibs raced out, inspected the dry, then turned his attention to the caddis pattern which had sunk and was settling in the mud. So he ignored it and cruised back into his

cubbyhole. Another bow and arrow attempt followed much the same script – he scrambled out, examined the drifting flies, decided he'd seen enough, and departed.

My final opportunity was at a pool where a large tree had fallen in and leafy branches had spread out across the surface. Jim, sharp-eyed as ever, spotted a sizeable brown creeping in under the leaves, so yours truly crept out along the fallen trunk. I dunked my shrimp pattern (one of Jim's of course) into the clear water near the edge of the fallen branches, then turned to steady myself. At this point Jim was shrieking: "Strike! Quick, he's taken it!!" But of course by the time I was back on the job it was all over.



*Jim Blakeslee with a fine Merri River brown*

So there's a couple more excuses to add – bad luck and angler ineptitude. I'll let you decide which applied to me. Hopefully you won't need any excuses. When the summer heat finally passes there will be some great fishing ahead for us all.

*Lyndon Webb*

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## **Tribute – Malcolm Elms, the Master Caster**

It is with great sadness that we inform members that Malcolm Elms, VFFA life member, past president, and passionate casting instructor, passed away on Wednesday, January 8, 2014. He was 92 years old, and unfortunately had suffered from deteriorating health over the past few years.

Malcolm was born in the suburb of Auburn in May 1921, and attended the Mont Albert Primary School. He later completed an apprenticeship in fitting and turning, and worked for many years in the family engineering business. During the war years he was involved in manufacturing parts for heavy artillery.

In the early 1950s Malcolm became involved in social activities run by a local church, and it was here that he met his beloved Nancy. They were married in 1951, and enjoyed 62 very happy years together. With his father's help Malcolm built the family home in Surrey Hills, and he and Nancy have lived there ever since, raising two daughters and son.



In his earlier years Malcolm was a very keen golfer, but when his son Bruce (then aged 12) told his dad that he wanted to try fishing, Malcolm, as a caring father anxious to 'keep an eye out for

his boy', headed to a tackle shop to get the requisite gear. The salesman wisely advised that fly fishing was the best sort of trout fishing, so Malcolm arrived home laden with fly rods, lines, flies, and lots of other 'essentials'. He and Bruce drove to the upper Yarra River at Warburton to try this fly fishing caper and on his first outing Malcolm hooked a trout. But Malcolm was also hooked - fly fishing soon becoming his passion.

He joined the VFFA in 1971, was President in the years 1978 – 1980, was made a Life Member in 1987, and when Jack Morey died in 1996 he took over as organiser of the Sunday Casting. He was to become a very keen student of all aspects of fly casting, and was a fine caster and very helpful instructor. He kept an old rod in the backyard at home, and neighbours frequently saw the flash of a fly line snaking over their back fences as Malcolm investigated a possible variation in his grip or his back cast.



*The Master Casters – Peter Hayes and Malcolm Elms*

Each January for many years Malcolm and Nancy took their caravan to a park on the Kiewa River, a stream that Malcolm grew to know intimately and love. Nancy confesses (very quietly) that on one trip she caught more trout fishing with worms right near their camp spot than Malcolm caught racing up and down the river with his flies. In recent years, with age taking its toll, Malcolm's good mate Marty Rogers regularly took him fishing at a private lake on a property near Ballarat.

Malcolm was very private and self-effacing, and was most reluctant to be included in the series of articles in our newsletter on our VFFA 'Elder Statesmen', even though he was so eminently qualified to be included in this esteemed group. He loved the VFFA and his many friends and colleagues in the Association, and in return he was cherished and revered by us all. His ashes are to be scattered on one of his favourite fishing venues.

Well done Malcolm – we treasure your contribution and your memory.

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## ... Two Further Tributes

All VFFA members would wish Richard Kos our deepest sympathies and condolences on the recent death of his father. Richard's father, Peter Kos, died on December 10 last year. He was 88 years old.

