

FLY LINES



FEBRUARY 2022

February 2022 Meeting: 'Liars' Night'

Again, our first meeting of the year is a review of the exploits and successes of members over the Christmas period. Many of us have been out fishing and the reports we're hearing are the predictable assortment of tales of good and no so good fortune. That's fishing.

New Zealand is often a happy hunting ground for members over the December/January holidays, but not this year. The covid menace has fouled things up, including the popular escape to the Shaky Isles.

So it's been Tasmania, NSW to some extent, and our own Victorian lakes and streams that have drawn the attention of members.

Thursday, February 24,
8:00pm at the
Kelvin Club

President David Hooke and his aides have been rounding up reports, and some prime suspects have been identified and recruited. So Liars' Night this year will be another fabulous opportunity to catch up with colleagues while hearing ripping tales of trout encountered.

We would encourage all members to join us for what will be a great start to the year, but PLEASE make a booking for dinner by Wednesday February 23, by emailing Terry Rogers at terryrogers@bigpond.com and leaving a message.



This photo is from Mark Weigall's fabulous collection of New Zealand Photos

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

VOL. 70 NO.4 - FEBRUARY 2022 Organisation No. A0024750J

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Bernard prospecting

We welcome a new member

It is our great pleasure this month to again welcome a new member to the Association. Ray Goddard has recently joined our ranks. We trust that his membership brings many years of enjoyment and pleasure, along with lots of great memories

VFFA Dinner – December 10, 2021

Some 45 members and wives gathered at the Kelvin Club on Friday, December 10, to share a meal together and celebrate the end of our VFFA year. It was the Annual Dinner combined with the Christmas Dinner, and thus an appropriate occasion for presenting badges to our latest group of twenty-five and fifty year members. Our twenty-five year members included Richard Garvey and Mark Wright, and our fifty year members included Brian Eddy, Colin Feely and Duncan Milenkovic. It was also the ideal opportunity to present our treasurer, Tony Mitchem, with a well-deserved Life Membership. Tony has been our hard-working and very efficient treasurer for nearly 20 years. This was an exceptionally popular and keenly endorsed award.

Our guest speaker for the night was Jim Allen, OAM, and he was in scintillating form. Here is the text of his presentation:

Recently at another club in town Mike Jarvis, Chris Gray and David Hooke heard me give an address to another fly fishing mob. Afterwards David and Mike insisted I give the same address to our annual dinner, which because of Covid has turned out to be our Christmas dinner! So here I am, and here it is!

I've thought about tonight for some time and decided I just couldn't do another

"how to, where to, or how I did I do it fly fishing speech". So I thought instead I'd look back at times past. Most of us here in the room tonight are probably playing in the last quarter, a few perhaps even in 'time-on', so I thought a little reflection wouldn't hurt.

I'm classified today as a 'baby boomer', being born at about the time that Adolf Hitler died, and I was about one year old when the atomic bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima to end the second world war.

Some years ago Albert Facey wrote a book called *A Fortunate Life*. I suspect many of us here tonight could say he stole the title of our book if we were to write our autobiographies. When I look back at our time and compare it with the new so-called politically correct "woke" society we live in today we have certainly been very fortunate.

As boys we had freedoms unknown to the young today. We have not seen a true depression like the 1930's. A few went to Korea or Vietnam, but most of us haven't had to shoulder arms and fight in a major war. In fact most of our lives have been changed more in just the past year with this wretched virus, where Australia today could again be called the Lucky Country with so few deaths per million. Is it good government, or good management, or just luck that we are an island? I don't know; nor will I guess!

We were banned last year from fishing for about six weeks. Now that was hard!!! Which gets me to the point of this address.

I think that anglers are born as 'fishos' - perhaps a throwback to our neanderthal 'hunter-gatherer' past. In a survey of 3,000 elderly anglers by the International Game Fish Association some years ago they discovered that over 93% of anglers who fished regularly were fishing by the age of



President David Hook presenting Duncan Milenkovic with his badge for fifty years of membership



Treasurer Tony Mitchem – the recipient of an Honorary Life Membership

eight - well before they could make their own decisions about where to go to fish. However, they seem to have found a way – often badgering an uncle or parent into taking them to the local stream or jetty. And thereafter fishing stayed with them for life!!

Years after I left school most of my mates knew I was a mad keen angler. Some would call and ask for advice: “Jim, I’ve got this eight-year-old and all he wants to do is go fishing. What do I do? I can’t stand fishing. It bores the pants off me!”

I’d reply, “Just leave him at the local creek or pier with a beginner’s outfit and a bit of bait. He’ll be fine. Each pier has a fishing community, and no harm will come to him. He might arrive home smelling dreadful and the family cat will love him. And he’ll have had a good day, fish or no fish.”

Other mates who were anglers would call and ask, “How do I get my young bloke to go fishing? He’s not interested. All he wants to do is play footy or cricket or tennis.” I’d reply: “Don’t even try. It won’t work. It’s in the genes. He just might go to be with his dad, but that’s all. It won’t be because of the fishing, and it never will be.”

In previous speeches I’ve often commented that anglers are ‘queer’. I don’t mean in a limp-wristed way. Let me explain. In my earlier life selling fishing tackle all anglers needed to buy hooks. At the time the leading hook maker in the world was a Norwegian firm called O. Mustad and Sons. They had made hooks in Norway for over 400 years. Sadly today the same company has them made in Asia.

These days hooks are put in clear packs to hang on display racks. In my time they were put in little white boxes of 50 or 100 hooks. They were made in over 100 different shapes, and all in some 10 to 20 different sizes.

A snapper angler might come in ask for a size 2/0 92554 Suicide pattern, or a fly tyer might ask for a 94840 Dry Fly hook to tie flies. I’d then go to the correct drawer and pull out the requested box and pass it over to the buyer, who nine times out of ten would open the box, extract a hook, hold it up to the light, and say, “That’s perfect.” The sale was made, and I would make about 1% profit on the sale. Well, I bought it from Mr Mustad for a dollar and sold it for two – I think that’s 1% isn’t it! Anyway, it doesn’t matter - everyone was happy!

But what I could never understand was that our erstwhile angler, then heading home and running a bit late, would race into the local milk bar and ask for a box of Cadbury’s chocolates as an appeasement for the bride. Our milk bar owner Luigi (though these days a 7/11 owner is called Mahatma) would pull down the purple box and no one ever questioned whether Mr Cadbury had put the right chocolates in the box. No inspections ever - just total trust.

And to my knowledge Mr Mustad had never put the wrong hook or the wrong-sized hook in a box! But it’s really not about anglers being queer - just passionate. Our angler couldn’t give a square root about the chocolates, but the hooks just had to be right! >>>

Down at Queenscliff where I live these days we had an old codger who broke the rules and continued to fish during the recent covid lockdown. Alex came to Australia first to the migrant camp at Bonegilla near Albury, then on to help build the Snowy Scheme. He was from Eastern Europe and wasn't going to have his fishing interrupted by some bloody virus.

When approached by the marine police he told them to go away. They wouldn't and wanted to fine him. He replied in his still very thick accent: "Yeah, yeah, yeah ... fine me! Today, tomorrow, anytime. I not pay any fines!" The police retorted that he may go to jail. He yelled back: "You not understand! Jail is not old man's home. I'm 86 and not have many fishing days left. Rules made by silly man, and you guys are silly too! There is no covid out here in Port Philip Bay! So leave me fish!" The police gave him a ticket, which he immediately threw away, and fished on. But it does show the passion around fishos.

Looking back at our generation and our fishing, we were the first generation to own a car. My first, as a 19-year-old, was an FJ Holden purchased, but nearly given to me, by my mother. It was £100 from memory, with a one pound a week payback program!!!

We were the first generation to have easy access to north-east Victorian rivers and the newly developed Snowy Mountains scheme with legendary waters like Lake Eucumbene and Tantangara Reservoir. We were the first generation to go anywhere we liked. Anglers before this time usually travelled in a furniture van from a fishing club. In my early days there was an angling club in nearly every Melbourne suburb. And in the early 1960's the Hume, Geelong and Ballarat highways were all one lane each way - hard to comprehend today!!



Retiring president Chris Gray was presented with his Immediate Past President's badge by Mike Jarvis

Even aircraft travel became available at a reasonable price only in our time, and fishing tourism developed. Some here will remember Noel Jetson – well, he was the first trout guide in Australia.

Very few anglers fished New Zealand and Tasmania until a decade or more after the war. We were the first to make frequent trips to these places. Nowadays Christmas Island, Argentina ... in fact anywhere where there is good fishing is on the agenda.

Today I have a view that we might also be the last generation to fish for large genuinely-wild trout. The pressure is so great today that hatcheries are needed to replace the trout taken. Many anglers these days do put their fish back, but it might not be enough. Even in the remote western lakes of Tasmania and the rivers of New Zealand many fish have been caught more than once. The trout even look old and past their prime, and it is not unusual now to have to share a lake, river or lagoon with other anglers. Very few waters are left that don't see an angler fairly frequently.

I went on a trip to Alaska some years ago to fish for Coho salmon. We were guaranteed and sold a certainty, but on arrival found the salmon run had not even

started. So we were not happy campers. As a consolation the lodge offered us some truly wild large rainbow trout fishing in a remote river accessed by De Havilland floatplanes. The aircraft landed on a lake and then jet boats transferred us up the river and we started fishing.