On December 14 last year well known Tasmanian angler Neil Robson also died. He was 85 years of age. Neil was a former politician and electoral reformer, and was the Liberal Member for the seat of Bass in the Tasmania House of Assembly from 1976 to 1992. He held a number of portfolios including industry, housing, consumer affairs, small business, and inland fisheries. This last portfolio gives the connection for our particular interest in Neil – he was a superb fly fisher. He was also a close friend and fishing companion of David Scholes, and is perhaps best known for the book *Tasmanian Angler* that they co-authored in 1970.

# 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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## Mystery Donor

Treasurer Tony Mitchem is anxious to identify a member who paid his subscription for 2013/2014 but didn't actually identify himself in the BSB transfer. The member is a city member paying \$125, and the only reference was BANKVIC.

If you think this might be your subscription then please contact Tony so that he can correctly allocate the payment to the right member. Tony can be contacted on mobile 0407 309 797 or email [treasurer@vffa.org.au](mailto:treasurer@vffa.org.au)



# River or Lake?

(from Philip Weigall)

My eight year old is going through a phase common to his age group, where he asks anyone he knows to make choices. “Which would you rather eat,” he questions his little mate Robbie, “A Big Mac or an ice cream?” Then later, amid much giggling, “... dirt or a worm?” Mum is asked who her favourite friend is; Dad is made to choose between the cat, the dog or the guinea pigs. Any ambiguous answer (‘All of them mate.’) just won’t do, and the person is pushed for a definitive answer.

I’m probably asked once a week whether I prefer rivers or lakes, and my honest answer – that I’d be lost without either – is usually greeted with the same look of dissatisfaction I see on Sean’s face when Jane refuses to rank her friends. But it’s true! Stillwater and flowing can each provide experiences the alternative simply cannot.

## No Choice

As good a reason as any not to form too strong an allegiance, is that for certain periods each year one will simply not be an option. It’s a case of fish lakes OR streams, or don’t fish at all. The stream closed season is the most obvious example of this. In most jurisdictions it’s illegal to trout fish most rivers for at least a few months each year, and in the case of some places like the South Island high country, that closure extends to several months. For the exclusive stream fisher, that’s a long time to go without!

Aside from man-made rules, Nature herself determines often enough whether we fish a lake or stream. Many’s the muddy river flood that’s seen me retreat gratefully to a nearby lake; or conversely, the gale ripped stillwater that sends me to the shelter of a stream. Hot summer days in Victoria would be hard indeed if lakes were the only choice, while wet cold spring days that sabotage stream fishing are often wonderful for lake mayfly. The list goes on, and the conclusion is clear – if you choose to fish either lake or stream but not both, you are limiting your opportunities substantially. It might be possible to advocate in favour of the aesthetics of lake fishing over stream or vice versa, but you cannot argue against the loss of opportunity – that’s an inescapable fact.



*A magnificent trout from Lake Purrumbete*

## The Merits

So, moving from the objective and practical to the emotional and subjective, is one really ‘better’ than the other? In terms of the skills needed to catch a trout, lakes typically throw up more challenges than streams. This assessment flies in the face of that offered by many of fly fishing’s big names historically, a fact that has puzzled me for decades.



*Smallish but very pretty - from the Catherine River*

There are a few possible explanations. One is that the historical privilege of stream fishing, where access was often more tightly controlled than for lakes (and still is in some places) created an aura of exclusivity. It then followed (however illogically) that privileged anglers were also very skilled anglers. Another possibility is that, as touched on above, the undeniable delights of stream fishing – easily readable water, generally higher densities of more competitive trout, more opportunity for dry fly, beautiful landscapes – have become confused with the skill level necessary to fish a stream. A third possibility (and call me a heretic!) is that some fly fishing greats found lake fishing more difficult than they were willing to concede, and thus built up the mythology of stream fishing requiring greater skill.

In terms of pure sensory appeal, it's much harder to argue against streams. There is something primal about the appeal of flowing water; how it seems to be alive. And despite the many pretty lakes I can think of, they're way outnumbered by beautiful stream-scapes. Some of the best trout lakes can often appear quite barren, even forbidding – they have looks only a fisher could love! It's much harder to find an ugly stream.