We did catch some rainbows, but most had been caught many times before looking at the hook marks in their mouths. They didn't fight hard as I think they knew they would soon be released back into the water. We caught them on Globugs fished under an indicator, which is not the most exciting trout fishing either. I didn't go back to Alaska after two visits - way too over-crowded with American anglers, and their definition of remote and size was, and is, very different to mine.

My very first fishing experiences were visits to the Portsea and Sorrento piers when aged eight, catching leatherjackets. It was my first taste of sight fishing. My love of polaroiding trout and bonefish with a fly rod came from those early days watching the leatheries dart in and out of the pylons of the piers. Then as young teenagers we caught barracouta from Station and Princess piers. In those days most Melburnians travelled by ship to England, and only a few flew by air.



Guest speaker Jim Allen was in sparkling form

As youngsters we had freedoms not known by young boys today with their helicopter parents. We left home on bikes just after dawn. No helmets, and the only rule was to be home by the time the lights came on in the street. No mobiles, no tracking, no-one knew where we were. We usually got home on time because we were starving.

I remember all the ships at Port Melbourne, and can still recite the tonnages of the Orion, Orsova, Orcades, the Stratheden, and many others. We sold barracouta to the merchant seamen. Threepence for a small fish, and up to ninepence for a pick handle (over two feet long).

We pier rats had the run of the ships - one minute in the boiler room with the most dreadful looking lascars, and then on the top deck with the skipper. And no one seemed to mind. The only rule was to be off the boat when the bells rang for sailing. Us pier rats could then throw streamers to those on deck with uncanny accuracy. We were tipped a penny. Today security won't even let a boy on to the pier to fish, let alone aboard a cruise ship.

I remember coming home after a very successful day with a one pound note I'd made from selling fish, and the Spanish Inquisition that followed when my mother wanted to know how I had such a large sum of money. And she took a lot of convincing, as our pocket money then was about ten cents a week.

Later, as a slightly older teenager I would take the tram to Spencer Street, then a train to Bacchus Marsh, to go rabbiting - armed with a box of ferrets and .22 rifle (then called a 'pea rifle'). Imagine the Number 8 tram today, with a blood-spattered 14-year-old heading home holding a rifle and few dead rabbits hanging around his neck!!!

We usually sold to some to the crowds heading home from the football. >>>

People loved rabbits before myxomatosis arrived. In those days boys from Scotch College or Melbourne Grammar carried .303 rifles home on trams after cadet training. Not even thinkable today!

I remember the tip opposite Como Park and Royal South Yarra Tennis Club and the birds nesting all along the Yarra. Every boy then was undressed if he didn't have a shanghai and a Joseph Rogers pocket knife - all highly illegal today. We made our own slingshots or shanghais and were intensely proud of them. And we were very accurate with them too!

The botanical gardens were a playground for bird nesting and catching eels using a bamboo pole with a piece of meat tied to some 40 lb line. The eel would grab the meat and was lifted out on the pole. The trick was to get it into a hessian sugar bag before it slid back into the lake. The eels were then delivered live to a Mr Greco who repaired shoes in Rose Street Armadale. He purged them in a bath, smoked them, and then sent them back to relatives in Europe. And he always had a Tex Bar for us boys - a forerunner of the Mars Bars that came later!! And my mum told me years later that she never paid for school shoe repairs.

We boys had a secret wombat hole hidden under the fence around the Botanical Gardens, and while the gardeners used to chase us away on evening after the gardens were closed, they never found our hole.

I can reliably inform you that in the early days previous governors of Victoria shot ducks from the Government House tower at dusk when the ducks flew past from Albert Park Lake to the gardens to shelter for the night. The last governor to do this was Sir Rohan Delacombe. When questioned he claimed he was only shooting shags or cormorants. In those days there was a five-shilling bounty on shooting shags. The government paid shooters to shoot them. They were



John Pilkington, our recently retired librarian, enjoyed Jim's presentation

regarded as a pest then, but are a protected species today!

I look back today on the lives we lived and think about the new generation of youngsters today. It seems to me they spend most of their recreational hours in front of a screen, either a mobile phone or an iPad, playing games. War-like and violent ones too. Perhaps our time with rods and rifles were violent in a different way. We shot birds and rabbits and killed fish, and sometimes fired on each other with shanghais if it was war with the Richmond boys who wanted to take over our tip in South Yarra!

Outdoor life no longer exists in the format that we once knew, and in the autumn of my years I worry for the future. I know for our economy to grow we must have growth in progress, population and migration. The building industry is fundamental to our economy.

We as youngsters had no knowledge of allergies. Today a child can't even take a peanut butter sandwich to school, and an epipen is kept in every classroom. And the grasslands of Melton and Bacchus Marsh that we roamed as kids are all suburbs today.

I suspect that mankind has become a plague on this precious planet of ours, and I despair for future generations that possibly will not see the rapidly disappearing wild animals on the Serengeti in Africa because of population increases that are worldwide. On a visit to Kenya in 2018 I was shocked to find that the Chinese were building a railway line right through the national park near Nairobi under some 'Belt and Road' scheme.

In the future we may no longer be able to hunt and fish except on refuges or national parks set aside especially for some sort of continuation of our sport. The freedom to camp anywhere we liked, sit around a fire, make noise, and build a shack on a beach or stream is now lost forever, and probably rightly so.

I read last week that the English National Health Service has prescribed fishing as a tonic for those who suffer stress and mental health issues. I think all of us know only too well the benefits and pleasures of being out there in the outback, fly rod in hand, seeing and smelling the cooling bush at sunset or a dewy pastel dawn. It is Isaac Walton and Charles Cotton who some 400 years ago named angling the 'contemplative man's recreation'.

I know I will be dead in a few years' time. I can mentally handle that final outcome; except I would like to come back every half century to see how mankind is dealing with the next few thousand years. Sadly, I know it can't happen! Will we and our political leaders have the intelligence to live sustainably without progress, without population growth, without migration? Or will nature bring another of these wretched viruses back to wipe half of us out?

I live in hope that we will be able to navigate a positive course, though the Melbourne I live in today is certainly not the same as the one I grew up in.

Now I've probably spoken way too long, so I'll finish tonight's diatribe with the words of Edward Abbey in a small book called *The Earth Speaks*. These words were passed on to me in 1959 by a retired teacher at a school reunion at Geelong Grammar:

"One final paragraph of advice: do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am - a reluctant enthusiast, a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land. It is even more important to enjoy it while you can, while it's still there.

So get out and hunt and fish and mess about with your friends. Ramble out yonder and explore the forests, climb the mountains, bag the peaks, run the rivers. Breathe deep of the sweet and lucid mountain air. Sit quietly for a while and contemplate the previous stillness - that lovely, mysterious and awesome place.

Enjoy yourselves. Keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to your body, the body active and alive. And I promise you this much - I promise you this one sweet victory over our enemies, over those desk-bound people with their hearts in a safe deposit box and their eyes hypnotised by desk calculators and screens.

I promise you this: you will outlive the bastards!!!!"



President's Message

Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish that they are after. (Henry David Thoreau)

I do hope you all had a pleasant Christmas with your families and have enjoyed a break over January.

It's not too long a bow to say our VFFA Christmas season started with the Annual Dinner on December 10 - generally agreed, a great evening. Our guest speaker, Jim Allen, as always was full of wise counsel and kept us mightily entertained with reflections on his life involved with his passion for fishing and particularly fly fishing. The transcript of his talk appears elsewhere in this issue.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of 25 year medals to Richard Garvey and Mark Wright; 50 year medals to Brian Eddy, Colin Feely, and Duncan Milenkovic; and the Immediate Past-President's badge to Chris Gray.

Our Constitution allows for the Council to bestow one Honorary Life Membership each year at its discretion. It gave me great pleasure, on behalf of Council, to present this award to Tony Mitchem, our longest serving treasurer in the history of the VFFA. Congratulations Tony, and on behalf of all members of the VFFA I thank you for your continuing service as Treasurer.

We also took the opportunity to make a small presentation to Fiona Keam, our long suffering and very skilled typesetter who, together with Lyndon, produces our superb *Fly Lines* newsletter, of which we are all so proud.

The raffle was very successful, raising around \$3,000, and for this we are most grateful to those who purchased large numbers of tickets on the night, and to



Dr David Hooke

our sponsors who I listed and thanked in the December newsletter. Again, I express our appreciation to them for their ongoing support and encourage you in turn to support them.

Each person who attended the Dinner also received a gift box (courtesy of Wes Betts) containing two flies - a Red Tag tied by John Pilkington and a Black Spinner tied by Robert Bailey. A lovely touch to add to a memorable evening, so thank you John and Robert.

Unfortunately Covid, with possibly a contribution from the holiday season, put the mockers on the January trip to Millbrook Lakes. You may remember that last year the weather was too hot for our January visit, but this year I think everybody is tending to stay at home and probably enjoying catching up with families, having been locked down for so long. Whatever the combination of

factors, we simply didn't have enough takers to make it worthwhile.

However, we have two major events coming up in February. The first is a trip to Currawong Lakes in Tasmania, which I have no doubt will be a splendid week for those enrolled. I have family connections with Richard and Merran who own and run Currawong and cannot recommend it highly enough. If you fancy yourself as a clay target shooter, they have one of the best ranges in Australia - fun for experienced and novice shooters alike. The fishing in the three lakes is all anyone could wish for and the accommodation and hospitality is splendid. Very family friendly as well, so do have a look at their website.

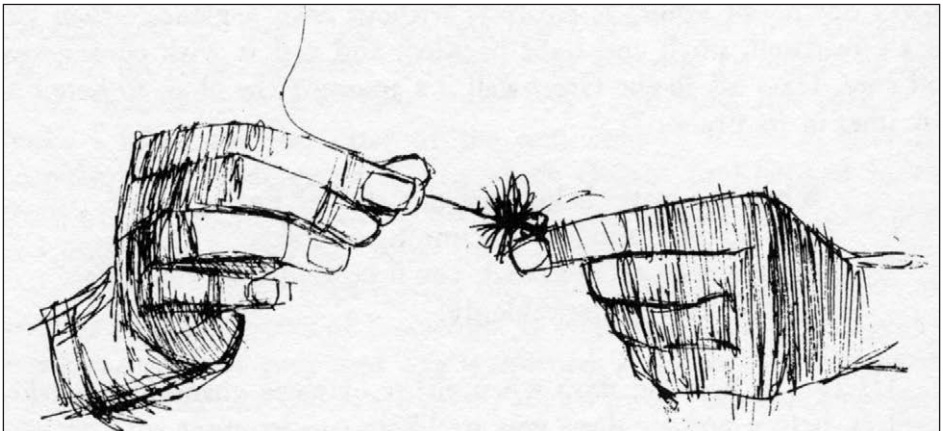
Our traditional trip to Peter Hayes at Cressy follows on from February 12. Covid of course has cast a pall over this as well. Or should I say the potential government response to Covid is leaving us all somewhat anxious. Not so much about catching Covid, as we're all now vaccinated, but the consequences of contact, isolation, quarantine, being in a group, travelling by plane or on the Spirit

have all given us 'pause for thought.' The uncertainty surrounding all of this is unsettling to say the least. Time to get on with it, recognise that the virus will become endemic, and live with it. I note Denmark has now thrown out all restrictions.

Our first meeting for the year is our traditional Liars' Night on Thursday, February 24, and I'm hopeful I will be able to press-gang speakers from Currawong Lakes and from Cressy to tell tales about their, and their mates, summer fishing. Any other members who have had interesting fishing over the summer, please contact me. It would be great to have other contributions too.

Our guest speakers for the March meeting are Frank Gadea and Cleola Anderiesz. Frank is a Councillor and runs worldwide angling tours. It will be a fascinating evening and I will provide more detail in a separate article.

Let's hope 2022 is better than 2021. At this stage we are scheduling all our monthly meetings at the Kelvin Club. In the words of Henry Thoreau, it's not just the fishing that we are after!



Tying on a fly – Scholes drawing

The March Meeting with Frank Gadea

Frank Gadea and his wife Cleola are passionate fly fishers.

Frank has fished all over the world in some of the most exotic destinations, both for freshwater and saltwater species. As well as fishing for trout throughout Australasia, including the North and South Islands of New Zealand, he has fished for the many saltwater species in the northern Australian tropics and the Pacific. Most recently he has put together a trip to Christmas Island staying at the renowned and renovated Captain Cook Lodge.

Further afield Frank has fished for Mahseer in India, sea run trout in Patagonia, Dorado and Pacu in Argentina and Paraguay, Barramundi in Sri Lanka, Arctic char in Greenland, Tigerfish in Tanzania and Bonefish in Kiribati.

He is a certified Fly Casting Instructor and is currently working on his Masters Casting Certificate.

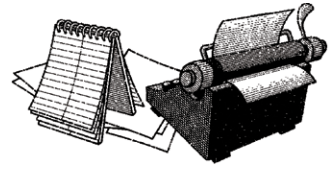
Given all of the above, it's not hard to imagine that he will be able to speak to us with authority about some of the most interesting places to fish around the world. This will be a fascinating and very entertaining meeting, so mark it in your diary – Thursday, March 17.

At this stage we are planning for the meeting to be held at the Kelvin Club, but clearly reserve the right to alter this to an electronic presentation via Zoom should circumstances so demand.



Frank Gadea and Cleola Anderiesz with matching catches

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"If I fished only to capture fish, my fishing trips would have ended long ago." (Zane Grey - 'Tales of Southern Rivers')

"There will be days when the fishing is better than one's most optimistic forecast, others when it is far worse. Either is a gain over just staying home." (Roderick Haig Brown)

"Fly fishermen are born honest, but they get over it." (Ed Zern)

"Look where Jesus went to pick the best people. He didn't go to the colleges, he got guys off the fishing docks." (Jeff Foxworthy)

"Always carry a flagon of whiskey in case of snakebite, and furthermore always carry a small snake." (W. C. Fields)

"The double-clarinet in India was primarily used for snake charming, since the snake would do almost anything to get the Indians to stop playing it." (Victor Borge)

I was hunting through a pile of old VFFA newsletters a few weeks ago when I came across this supposedly truthful report from the May 1970 newsletter:

"At Easter the accommodation at the Buxton Hotel was booked out mainly by trout fishermen and some wives. Just on lunchtime one day a guest came galloping in to say that he had seen a large snake in the yard and it had slithered under a big log lying there. It was agreed that the snake had to be got rid of, as nobody would feel comfortable with it around.

One knowledgeable guest said he'd heard that snakes will respond to music, so the plan was for several men to station themselves round the log with suitable weapons, while someone played an attractive tune. But on what? The only musical instrument in the hotel was a piano, which was way too heavy to carry outside. After a puzzled pause one of the house guests confessed that he had his bagpipes with him. Perhaps he

could play a few lively Scottish jigs. He retrieved his bagpipes, and five of the more resolute gents equipped with heavy sticks stationed themselves strategically around the log.

The musical performance began, and went on for some three-quarters of an hour. But no snake appeared. In the meantime the dinner gong had been rung and the gentlemen with the sticks were getting impatient. So it was decided that two men should roll the log over while



This friendly-looking serpent was resting on the path near Tasmania's Four Springs Lake

>>>

the others stood at the ready with their sticks.

The log was pushed over, and the snake was revealed. But it remained quite motionless - it had been dead for the last twenty minutes."

Two comments. First, I hasten to say I don't mind bagpipes, especially as my son-in-law is from Scotland. Secondly, snakes are very much part of our trout fishing environment and experience. We've all seen them, and we all have tales to tell.

My first fishing and snake experience happened in 1977. I had driven over to the Moyne River near Port Fairy and was fishing my way quietly upstream near the old railway bridge. Not a lot was happening and my mind was miles away when I glanced down and saw a reasonably substantial copperhead snake curled up in a tight circle lying right between my feet. How I hadn't stood on it remains a huge mystery. I did an instantaneous backwards leap of several feet. The snake didn't move, so I wondered if it was dead. So I gave it a poke in the ribs with the tip of my rod and it leapt into action. The head came up, the snake glared at me then raced off upstream at a rate of knots. At this point I decided that the downstream fishing was undoubtedly better.

I also recall fishing the Kybean River in NSW with Hubert Reichelt in January 1989. During our trip we had seen some snakes, but Hubert assured me they were no problem. He knew about snakes and how to handle them. They didn't bother him at all.

When we arrived back at the car after an afternoon's fishing Hubert discovered to his dismay that he had lost a box of flies - in fact an expensive aluminium fly box packed tight with his superbly tied nymphs. So we left our gear at the

car and started hiking back along the river, hunting for the lost box. I was ahead when I suddenly heard an ear-piercing shriek. I spun around and saw Hubert leaping high in the air, with his legs tucked up tight. He had stood on the middle of a sizeable tiger snake, both halves of which were complaining bitterly at Hubert's size 12 wader boot landing on it.

Fortunately, most of our snake encounters are just harmless observations of snakes doing their thing in the wild, but a few of us have had more serious interviews. In 2001 VFFA member Bill Thomas stepped out of his car on the banks of the Delatite River and was bitten on the back of his leg by a large tiger snake. His fishing compatriot Martyn immediately drove him at great velocity to the hospital at Mansfield (that fortunately had antivenene), and subsequently he was flown by helicopter to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, where his continuing treatment over several days was not all that attractive. Our February 2002 newsletter tells the story.

One of my favourite snake stories is of the members of the Bairnsdale club who many years ago drove up to their lodge on the Mitta River on the Friday before the trout season opened so they would have an early start. They slept well, and on the Saturday morning, opening day, they were up early cooking bacon and eggs when a large (and quite deadly) brown snake that had taken up residence in one of the beds over winter came wandering out to see what the fuss was all about. I'm told there was lots of leaping and square dancing as shovels and axes were grabbed and bits of snake and lumps of floorboard were chopped into small pieces.

And to finish, a newsletter report on the VFFA meeting of November 1996 had as guest speaker Dr David Mackay, a

specialist medical practitioner, avid fly fisher, and member of the Southern Fly Fishers. Dr Mackay, who worked at the Austin Hospital, had some expertise on snakes and snake bites, and spent the evening telling members how to avoid getting bitten and what to do if they did get bitten. All very informative and helpful.