There is also a sense of connection you get with a stream – especially a small to medium-sized stream. After a few hours you can begin to be mesmerised by the current, the surrounding banks and endless little details. It's hard to achieve the same level of intimacy on the wide expanse of a lake.

### **Being Better**

What you should get from fly fishing and what you 'need' to enjoy fly fishing isn't up to me or anyone else to tell you. But if you want to be a better fly fisher in terms of overall skill level and ability to capitalise on available opportunities, then you should learn to fish lakes and rivers.

As a lake guide, I see two fundamental shortcomings with people who primarily fish streams. By far the most prevalent is lack of speed. While stream trout generally wait in the same square metre or so of stream for the current to deliver food, lake trout are usually moving, and often quite quickly. The window of opportunity during that most blessed of lake fishing moments when you detect an actual trout amongst all that water usually lasts no more than a blink or two. You have a few seconds at best to use the key information – where the trout was and where it might be going – to intercept it with your fly. Lake fishing is very good practice for quick, efficient casting and for noticing the barest hint of a trout.

The other shortcoming stream devotees often show is an inability to play big trout. Lake fishers get to practice dealing with large trout simply because lakes hold a much greater proportion of them. Yes, there are the inevitable exceptions in New Zealand and even parts of Tasmania and Victoria. But it's invariably my dedicated stream fishing guests who need to be coaxed away from their 3 weight rods, 3 pound tippet and tiny nets. And believe me, knowing how to successfully land a big trout is something all fly fishers need to be able to do – every stream fisher will hook one sooner or later!

The dedicated lake fisher confronted with a stream is a rarer species, but when that happens the biggest failing is likely to be (without overstating the bleeding obvious!) coping with current. Understanding sink rates in flowing water and managing drifts in two dimensions and three, are skills only a stream can teach you.

River or lake? Don't make me choose; in the immortal words of Jeff Fenech "I love youse all!"

*Philip Weigall is one of our best known Australian fly fishing writers and guides. The author of eight very popular books and countless magazine articles, he is currently editing the quarterly FlyStream magazine: [www.flystream.com](http://www.flystream.com). He also guides at Millbrook Lakes. (His articles are copyright and can't be reprinted without his permission.)*

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## Fishing Southland in late 2013

(Andrew Mossman)

When I was young and still a student, spring was a very special time for me, even if at times a little worrying. The special times came with the trout opening, which in those days was on the first Saturday in September, and I looked forward to this passionately, never missing it until the openings were scrapped many years later. This annual highlight was then followed by much study and final exams in October and November. Being only a very average student I would not fish between the trout opening and until my last exam was finished. Then of course I fished with immoderate passion until the season finished at the end of April in the following year.

Although I no longer fish the official trout opening I still look forward these days to my spring fishing. Apart from an odd sortie to some Ballarat lakes in November my first serious fishing is normally in Southland, New Zealand, for a couple of weeks in late November and early December. Therefore this year I organised my usual trip to New Zealand with a friend Bob, and off we flew on November 26 to Queenstown.

For the last year or so southern New Zealand has been very dry and the rivers throughout the year have mostly been at low summer levels. So low in fact that when I was there in April and again in November and December 2013, I was able to cross the Mataura in many places where in normal years it would be impossible. Now these low waters have been a mixed blessing. On the one hand we were able to fish runs and riffles that normally were unfishable, being too swift or too deep, but on the other hand, many of the fish caught on this last trip were not in good condition. They were not slabby, just not fat like they normally are in late spring. One further complicating factor was that there had been a very substantial flood in the Mataura in early June that did quite a bit of damage. Some of my favourite runs have been changed and one almost washed away. The significance of this flood is that I suspect it must have damaged the fly



*These Mataura browns were given away as gifts*

population. Although there were light hatches throughout the fortnight we were there, I did not see one big hatch, despite conditions appearing to be perfect on several occasions. If I am right and the insect populations and hatches have been damaged by the floods, I am confident that, as in the past, they will recover quickly. However there was quite a lot of green algae in the river which I have not seen before, and this cannot be good as it almost certainly indicates a very high level of nutrients and therefore pollution. This situation is (almost certainly) partly caused by current farming practices, especially dairying and including ever increasing irrigation demands on the Mataura water system. The drier seasons causing the lower river flows and levels must be exacerbating these problems.