Then to finish Dr Mackay told his audience about some of the bizarre experiences medical people at the Austin Hospital had encountered with snake bite victims over the years. On one particular evening of note a middle-aged gent very much under the influence of intoxicating liquor came wandering in complaining he had just been bitten by a snake. He was asked where and when and how long ago, and was finally asked what sort of snake had bitten him. He explained that he didn't know much about snakes and guessed someone would possibly ask him this question, so he had brought the snake with him. At this point he put his hand into the pocket of his overcoat and dropped three foot of very lively tiger snake onto the floor of the emergency ward. As Dr Mackay recalls, a couple of terminally ill patients

suddenly came back to life, a paraplegic in a wheelchair leapt out and sprinted off down a corridor, and general mayhem and pandemonium continued to reign until someone snatched a patient's crutch and beat the poor snake to death.

Perhaps in finishing I should list Bill Thomas's advice – he always carries compression bandages when he goes fishing, he always takes an EPIRB with him, and he always fishes with a friend.

Best wishes, stay safe, and I trust that 2022 is a great year for you.

Lyndon



Kristina Placko landed this fine New Zealand brown where anglers don't need to fuss about snakes - as there aren't any!



From the Australian Trout Foundation

Terry George, president of the Australian Trout Foundation, recently emailed to ATF members the 2021 Special Report on Fishing from the USA Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. The report runs to 56 pages and is very detailed. But we can reprint some bits from the introductory Executive Summary, which tells us lots about recreational fishing in the USA last year:

“Fishing brought families, friends and communities together in unprecedented

numbers amid the extraordinary challenges of 2020. In March, the country stopped in its tracks when the seriousness of the Covid pandemic became apparent. With so much closed, fishing became an ideal social distancing endeavour, a relaxing and rejuvenating activity to be enjoyed alone, with immediate family or within a social pod.

Overall Fishing Participation Trends

An impressive 54.7 million Americans fished at least once during 2020,

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the highest number recorded since participation tracking began in 2007. The fishing participation rate rose to 18% of the U.S. population, the highest rate in over a decade and a nearly 9% gain on 2019. Despite the higher number of anglers and the increased participation rate, the frequency of fishing trips continued its long-term decline. In 2020, the average number of outings per participant was 18 trips, down from 22 in 2008. This declining intensity means there are fewer of the most devoted anglers and more casual ones.

Nonetheless, a “Covid Bounce” clearly brought new energy to fishing, as total outings rose to 969 million. This represented the highest number of outings since 2012 and a 10% increase from the year before.

Fishing by Category

With freshwater widely accessible throughout the U.S., freshwater fishing attracted 42.6 million participants in 2020, 3.4 million more than in 2019. The freshwater participation rate jumped to 14%, the highest rate since 2010.

Freshwater fishing outings totalled 677 million, a level not seen in a decade. The average number of freshwater fishing outings per participant fell to 15.9, slightly below the ten-year average of 16.3.

Among the fishing categories fly fishing continued to punch above its weight, attracting the fewest participants but growing the fastest. The number of fly fishing participants has grown from 5.5 million in 2010 to 7.8 million in 2020. During the same period, the participation rate grew from 1.9% of the U.S. population to 2.6%.

Fly fishing participants went on 97 million outings, a huge 27% increase from

the year prior. Average annual outings surged to 12.5 days, a level not seen since 2014 and a 14% increase over 2019.

Youth Participation

Youth and adolescent fishing participation rose sharply in 2020. Eight million children ages 6-12 fished, a one-year increase of 15%. There were 5.5 million adolescents ages 13-17 who participated, an impressive 28% increase from 2019. Participation rates also grew significantly, increasing to 29% of all children and 24% of all adolescents. Participation growth in 2020 skewed toward boys, as 34% of boys ages 6-12 went fishing, versus 23% of girls ages 6-12. The three-year growth trend, however, was higher among girls than boys.

Female Participation

Encouraging news about female anglers was abundant in 2020. Nearly 1.8 million more women fished than in the year prior, a 10% increase. In the last three years, female participation grew an average of 5% annually. While the 19.7 million female participants represented 36% of total participants, that was their largest share on record. Participation rate growth among girls ages 6-12 and female adolescents ages 13-17 have averaged around 7% per year.

Profile of a Fishing Trip

More than three-quarters of participants reported they caught a fish on their most recent outing. What they did with the fish varied with 35% kept, 45% released while the remainder (20%) did both. Fishing venues also varied, with fishing from shorelines, boats and riverbanks being the most popular.

Perceptions of Fishing

Americans were motivated to fish to escape the usual demands of life, to be close to nature while social

distancing and, of course, to catch fish. Most participants held no stereotypes about fishing. Terms like “outdoorsy” and “families with kids” and “quiet” were among the most often used to describe fishing. Only a very small percentage—6% of males and 11% of females—said that fishing is “not typically for someone like me.” After participating for the first time, 71% of new anglers disagreed with the statement “Fishing is not for someone like me.” In other words, stereotypes can be shattered through participation.

Future of Fishing

Data continues to underscore the critical importance of introducing fishing at a

young age, as 88% of current fishing participants fished before the age of 12. Participation rates among young anglers fall by about half after the age of 12, making families with young children the key to growing future participation.

By understanding the demographics, motivations and barriers of participants, the fishing industry can better reach America’s youngest citizens, nurture a new generation of fishing enthusiasts, and retain those new to the sport. Connecting youth to fishing will ensure that our nation’s waterways are protected, our communities are healthy and our industry is thriving.



Trout Fishing in Tasmania – January 2022

... from Chris Wisniewski, Tasmanian IFS

Typical of Penstock and Little Pine Lagoon at this time of year the dun hatches have been sporadic and weather dependent. If you were there on the right day there have been some very heavy hatches with lots of fish up on them. On other days the rise has been limited, and using wet flies has been the fall back. But the fish have been fat and strong.

After some concern about low water levels during winter Woods Lake has filled and spilled during spring, and has been fishing really well. Anglers using lures have been complaining about the weed growth, but for the fly fishers the weed beds provide productivity and structure to fish around. The fish have been in a range of sizes, showing that all year classes are present.



Two photos of Tasmania’s St Clair Lagoon - a fabulous trout fishery

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Early interest in Arthurs Lake has waned a little with so many other waters in the highlands attracting attention. Fishing a dry fly blind around the strap weed has proven productive. There is a good stretch of this type of water in around Tumbledown. Again, the fish being caught are in great condition.

The high water level at yingina / Great Lake has seen brown trout in the grassy corners at daylight and dusk. Walking the edges with polaroids on a sunny day has also been worthwhile. Fish have been up in the wind lanes, particularly when there is a strong northerly blowing terrestrials onto the water.

On calm evenings there have been lots of black spinners along the sheltered road shore at Bronte Lagoon. In Bradys Lake rainbow trout have been seen in the wind lanes early in the morning, and fish cruising the grassy flats at the bottom end of Lake Binney can be spotted with the aid of polaroids.

As expected, power station refurbishment on Lake Echo has resulted in high water levels and polaroiding the clear edges has been particularly productive. The warm weather has also led to gum beetles on the water, and the fish have been quite willing to take any well-presented dry fly.

Black spinners have had the trout focused in St Clair Lagoon. Fish have been hard to catch in the crystal-clear water, but visibility with polaroids makes for some exciting fishing. Long leaders and fine tippets are required. Lake St Clair normally produces good fishing at this time of year too, with gum beetle and black spinners being successful flies.

At Lake Leake the fish have been up feeding on the surface early in the morning. They have been focused on herding redfin perch fry. This is quite

demanding fishing, with fast accurate presentation necessary.

At Huntsman Lake there have been some thick red spinner hatches, so fish have been in around the edges. Again the water level has been high due to recent rain.

The Meander River is fishing really well, and fish are taking both nymphs and dry flies. You can use these flies together or individually. The Mersey River has also been fishing well this year, right through its length. Of note the Merseylea stretch has been particularly good in recent weeks.

Wild rainbow trout fry have been hatching over the past two months in the Liawenee spawning channels. Monitoring has shown good growth as the fry drop out. 650 of these fry were transferred to Penstock Lagoon and the remaining fry were allowed to drop naturally into yingina / Great Lake.

Tasmania is certainly a great place to escape from Covid, and what better way than to be out in the fresh air chasing a trout.



Rainbow trout fry from the Liawenee spawning channels



Thorpdale Report – from November Last Year

Thorpdale report – from November 29, 2021, from James Carter.

Our thanks to Hamish Hughes as the designated co-ordinator for this event, which was attended by ten members and Ray Goddard, a proposed new VFFA member.

Being some eight weeks later than the usual timing of this event, Thorpdale looked a treat as it had experienced wonderful spring growth. The weather was hot, so snakes were front of mind on a day with an all but cloudless sky and a light wind from the east in the morning becoming stronger in the afternoon.

Our hosts, Latrobe Valley Fly Fishing Club members, were most generous with their time, support and guiding. We split up into groups of three and dispersed across the stocked farmers' dams that were overflowing following the recent rains.

There was an abundance of dragon flies and by mid-morning a few birds arrived to work over the water. The fish however were absent from the surface until late morning, and then only for a brief spell. If there was any interest in a fly below the surface, this author had missed the message from the tea leaves with his selection of a nymph. Our President, exhibiting his leadership skills, was the only person to land a fish during the day.

The lunch break was a welcome opportunity to recharge. There was plenty of banter, and our hosts - LVFF President James Hearne along with Richard (aka Doggie), Gary and Daryl treating us to a great BBQ and a raffle that was a heap of fun.

A relaxing afternoon return to the dams, where I still failed to entice a fish to my offerings. It did however enable me to

reflect upon how great it is to get out of town, get on the water again, and think about fish instead of Covid.

My thanks to the VFFA members and Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers for a great day, their company and hospitality. Our success, or more correctly lack of, has me very keen to get back to the water sooner rather than later.

But isn't this what fishing is all about?



President David Hook demonstrated his angling talents with this magnificent 5 lb rainbow

Millbrook and President's Casting Day

We had a day at Millbrook scheduled for January 12, but for a variety of reasons only a few members offered to take up the opportunity. So as we need at least eight members for the event to proceed we had to cancel this one. But we are scheduled for our next day at Millbrook on Wednesday, March 9, and this one, in autumn, will undoubtedly be popular, so those interested should watch out for an email from Terry Rogers in the first week of March. Because the January visit was cancelled Mark Weigall has very kindly offered us a day in June as a replacement. So those of us keen to fish the fabulous Millbrook Lakes can mark Wednesday, June 1, as another opportunity to visit this fishery.

Another event that wasn't well supported because it somehow missed being advertised in the newsletter was the President's Casting Day at the Red Tag Casting Pool on Sunday 12, following our Christmas Dinner on December 10. But the word had got around and despite some confusion with keys and locked gates a dozen members attended and enjoyed a very pleasant barbecue together. A few members even used the

opportunity to try a different rod or hone up their casting skills.

The weather was kind and the culinary skills of the catering crew were superb so it was indeed a very pleasant event. We will definitely advertise the next one.



The president took a turn as chef



Jenny, John and Glenise enjoyed the occasion



Ray Goddard, our new member, hopped in and helped too



Ray Goddard caught up with Chris Gray



Richard Kos took the opportunity to try his new Winston 2-weight rod, an early Christmas present we heard



It wasn't a big group, but the weather was delightful and the food was scrumptious

Little Frustrations

... by Philip Weigall

When I'm being quizzed by a guest who's relatively new to fly fishing, or a non-fisher such as your typical radio host, or a New Year's Eve acquaintance, a common question is, "What's your favourite spot?"

I'm sure in each case, the intent is harmless. If by chance there's any mischief, it's purely along the lines of trying to prise a secret location out of the uncomfortable interviewee. The interrogator chuckles at my hesitation and uncertainty, assuming it's simply driven by a reluctance to tell the world of a special aquatic paradise known only to me and a few close friends.

In fact, as we all know, the actual difficulty lies in trying to select from so

many worthy candidates. In desperation, I'll often explain there is no favourite; that if you're asking me where I'd most like to go fishing, it'll be somewhere I really like but I haven't been for a while. (For example, right now, New Zealand's Owen River Lodge springs to mind.) This degree of nuance is lost on most radio hosts or non-fishers, so they'll either change the subject, or look for someone more interesting to talk to.

So, with that definition clarified, it was in late spring that brother Mark and I headed for one of our favourite places, the Grampians. While Mark and I will gladly fish in whatever conditions nature presents, we had the rare luxury this time of a choice of available >>>



Somewhere in this photo is a school of pin fry

days. We scrutinised the forecast and picked what looked to be fairly calm and mild conditions. Our plan was to sight fish from boat and bank to rising fish – mild days with light winds at this time of year can create amazing quantities of midge and terrestrials on the three main Grampians lakes: Fyans, Wartook, and Bellfield.

As with many best-laid plans, and particularly those related to fishing, things didn't quite play out as expected – at least, not at first. But after a few twists and turns, we found ourselves at Lake Wartook in the mid-afternoon, and the first signs of the kind of action we had been hoping for. Here and there decent slicks of midge were draped across the lake's surface like thin veils; probably relics of a big morning hatch.

The problem was (and this is often a downside of light wind days), what little breeze there was couldn't make up its

mind where to blow from. Therefore, a few trout would start rising in a midge slick, a puff of wind would disperse it, the fish would stop ... and then another slick would form maybe 100 or more metres away and after some minutes, trout would find it and start rising again.

It was equal parts annoying and exciting: we got shots at fish, but only ever one or two before the breeze blew from a new angle and sent us back to the starting line. In a couple of hours fishing we had two actual hook-ups, and zero fish to the net. Boat or bank made no difference, and if you didn't know any better the way in which good opportunities were briefly presented and then snatched away again you'd think the fishing gods were having a bit of a laugh.

Then late in the day, we were scanning way down towards the northern third of the lake when we saw distant rises. Mark grabbed me from the shore in the



Running out of time on the pin fry feeders

boat, and we motored towards the rises at a slow jog, both because of the sensible 5 knot speed limit (there are submerged stumps and boulders everywhere at Wartook) and to avoid disturbing the fish with the boat's wake.

Miraculously, by the time we were near enough to deploy the electric motor, the trout were still rising. However, close up, the rises looked different to the gentle sips and 'tail-wagging' of the earlier midge feeders. These trout were often surging and even splashing. It wasn't exactly smelting behaviour, but they weren't midging either.

It's never easy to stop casting when good fish are feeding within range, and some of these looked like they were real monsters. Still, whatever was happening, it was obvious our midge rigs were wrong, and we eventually stopped casting for long enough to make a considered assessment.

Staring into the slightly tannin-coloured water I began to resolve tiny, skinny shapes. Pin fry! At Wartook these aptly named baitfish are the newly-hatched form of either galaxias or redfin. It's sort of academic which, because in either case, the juveniles resemble a miniscule strand of jelly.

While I suppose it was useful to identify the cause of the ever-increasing frenzy, a more pervasive thought was, what now? All over the world pin-fry feeders are known to be very difficult to catch. As we watched the feeding trout, we began to notice a subtle shimmer just before each attack, often metres wide and a little like a patch of drizzly rain. The scale of the problem began to unfold. It appeared that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of pin-fry had been drawn to the surface to feed on the tiny midge, and now the trout were eating the pin-fry.



Understandably, the Grampians are one of my favourite places to fish, but ... those pin fry feeders! >>>

Pin-fry are weak swimmers, and the trout were evidently annihilating them with the efficiency of baleen whales eating krill. We had flies that might approximate the real thing, but that was the least of our problems. How could we draw attention to a single fly (or even a double) from among acres of real food? To add to the challenge, the 'bust-ups', though numerous, were completely random. There was a lot of electric motor chasing for only a handful of moments when we thought we were presenting flies right in front of bow-waving fish.

In the end, Mark had two good hook-ups on a very small Zonker fly, while I had one on briefly which took a Tom Jones. But this was from at least two hours of constant effort, so we weren't kidding ourselves that we had cracked the code. Even now, from the distance of a few months, I suspect there is no pin-fry code to crack, any more than there is for daphnia feeders. Present often

enough and near enough, and statistics will eventually permit an 'outlier' to eat. While I hate to admit it, good choice of pin-fry fly is probably more about the angler's belief it will work (and therefore their committed effort) than cunning fly attributes.

Finally, the light got low enough that either the pin-fry headed deeper, or the trout began struggling to see them. Either way, the spectacular but tormenting action died away.

Chugging back to the ramp in the very last of the purple light we looked for something more catchable, like an early mudeye feeder perhaps? But the glassy lake, which had been cut to ribbons half an hour earlier, was now as still as an ornamental pond, and, besides the harsh, lonely cry of a Nankeen Night Heron, just as silent.



Some New Zealand News – from Nick Taransky

With the New Year come and gone, the season in the south-central North Island has been rushing before my eyes. Realities of "semi-rural" life, such as dragging a neighbour's half-dead sheep out of the river while they were away on holidays (with fish happily rising all around it) took precedence over fishing. The poor creature thanked us by quickly becoming fully dead, so the next task was to move it a little further away from our window.

Another more pleasant distraction has been establishing our vegetable garden. We are already getting bountiful harvests from it, which has been a wonderful thing, particularly given the price of fresh food here. Two sad, wrinkled zucchini's cost me eight dollars at the supermarket,



Zucchini strike indicator, and zucchini willow grub imitation?

and now our four plants are pumping out half a dozen bursting golden specimens a day. I've almost run out of things to do with them. Strike indicators?



The trees near home are a willow grub factory

When buying our place, which is right next to a public access bridge, I fully expected to see constant angling pressure along "our" stretch of the river (of course it isn't ours). But aside from some local boys setting lines for "eels and trout" before the season was actually open, until a week ago I hadn't seen a soul along the river. Then last weekend the inevitable happened. I heard some voices below the house, and low and behold a pair of fly anglers were fishing their way upstream. I briefly considered throwing stones (or zucchinis) at them, but instead I watched quietly from a distance and was chuffed when one of the anglers finally hooked and landed one of the house pets!