However despite all this gloom my last two trips to the lower Mataura River have been excellent. In terms of fish caught, this last trip was almost my most successful fishing trip ever. In the first seven days I caught more fish than ever before, but then a New Zealand heat wave, with the temperature at Gore actually reaching 30oC, put the fish off. We still got a few fish on the last couple of days, but nowhere near as many as on the days before.

On our first day's fishing there was a strong east wind blowing, so we decided to fish the Waimea River which enters the Mataura near Mandeville. As this river runs from west to east it is a good stream to fish with the easterly blowing upstream. We had a good day catching a number of fish, though I had one of those days where I lost more than I caught. The last fish that I lost was at least 6 pounds. I survived many rushes and jumps and even more or less kept him out of the floating algae, but just when he was giving up and coming to my inadequate net, ping out flicked my little dry fly and off he slowly went.

The river was badly polluted with green algae. It was growing thickly along the banks, was all over the weed beds, and was floating down the river all day, mostly as small clumps but with occasional large clumps floating past. It made for very difficult fishing and after every few casts we had to clean the algae off our lines and flies. I was fishing with a dry fly and this shows just how bad it was. I guess this is the result of the dry season, but my New Zealand friends tell me that the Waimea River is the most polluted river in Southland.

We fished a couple of other smaller local rivers and had reasonable results. They were all at low summer levels and unless they get some rain soon the fishing in them will deteriorate. However it was in the Mataura around Gore and near Mandeville that the fishing was so productive.

The fishing on our first day on the Mataura was typical of those for the first week. It was a mild, quiet, grey day so we decided on the river just below Gore where there is a long gliding pool and some riffing water. In these conditions we were hoping for a good rise. We arrived just before

midday and odd fish were sipping, but not really working, in the gliding water. I started with my 'Upright Possum Emerger' size 17, but the first fish was not interested. I then thought I saw a spinner fly past. Now it is often difficult to distinguish Venale spinners from the duns when they're sitting on the water or flying some distance away, so I put on Hubert's Mataura Spinner just in case they were feeding on spent spinners.

I saw the first fish that I cast to come up, take the fly with a sip, turn and go down, and with what I thought was a well-timed strike I felt nothing. This is usually a bad sign, but I got the next five, all from 1¾ to 2¼ pounds, and all perfect sipping takes in the glass.

By now more fish were rising, but suddenly they refused the spinner, and as I could see a few duns coming down, with odd ones being taken, I changed to a Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear (GRHE), size 17. The first fish, a 2 pounder, took it perfectly. The fish then rejected the GRHE so I put on my No Hackle Possum Dun, size 17. I got two more but had many clear refusals. I went back unsuccessfully to the Possum Emerger upright. In desperation I tied the No Hackle Possum Dun back on and caught two more, but again had many refusals, including seeing fish swim up to the fly, look carefully at it, and then turn down rejecting it.



*A four pounder in top condition*

Clearly my flies, and in particular the No Hackle Possum Dun, were not quite right. My theory is that unless you get all of the fish that you present your fly to well (that is rise, hook and then land them) then all else being equal there is always a better fly. However in these situations what fly should I try? As all of my old favourites were failing I reverted to the popular theory "when in doubt put on a Parachute Adams". So I tied on a size 17 Para Adams, ignoring exact imitation, and got a 2 pound fish on my first cast. But it was not the answer, and again I saw fish swim up, look at the fly carefully, and then turn down rejecting it.

I made a long cast to a fish that was rising well out, but no sooner had my line hit the water and float down a little than another fish rose, right in close to me only a rod's length away. It should have been lined, but with some difficulty I dropped my fly on to him and I saw him rise, take and turn down and then I tightened into a 3 lb fish. A little further up at the top of the run, just below a willow tree, a fish rose and then took my quietly presented Para Adams and dashed out and down. When I was 15 metres into the backing I took off after the fish and 50 metres downstream I landed another superb 3 lb hen. During this fight a strong north-west wind had sprung up and the fish stopped rising. All of them! I quickly fished my way back down to where Bob was still fishing, casting a brown spider here and there but without any interest from the fish or even much interest from me.

It was now 5:45pm and we decided to have an early night. And what a wonderful day of mostly difficult fishing it had turned out to be. Apart from one session at no time did I feel that the flies I was using were quite right, despite finishing with a great bag of 14 trout. Bob, who does not fish very much, had a great day and caught fish too.

Apart from the last two days when the so-called heat wave hit us, this turned out to be the smallest bag I caught on the Mataura on this trip. My best day was 19 fish released and on the others days my bags were between these two numbers.

It is interesting but not unusual that our best day on the Mataura was a day of strong, cold southerly winds, with stronger gusts, and threatening rain but with only a few drops and some mizzle. We were fishing a long run with the wind off our bank so that there was a small lee shore. As is common there was a bigger and more consistent dun hatch in these cold conditions and the fish rose on and off all day. But like the first day the fish were selective and often refused all my usual flies, and once again I felt that I did not have quite the right fly.

In heavy wind the hatching flies get blown around quite a bit and emergers often work better than dun patterns, but on this day although the old rule worked a little it was not the grand panacea and I caught a number of fish on dun patterns. During a quiet period I even lowered my standards and used Hubert's "Bismarck" nymph (don't mention the war, but it sinks well you know) under a Para Adams and caught a couple, but as usual I caught more on the Adams, and missed a couple of other rises to the Adams. In my experience this is normal and is the reason why I avoid using an Adams as an indicator over a nymph. As a fish rises to take the Adams it often hits the line and misses the fly or 'boofs'. Provided the water is not too deep, I have found in the Mataura that to search with just an Adams, or one of my more specific dry flies, is often more productive than using two flies.

On all of the days that we fished the Mataura on this trip I never really felt that my fly was just right. There was however one wonderful little purple patch when everything just clicked. I was fishing the river just below Mandeville and we had fished all of the 'bottom' water, and had caught several fish when I decided to walk up to another run and riffle well upstream. Bob, who is waiting for a knee replacement, decided to stay put.

Now one of the peculiarities of the Mataura that is known to those who know this river well, is the way the fish will often hold and feed in very shallow water, and I mean shallow water, often only just deep enough to cover them. In this top riffle that I had just walked up to there is a shallow section just below a drop off of sorts where I have caught fish in the past. On this



*Andrew's No Hackle Possum Dun*



*The Upright Possum Emerger*

occasion, due to the low river level and the effect of the June flood, the water was a little shallower than normal and only shin deep. At its deepest it was only just over my knees, and I ain't tall.

The water was riffing and despite being so shallow I could not see the fish lying there, despite the sun being high and behind me. However the fish were clearly visible when swimming up to take a fly. I would watch a natural or my fly floating down and then suddenly a fish would materialise under the fly, quietly take it and turn down while closing its mouth. In this way using a Para Adams size 17, and often casting to a fish I had seen rise, I got five fish one after another. I then had a fish take the fly perfectly and then just as I was about to tighten it 'boofed' and bolted off and down. I had two other slow and deliberate rises that I did not feel. Clearly it was time to change the fly, so I then put on my No Hackle Possum Dun size 17 and got the previous fish that I had risen, but not felt, on the first chuck. I then caught four more with only a couple of misses. All the fish



*The Mataura has some delightful reaches*



*The Gold Rib Hare's Ear*

were from 2½ to 3½ lbs, and I had not moved more than ten metres from where I had started. It was all over in an hour. What wonderful fishing we occasionally have in this prolific river.

And so we fished on until the heat wave hit and the fishing diminished. We did not catch any New Zealand 'lunkers', with 4½ lb being the biggest. But as usual the majority weighed between 1¼ lb to 2¾ lb, with a few of 3 lb to 3½ lb. Apart from one other day when a very cold southerly wind blew and it rained a little we had fine mild weather. I just hope, as do all of the farmers with whom I spoke, that New Zealand, and in particular Southland, gets a bit of rain soon. If Southland has another dry summer then I fear for the autumn fishing.