Even with these and other distractions, I haven't been totally kept off the water. As



The smaller fish have proven to be fun. And plenty of a challenge at times



Miri showing off with her first fish after dragging me back to her homeland

expected, on our heavily willowed stretch of the Hautapu River willow grubs are everywhere, and the fish have become fixated on these little dropping morsels. I've had fun experimenting with different flies and presentations. Most work some of the time, but none work all of the time. That's fishing I guess, and it's this aspect of it that I enjoy the most. I'm setting up a range of small aquariums and other ways of studying the local trout food in more detail. Norman Marsh's *Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand* has been my starting reference, and what a wonderful body of work and contribution to New Zealand trout fishing literature it is.

As I write this, the shrill sound of cicadas is in the air, which I guess will offer something more substantial on the trout's menu than willow grubs. After a light rain shower the other evening I was distracted by insects crawling over my iPad screen. Mayflies - small *Deleatidium* and large *Coloburiscus*. While these haven't been plentiful on the >>>



We'll let this one go

river, they will hopefully be a factor in the fishing on and off. I think I love mayflies as much as I love trout. When they appear together, it's better than zucchini fritters!

A little downstream from the house the Hautapu drops over a weir into a shallower, more babbling stretch of the river. It's gorgeous water, but heavily willowed, so it's tricky to fish - mostly bow and arrow and roll casts, with the occasional longer flick. When I do take a rod out for a few hours, I tend to head to

this area. There are plenty of fish to keep you busy between messed up chances, and many are on the "smaller size", which I actually love. They've proven to be just as difficult to fool as the larger fish, and landing and releasing them (or losing them) usually happens after a brief tussle, compared to the "Old Man and the Sea" affair of larger fish. Maybe they remind me a little of "home" in Australia, too.

Aside from the home water here, we have had a few trips into adjacent valleys for some fabulous sessions on mixed brown and rainbow rivers (the Hautapu is browns only). And I have reliable reports of some small brook trout headwater streams nearby that are at the top of my exploration list... I'll hopefully have more to report on that front soon.



OK... Just one more willow grub... And another



Cooma Notes ...

... by John Killip

What a summer we are having. Very strange times. I am not talking about the virus either, but the weather. December was reported to be the wettest ever recorded in the mountains, and that came after a very wet spring. The lake front park in Jindabyne is normally a popular picnic spot, but this summer it has been used as a swimming pool. Not swimming in the lake, but in the park!

Lake Eucumbene has been rising steadily all season, bringing trout into the shallow edges to feed. More on that later. Those who enjoy fly fishing the lakes have been happy, with some good catches. Many days of poor weather, of course, but in between there have been occasional bright spells.

But what about the rivers? Lake fishing can be good, but we are devoted river and stream fishers. I know I risk starting an argument, but for me you can't compare stillwater lakes to the ever changing scene on a river. This season has been the worst I have experienced in more than 40 years living in the Snowy Mountains Monaro region. Yes, the garden looks great, but the repeated heavy falls of rain have had all the rivers and streams much too high most of the time. We have arrived at rivers hoping to fish, only to find that we couldn't get close enough with the banks flooded.

It has sometimes been surprising to see trout rising despite very strong flows. Getting a dry fly to float down to the trout without drag has been a challenge, of course, but we have managed to catch a few.

The headwater sections of the rivers have been better. We had a pleasant morning

on the upper Eucumbene, with the river a bit high but clear. This was after the Christmas holiday period however, and the banks were very well trampled. We caught nothing larger than 20 cms.

As you may know, the small Monaro streams suffered badly during the recent drought years, and last season there were signs that the re-stocking efforts of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society were producing promising results. The Maclaughlin is a small stream where a flow of 20 ML/day is normal. This season it has been up into the thousands quite often, with one day in December at 15,000 ML/day - more than I have ever seen. I wonder what has happened to the trout.

Back in November Margaret and I managed to pick a morning when the weather was as it should be and we ventured to Lake Eucumbene. The trout were also pleased to see the sunshine and took advantage of the warmth and light breeze.

Not expecting to see rising trout I had tied on small wet flies, which the trout ignored. At first there were just occasional swirls in the ripple to indicate feeding fish, and it seemed they were feeding just beneath the surface. I replaced the wets with small brown emergers that we had found very successful on New Zealand's Mataura River to imitate the *Deleatidium* mayflies common there. Before I had a chance to cover a rising trout I realised that there were midges hatching, and that was probably what the trout were selecting.

While I was debating whether to change flies yet again, and tie on a midge pupa, a trout rose twice coming towards

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me. Well, what would you do? I cast the emerger, hoping to place it right in the trout's path. A lovely head and tail rise and I tightened into a good trout.

It wasn't just one stupid trout, either. Despite midges being the only insects present as far as I could see, the trout were quite keen to take the mayfly emerger. It was quite demanding fishing, for the breeze became more of a wind, and the rises were few and far between. Some of the fish were in shallow water amongst flooded thistles, so used these to escape. But it was interesting that, provided the emerger could be presented correctly in front of a feeding trout, it would be taken.

We have been led to believe that selectively feeding trout demand a good imitation. There are many stories of selectively feeding trout being distracted into taking something quite outlandish, but I have not previously experienced them choosing to take a fly imitating something they weren't taking. Now you are probably thinking that my mayfly emerger was being mistaken for a midge pupa, but I can assure you the emerger pattern was tied with foam folded over the thorax and the tag end left sticking up above the hook eye. Quite chubby, and dark brown. Certainly nothing like a slim midge pupa.

There is always something new to discover about our speckled friends.



Another One Got Away - Poolburn Dam New Zealand

... from George Benwell (George is a friend and fishing colleague of Ian Williamson, a VFFA vice president some years ago. George wrote this report for us at Ian's invitation.)

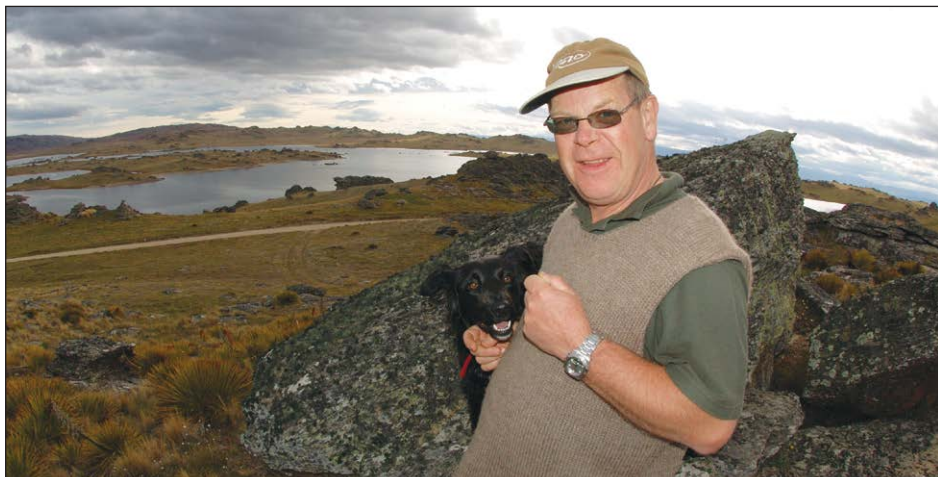
Poolburn Dam is a storage/irrigation dam for the Ida Valley in Central Otago, New Zealand. It is an arched concrete dam 85 metres high, and was completed in 1931. It is primarily fed by two water sources, the Poolburn and Cranky Women Creek. The dam fills (and sometimes freezes over) in winter, and water is slowly released for irrigation over the spring and summer. With a cold winter and a hot (short) summer with low rainfall, the topography ranges from rolling hills and rocky tors of outcropping schist. The area features in the film *The Lord of the Rings*, and more recently *Moulan*. The dam is at about 900 metres altitude and there is little obstruction between it and the South Pole.

The dam is now naturally populated by brown trout that spawn in the two main tributaries. Both rainbow and brown trout were once present, but the last reported

rainbow was caught in the 1960s. The nearby Manorburn Dam is populated by only rainbows.

The Poolburn open season is from October 1 through to April 30. All methods of fishing are legal with a present bag limit of two (four at Manorburn). The fish feed on plentiful aquatic invertebrates, koura (freshwater yabbies), water snails, small fish (both trout and bullies), and terrestrials such as cicadas, flies, beetles, skinks, hoppers, worms, and snails.

How and where to fish depends first on the wind strength and direction (and it can blow an Antarctic gale at frequent times), the time of day, and the time of year. Fly fishing from the shore is more practical with the wind from your back or aft side. It is easier to cast that way, and food in the form of terrestrials is blown onto the water. This is particularly true in



George overlooking Poolburn

the warm days of February when cicadas are about. It is very exciting to plop a deer hair cicada imitation onto the water and wait for a 4 – 6 pounder to smash and grab it. Fishing can be difficult and frustrating in the early season, but after the New Year things usually brighten up for my style of fly fishing.

For the last 17 years I have co-owned a hut which is nestled in the rocky tors over-looking the northern shores of the dam. The motley crew of four of us time-share the 3x6 metre corrugated iron shed. No reticulated water or power, tannin-stained dam water (or tank water), gas stove and a long drop toilet provide all the comforts a fisher could desire. 'The Hut', as we call our slice of heaven, was reputedly built for the chief engineer for the dam's construction in the late 1920s. It variously passed hands through the ninety years from the original construction crew to the Public Works Department, then to the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (RSA), and eventually purchased by our crew in the early 2000's.