# London Flyfishers' Club Warm Welcome

(from Dermot O'Brien)

London was busy in January; shoppers, workers and locals all going about their business in the bitter cold. I was lucky enough to be in the great city for a few days, and what better place than the London Flyfishers' Club to seek refuge from the hustle and bustle. Club member John Pilkington had told me that just turning up would not be a problem and so I walked in unannounced mid-morning. The Club, located upstairs at 69 Brook Street Central London, is hosted by the Savile Club.

The Club consists of a cluster of rooms including a dining and sitting rooms and a library. The only member present was actually reading the VFFA Newsletter (one of about half a dozen on a sideboard table in the sitting room) when I walked in.

Fred Buller introduced himself and then introduced me to the Club claret. A fine and hearty drop if I do say so. Fred, a fine host, was delighted to introduce me to two more members just arrived - Robert MacDonald and Tony Hayter who recently completed a book, *G.E.M. Skues: The Man of the Nymph*. The conversation flowed and these fellow fly fishers were keen to hear a little about the fishing in Tasmania and New Zealand.

The London Flyfishers' Club was founded in 1884 and His Royal Highness Prince Charles is Patron. The Club was constituted as a social club for gentlemen interested in the art of fly fishing and for the study and furtherance of subjects and issues of interests to fly fishermen.

The Club's library is reputed to be one of the best in existence and has many rare works amongst more than 3,000 books. Also, the Club has a well-stocked fly tying bench. Members are able to tie flies with the relevant book open in front of them.



Items of historic note include a creel reputed to have belonged to Isaac Walton and historic flies including a Greenwell's Glory tied by Canon Greenwell himself. Several rods are in glass boxes, among them Skues's 1905 Leonard.

So in the heart of busy London a fly fisherman's oasis ... a good way to describe the London Flyfishers' Club.

## David Featherstone in Tasmania

In November last year David Featherstone travelled to Tasmania to donate a number of items to the Australian Fly Fishing Museum at Clarendon. Prior to this trip Dermot O'Brien from Channel 10 had produced a DVD focusing on part of David's fly fishing career, including the early days of Lakes Eildon, Eucumbene and Jindabyne.

David travelled to the Apple Isle on the Princess of Tasmania and delivered the following items:

- Two glass cabinets containing five monster Eucumbene brown trout and Lake Eildon brown trout (one of which was the Eildon record brown trout, taken on a fly in 1956).
- Three framed posters of the early days of these venues and the class fly fishers of that period.
- A magnificent fly cabinet of Fred Craker's flies, displaying 1,200 flies in 10 sectional drawers.
- A glass cabinet display of David's favourite flies from 70 years of fly fishing.

On arriving at Clarendon David was met by Michael Stevens, Hugh Maltby, Andrew Braithwaite and a number of other willing helpers to unload the 4x4. They were particularly pleased to receive the Jack Ritchie VFFA shadow cabinet.

David found this experience a wonderful honour for him in the twilight years of his involvement in this fantastic sport.

PS: Whilst in Tasmania David took the opportunity fish Penstock Lagoon and Arthurs Lake for ten browns to 3 lb, all taken on the dry fly.



*Part of David's contribution to the Museum*



*He had a good day on Arthurs Lake*

## The Return to Ascension Bay

*(By Paul Sharman. Until recently Paul was editor of 'Fish & Fly, The World of Fishing Online', the largest online fly fishing magazine in Europe. It was Paul who gave us permission to use those many articles on French Leader and Leader to Hand technique by UK guide Jeremy Lucas. However a few months ago Paul left 'Fish & Fly' and is now working as a freelance outdoor writer and photographer. He recently emailed the following article and invited us to use it in our February newsletter. You can find more of Paul's work at [www.paulsharmanoutdoors.com](http://www.paulsharmanoutdoors.com). You can also see his work and lots of other quality fly fishing photos at [www.flymage.net](http://www.flymage.net), a very impressive online fly fishing magazine.)*

The chance to revisit the stunning golden flats of Mexico's Ascension Bay, home to myriad bonefish, permit and tarpon, is one that I always find hard to resist. I love the mix of fishing available but also the fact that you have all the Mayan culture and history nearby as well as the Sian Ka'an biosphere reserve with all its amazing wildlife too. Viva Mexico!



Sight fishing the flats is all about the anticipation and no more so then when on the hunt for permit – crab fly at the ready.



Permit can be found year round and although they are not always big they are always welcome.



Bonefish galore – this mixed school of bonefish, permit, ladyfish, lookdowns and jacks included several bones that were easily 5lb+ and just proves Ascension Bay does hold some larger fish too, not just the large schools of small fish it is already well-known for.

Just to prove a point, a larger than average bonefish screams off on a run.



The prize.

Poling along a promising flat under azure skies on the hunt for bonefish and permit



Resident tarpon in the 20lb class are always a great way to liven up the day and don't need any persuading to go airborne, often multiple times.



No worries with leaving your tackle lying around out here when you have the whole flat to yourself– just don't forget where you left it!



Triggerfish are already targeted in other tropical areas around the world so we thought we'd give them a go in Mexico and found them extremely willing to take a fly. This was my third trip to Pesca Maya lodge, gateway to Ascension Bay and as always it delivered. In this case particularly well for my fishing companion who not only caught his first permit on the fly but also managed a grand slam too. I'm already looking forward to the next visit.  
<http://www.pescamaya.com>

# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *Kossy's Shrimp*



Richard Kos, member of the VFFA Council, is one of our talented fly tiers. His popular and very effective Damsel Nymph was featured in our February 2009 issue. Kossy is a creative and thoughtful tier who keeps coming up with clever original patterns and variations to established patterns. For the VFFA trip to Warrnambool last November he decided to experiment with a new shrimp pattern – and a good choice too, as the Merri River at Warrnambool has a very healthy shrimp population and the local trout gorge on them.

So Kossy consulted his reference – “*The Waterbug Book: A Guide to the Freshwater Macroinvertebrates of Temperate Australia*” (by Gooderham and Tsyrlin), found some pictures of common Australian shrimp species, and went about devising a fly pattern to represent them. The photo shows his handiwork.

There are lots shrimp patterns around; some quite simple to tie and others incredibly complicated. Fly tiers will agree that Kossy's shrimp is not too hard to put together, and it really looks the part. As it happens, not many trout were caught on the VFFA Warrnambool trip last year. Richard was one of the few successful anglers, and the fine 3 lb brown he captured from the upper Merri fell to this new shrimp pattern. He tells us that it still needs more field testing, but it's off to a good start.

### **Kossy's Shrimp:**

- Hook: The Gamakatsu S11-2L is the preferred hook but is no longer available, so the Kamasan B830 in sizes 10 and 12 is a suitable alternative.
- Thread: White 6/0.
- Eyes: Either small black eyes by Wapsi, or a pair of black eyes made by melting some monofilament line (see note below).
- Feelers: Four strands of Gold Krystal Flash supported by a small tuft of white Sparkle Yarn.

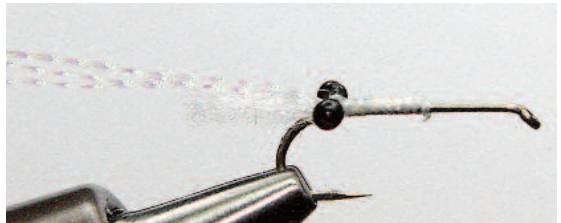
- Body: Rainy's Sparkle Dub Number 2, 'Mother of Pearl'.
- Thorax: Rainy's Sparkle Dub Number 19, 'Smoky Orange'. (It would seem that Rainy's Sparkle Dub is no longer available, so Richard is searching for alternatives. Scintilla dubbing is a possible alternative.)
- Rib: UTC Ultra wire - Chartreuse (small diameter).
- Shellback: Wapsi sow-scut back, clear, 3.0 mm wide. (There are other brands of shellback material available, but the Wapsi scud back is more translucent and gives a better finish).

**Tying Procedure:**

1. Start the thread at the halfway point along the hook shank and wind towards the bend.
2. Tie in a thin wad of Sparkle Yarn so that it extends about a centimetre past the bend of the hook. Then tie down and trim off the unwanted yarn along the hook shank.
3. Tie in the four strands of Krystal Flash on top of the Sparkle Yarn. The Feelers should extend past the bend of the hook by 3 - 4 cm.