I live in Dunedin but try to get to the hut at least ten times each season. I am

good friends of the owners of the nearly 100 years Poolburn Pub (no longer a pub, but a bed and breakfast - perfect for fishermen seeking to explore the best fishing in Central Otago) that is about 30 minutes' drive from the dam. It was renovated recently and is now run as a bed and breakfast, but has a great old bar, nice cosy fires, rooms with ensuites and good food. I keep my favourite bottle(s) of single malt in the bar and often stay the night before heading to the hut at first light!

Manorburn Dam is also about 40 minutes' drive from the pub, where the fishing for large rainbows up to 8 lb in shallow water is legendary. However, you need a small tinnie to get to the best waters at the top of the lake called Greenland. (I keep my tinnie at the pub). You need to be careful with the weather when fishing Greenland, as gales from the south or north-west can blast through without much warning (and cell phone coverage is very intermittent). The thirty-minute ride back to your car in a small tinnie in very rough and cold water can be challenging!

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I have shared many a day's fly fishing on these pristine wild waters with two old friends who were both members of the VFFA - Dick Connor, now sadly passed, and Ian Williamson, whose son jointly owns the "Poolburn Pub". I am also aware that many other VFFA members have shared these magic waters over the years.

Given a favourable weather forecast in early October this year, I went to the hut at Poolburn Dam for two day's fly fishing. 'Favourable' means breezes not gales, hopefully blue skies, and temperatures in October during the day about 15°C. Water temperatures during the day in this early part of the season do not vary much, averaging about 6°C – 8°C. It is too early in the season for larger terrestrials, and rises are few and far between. Regardless, I fished all day from about 10am to 3pm with nary a mere second of excitement nor a gram of good luck. I tried wets, dries and streamers, and a weighted wet under a dry, all to no avail.

So back to the hut for lunch about 4:00 pm, fortified with a dram of single malt. This lubricated the brain cells, and I hatched a scheme. Many times in the past I have fished the early morning rises for tailing fish. During mid-season good-sized fish come into the shallows at first light chasing snails, fry and koura. It took me a few years to design a rig, fly pattern and strategy to successfully lure these numerous 4 - 6 lb browns onto a hook, temporarily in some cases. I thought about what I would have to change to shift the strategy to early season twilight fishing? The wind was dying, and the sun slowly inched towards the south-eastern horizon. Sunset was due about 8:30pm.

Well, my tried and tested morning rig was a 5 - 6 weight Sage rod, Orvis reel, matched floating line, and a 5.0 metre tapered clear floating leader with 2 metres of 6 lb mono tippet. While the majority of fish caught are in the 4 - 6 lb range, an 8 lb or even a 10 lb fish can lurk in the sometimes weedy shallows, so 3 - 4 lb tippets simply result in too much swearing.



The hut



A Poolburn edge-cruiser taken on a size 14 Royal Wulff

The long leader and tippet puts the fly line well out of the action zone and is less likely to spook the very wary trout. At the point I tie on a teaser or sight fly (not a woollen or foam indicator!), but something big (size 12) and easily visible as my matured sight declines. I have a favourite, the One Fly - white deer hair laid to just past the bend of the hook and bound near the head of an up-eye hook. It imitates a sedge. From the bend of the point fly I tie a size 16 - 18 lightly weighted hackled black gnat. For such a small fly, a few turns of soft copper wire (10 gm) or lead wire (0.015) is sufficient for it to sink. Obviously I use less lead than copper. This gnat is for me a snail imitation, and it hangs below the One Fly on a dropper of 25 cm of 6 lb mono. This way I can see the indicator, and the gnat represents a snail moving up or down the shallow water column looking for either a slurp of air or bottom weed for food and protection.

I decided to slightly modify the rig for twilight fishing by using a floating size 16 hackled black gnat and a One Fly variation to better resemble a sedge. I set off at 6 pm for a glassy shoreline with the wind continuing to zephyr out. I sat and watched for about thirty minutes to see where the fish were patrolling a shore near Sometime Island. There were three or four good fish on beats to and fro

along the boundary of the glassy water and the slight riffled outer water. Most of the fish were working within 1 - 3 metres from the shore. The old saying of 'match the hatch' is critical and I think I had it right. There were gnats on the water and both sedges and mayflies were emerging from the tussocks and wet shoreline schist gravel beds.

There are three casting strategies I use, depending on how I feel on the day! Actually, I don't know why I use one over the others, other than to try not to spook the cruising wary trout. If one doesn't work, I try another!! That's pure science in action. First, spot a fish and cast to it - then strike or repeat the cast. Second, spot a fish and watch its beat and when it moves away, cast behind it and wait. Patience is required as the beat might take a few minutes. Third, cast out anywhere in the zone near the edge of the still water and wait and drift until a retrieve is required due to it drifting into the shore or drifting too far out.

This night I tried methods one and two, with both gaining the trouts' attentions. The most exciting chapter in the two hours was sight fishing to a cruising 5 pounder mooching along the shore less than a metre off the over-hanging tussocks. These fish were stalking the sedges and mayflies floating right along the shoreline.

I cast two metres ahead of the fish and only half a metre from the shore. With no fly-line on the water, a silent, splash free trap was set. Within a few seconds a fish rose and took the gnat and not the One Fly variant as I had expected. Victory was close at hand.

But let me return to my morning strategies once more. As any fisher will know, fishing is easier than catching. Fish hunting and cruising shallow water are even more skittish than >>>

normal, as their escape routes are less than when they are in deeper water. So a pricked or hooked fish takes rapid and sustained flight. I learned the hard way when trying to catch tailing fish in the mornings that striking too early and too hard with the tension too high leads to profuse swearing and a lost fish. And I can tell you - no matter how many times you swear, the fish never get back on the hook!

So back to the hooked fish - a brown of about 5 lb, hooked on a fly I tied and within two metres of my shore-based

dry feet. A few seconds passed with line peeling as the trout accelerated into deeper water. Contact was made, excitement elevated, but reel tension too high - so the tippet broke. Oh dear. Another one got away! Lesson relearned!

Back to the car for a dram and back to the hut for another one with dinner. I am captured by the thrill of the chase, the sheer enjoyment of being out in nature, fishing with not another person in sight. Oh, for another day on the water.

George (George.benwell@otago.ac.nz)



Poolburn at sunset



Put The Fly Where The Trout Can See It Without Alarming It

... By Jim Jackman

Most of us are comfortable fishing streams. The trout are fairly predictable in their holding patterns, and discerning their likely depth isn't too difficult. A drag-free drift with a nymph or a dry fly usually brings rewards.

Lakes, however, are a lot more difficult to read and present myriad new challenges. It's helpful to bear in mind that according to the Law of Conservation of Energy,

trout will expend the minimum amount of energy for the maximum return. Fish in stillwaters haven't got the problem of constantly negotiating current, and as such, their energy expenditure for a given amount of calorie intake is likely to be less than for stream fish. The lake residents not only have plenty of opportunity to feed, but also the luxury of being selective, without the urgency to grab a morsel before it drifts downstream.

There are only two types of fish when it comes to lakes ... those that are feeding and those that are not! Superficially, this might sound a bit trite. However be assured, it's not! It's essential to factor this into one's thinking because it's fundamental to our approach to successfully fishing lakes; especially when all is quiet and there isn't any sign of life.

I thoroughly recommend spending some time noting the prevailing conditions, and looking for activity from potential food sources, before setting up the rod and choosing the fly to be deployed.

Often in nature the hunter becomes the hunted, and whilst trout are often the apex predator subsurface, they're vulnerable to airborne predation. As such trout are very sensitive to movement above the water.

For this reason, when guiding I discourage clients from excessive false casting, which I consider one of the most common and counterproductive errors I see on a regular basis. Four or five false casts to a rising fish will usually result in the fish bolting before the fly lands. The fish has detected the line in the air and equates the movement with danger.

The same applies to prospecting when there is no sign of movement. Imagine covering the same piece of water with multiple false casts. By the time the fly touches the water it's a fair bet any trout in the vicinity will have moved on.

When it's all said and done there is no point in putting the fly where there are no fish to see it!

Two false casts should be the maximum necessary to cover a fish 60 ft away. Any difficulty achieving this is usually an indication that some aspect of the cast needs adjusting and working on. A professional is invaluable here.

Back to not spooking, there are three efficient casts to reduce this risk:

- Pick Up and Lay Down
- Roll Cast
- Single Handed Spey

To the last first, and don't be put off by the word Spey. The Single-Handed Spey is simply a roll cast with a few tweaks. A normal 9 ft rod is all that is required.

The others are easy to learn too. In fact, the Pick Up and Lay Down and the Roll Cast are often taught to beginners before they learn to false cast.

Some of the benefits of these casts include:

- Elimination of false casting;
- The ability to change direction quickly and accurately deliver the fly to its target;
- Minimal effort by the caster;
- Being able to fish places where a back cast is not possible.

Meanwhile, folk who are on the debit side of time (like myself!) not only experience less wear and tear on the wrists, elbows and shoulder with these three casts, but also considerably less energy expenditure.