4. Tie on the pair of eyes using plenty of figure of eight turns. Then add a drop of super glue to hold the eyes in place.



5. Tie a short length of scud back in between the eyes so that it points back over the Feelers as shown.



6. Start dubbing the Mother of Pearl around the eyes, then tie in 2 or 3 turns of the orange dubbing to create a 2.0 mm thick thorax (which actually represents the gut region of the shrimp).



7. Tie in the rib so that you will start winding it in at the end of the orange dubbing.

8. Continue with the pearl dubbing to the tail, leaving enough room to tie off the scud back and ribbing.

9. Stretch the scud back across the body towards the tail and tie it off.



10. Wind the wire ribbing towards the tail using 6 to 8 turns, then tie it off and apply some head cement or super glue at the tie off point.

11. Take a Prisma Colour or similar olive green permanent marker and run it along the top of the fly. Then trim the scud back to finish it over the eye of the hook.

12. Pick out some of the dubbing to form legs, then trim off the ends of the dubbing fibres from the tail to the point of the hook to tidy it up and produce a nicely balanced fly.



There you have it - the Kossy Shrimp. Tried first on the Merri River at Warrnambool, where the first cast resulted in a 3 lb brown being landed. It will be tested further on the lakes around Daylesford and Ballarat, and on the streams and estuaries around the Otways.

**Note: making pairs of black eyes.**

To do this you need either the black plastic fibres from one of those wide yard brooms, or some thick monofilament line (0.60 mm diameter or larger). The monofilament gives a better result.

You also need a small pair of fine point long nose pliers and a cigarette lighter (with some YouTube experts suggesting that lighters using butane fuel are better).

Cut a 2.0 cm length of, say, the monofilament and hold it crossways in the tip of the pliers so that half of the monofilament sticks out each side. Now light the flame and bring one end of the monofilament up very close to the side of the flame (but not in the flame). The monofilament will melt and smoulder and form a tiny round ball as it burns back to the pliers. Repeat this process on the other end of the monofilament.

You should now have a very short length of monofilament in the tip of the pliers with small spheres at each end – in other words a pair of eyes.

Hold the eyes until they cool. If they haven't turned black in the process then a quick dab with a black permanent marker will produce a neat pair of black eyes for your shrimp.

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## This Month's Yarn

(... from March 1960)

"I'll tell you something quite unusual," said Alf, as Richard Kos pushed some dollars across the bar and nodded to the barmaid to replenish McTaggart's glass. "I was up on the Neverfail Creek near Corryong a few years ago and was fishing that new rig. You know – where you have a nymph hanging underneath a dry fly indicator. And you wouldn't believe it - I hooked two fish on the one cast. A lively little rainbow snatched the dry off the surface just as a brown swallowed the nymph. It was all fun and games from then on, I tell you. As I said, quite an unusual experience."

McTaggart drew a thoughtful swig from his glass of lunch before responding. "Yes, I'd agree that it's a fairly rare experience. Mind you I had an even stranger one when fishing Lake Dartmoch some years ago. On my first cast of the evening rise my fly was taken by a very lively rainbow of about 6 lb. It went berserk, leaping out of the water at least eight times, each leap higher than the one before. I was well into my backing with this fish making his final leap when a large black duck, disturbed by all the fuss, took off in fright. The rainbow was in the process of a loop the loop in mid-air at this instant, and a coil of fly line wrapped around the duck's neck and strangled it. As I retrieved the fish and the duck a young kangaroo that had witnessed all of this was so overcome with amazement and shock that it fell into the water and drowned. So from that one cast our party dined magnificently on kangaroo tail soup, smoked fish, roast duck, and steaks from the kangaroo's haunch."

At this point Kossy, who was collecting his change off the bar, raised a sceptical eyebrow. So McTaggart quickly added, "Just to indicate the absolute veracity of this story have a look at these boots I'm wearing. They were made from the hide of that very same kangaroo!"



# 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

### 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: Mick Hall**
- 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