Jenny Singe caught this fine brown at Millbrook. Jenny catches lots of fish – she is a skilled angler. >>>

Stealthy Stillwater Tactics

One of my favourite methods is indicator fishing, especially when using small flies such as nymphs, stick caddis, buzzers, etc. This is an excellent prospecting option when there is nothing to show where the fish are feeding, or even if they are feeding at all.

Indicators allow the flies to be set at the optimal depth for the prevailing conditions, and can be left in the strike zone for extended periods, thus maximising the chance of being seen.

I prefer to use Poly Yarn for indicators. Apply a little bit of floatant and your indicator will stay buoyant all day. On bright sunny days I use neutral colours such as cream or off-white, while on dull days I find orange, pink or chartreuse make it easier to stay in touch with the indicator.

Another favourite tactic is to suspend a nymph beneath a dry fly. This method is particularly effective during mayfly, caddis and midge hatches, or for prospecting prior to an anticipated hatch.

When it comes to polaroiding, casting right at a trout is a low percentage endeavour. It is much more profitable to set an ambush. Deploying a dry with a dropper often gets the job done. Cast about 20 - 30 feet ahead of the trout's anticipated line of travel to set the ambush. It's essential to stay low and out of sight, and make sure there is no movement to give you away. These fish are usually close to the bank and are often very skittish.

Stealthy presentations on still sunny days can be daunting. It's essential to keep line movement over the water to an absolute minimum.

I like to prepare the indicator rig using a tandem set up. Begin by having the point fly at a depth of 4 - 6 ft and the dropper

about 18 inches above the point. It's a good idea to vary the depth the flies are set at during a session in order to fish as much of the vertical water column as possible.

It's essential to stay alert! If the indicator or dry fly indicator does anything remotely suspicious, assume it is a take! Any hesitation in lifting will more than likely result in a failed hook up.

Fly choice depends on the time of the year. I use the Green Grocer method. I purchase fruit and vegies that are in season, so why not apply the same logic for fly selection? A knowledge of which food is available at different times of the year helps to choose the appropriate fly. Think caddis and buzzers in winter, mayflies for spring and autumn, and damselfly and dragonfly nymphs in late spring and early summer, and you're off to a good start.

Overall, a basic knowledge of entomology can be very helpful. Knowing, for instance, the difference between a larvae, pupae and adult can be a big advantage when it comes to getting it right.

Summing up:

Trout are sensitive to movement. There are times when a fly creates a disturbance when it lands that can alert a trout to the arrival of a potential food source. However on the whole, you should make every effort to employ stealthy and accurate presentations above the water and to animate the fly at least a little beneath the water.

A lot of opportunities are missed because the fly isn't delivered quickly and accurately. Correct casting technique will go a long way to not only achieving a quick and accurate presentation, but also to keeping those false casts to a minimum.



Safe Handling of Trout

... from Philip Bailey. (Philip saw the notes in our December newsletter on 'catch and release', and responded by sending this material, which was originally headed *Fish Handling And Photo Taking Etiquette*, and was written for and published by Bradford City Angling Association in the UK.)

Ever thought about how we should handle the fish we catch and how to capture that once in a life time catch or something to remember a special fish? Bradford City Angling Association Fly Fishing committee advocates following this etiquette:

Now that we have an overall Catch and Release policy, the way that we handle fish, in order to protect our fish stocks, should be at the forefront of our minds at all times while we are fishing. The great thing about fly fishing is that we have a better chance of releasing the fish without too much damage so our fish handling and photo taking techniques should follow some golden rules.

Remember two important things when handling fish:

- Keep them wet at all times;
- Minimise the amount of time that a fish is out of water. Ten seconds should be the absolute time that a fish should be out of its environment.

Catch and Release fish handling tips

The golden rule for fish handling must be to use a net. Netting a fish reduces the amount of stress to the fish, irrespective of its size. And, as our rules state that you must carry a net at all times, there is no excuse to take hold of a fish while trying to land it.

The 7 things to consider are (see www.keeperwet.com):

1. Always net your fish. Nets help land fish quicker and in deeper water. Nets also help reduce handling by allowing you to keep fish in the water



Another photo from Mark Weigall's collection showing a magnificent South Island brown correctly held before being released

- while unhooking, reviving, and photographing them. Change your net to a rubberised net as opposed to knotted and mesh nets, as rubber nets are less abrasive and will not get caught in a fish's gills. Plus, hooks don't snag as much on rubber nets, and they look great in photographs.
2. Try to bring the fish to the net as quickly as you can. Try not to play it to exhaustion. You can do this by making sure that your tippet material is not too light and is strong enough to bring the fish to hand quickly.
3. Always have 'catch and release' at the front of your mind at all times. Keep the fish's condition paramount, as we want it to survive so that it can continue to be caught again or go on to reproduce.
4. Use barbless hooks at all times. Our rules state that you should be using barbless or de-barbed hooks at all times. The former is preferred. Barbless hooks cause less >>>

damage to a fish's mouth, but they are also much easier and quicker to remove.

5. Keep the fish over water at all times. This minimises the risk of the fish touching the bank or other non-water materials and if it slips out of the net or your hands it will go straight back into the water with minimal damage to its skin.
6. Grip your fish carefully. Fish have sensitive internal organs, so hold them lightly without squeezing. Avoid placing your hand over their mouth and gills as it obstructs breathing. With larger fish, grip the tail and gently support the body under the front fins.
7. Release the fish with care. If a fish cannot swim away on its own it may need reviving. This can be done in a river by submerging the fish and holding its head facing upstream so that the water runs into the mouth and through the gills. In stillwater situations, move the fish in a figure 8 pattern to simulate this effect.

Measure versus photo

Measure your trout quickly and easily against your rod using a stick-on rod measure or some other measuring apparatus (without taking the fish out of water unnecessarily), and calculate its weight based on length and condition using our handy waterproof length to weight calculation table.

This is the fastest and most effective way to record the size and weight

of trout, ensuring that the fish is kept in the water and released quickly with minimum handling. You can also photograph the fish against the measure to record that special fish.

The Wild Trout Trust is very keen to encourage best practice 'catch and release', so we have developed the measure and length-weight table to encourage anglers to measure rather than weigh their fish and return them quickly. The rod measures are being sold at cost so that they are used as widely as possible (although you will have the opportunity to add an extra donation at the check-out stage to support our vital habitat work for wild trout).

Bradford City Angling Association encourages its members to follow these simple guidelines developed by the Wild Trout Trust.

Capturing that special fish as a memory
Irrespective of how the photo is taken it is best to make sure your fish has recovered from being caught. To do this, let the fish rest in your net but fully submersed in water. It is important that you net is deep enough to allow you to do this. Don't be caught out with a shallow net and a

Trout Length to Weight Table (<http://www.wildtrout.org>)

Length (in/cm.)	Probable weight		
	Good Condition	Fair Condition	Poor Condition
8 / 20	5oz / .14kg	4oz / .11kg	2oz / .06kg
9 / 23	7oz / .20kg	5oz / .14kg	3oz / .09kg
10 / 25	9oz / .25kg	7oz / .20kg	5oz / .14kg
11 / 28	12oz / .34kg	9oz / .25kg	6oz / .17kg
12 / 30	1lb / .45kg	12oz / .34kg	8oz / .23kg
13 / 33	1lb 4oz / .57kg	15oz / .43kg	10oz / .28kg
14 / 35	1lb 10oz / .74kg	1lb 3oz / .53kg	13oz / .37kg
15 / 38	2lb / .91kg	1lb 8oz / .68oz	1lb / .45kg
16 / 41	2lb 6oz / 1.0	1lb 13oz / .82kg	1lb 3oz / .54kg
17 / 43	2lb 14oz / 1.3kg	2lb 3oz / 1.0kg	1lb 7oz / .65kg
18 / 46	3lb 7oz / 1.6kg	2lb 8oz / 1.13kg	1lb 11oz / .77kg
19 / 48	4lb / 1.8kg	3lb / 1.36kg	2lb / .90kg
20 / 51	4lb 11oz / 2.13kg	3lb 8oz / 1.59kg	2lb 5oz / 1.05kg
21 / 53	5lb 7oz / 2.47kg	4lb 1oz / 1.84kg	2lb 11oz / 1.22kg
22 / 56	6lb 4oz / 2.8kg	4lb 11oz / 2.13kg	3lb 2oz / 1.42kg
23 / 58	7lb 2oz / 3.23kg	5lb 5oz / 2.4kg	3lb 8oz / 1.59kg
24 / 61	8lb 1oz / 3.65kg	6lb 1oz / 2.75kg	4lb 1oz / 1.84kg
25 / 64	9lb 2oz / 4.13kg	6lb 14oz / 3.12kg	4lb 9oz / 2.1kg

large fish. It doesn't work well. Also, not every fish needs to be photographed, and those that are not special should be safely released.

DO NOT TAKE FISH OUT OF THE WATER AND LAY IT ON THE BANK OR YOUR NET. This will reduce the ability of the fish to recover, and most probably it will not survive.

While your fish is recovering take the time to prepare for your photo. Remember the 10 second rule and **DO NOT BREAK IT.**

Taking a photo for a friend

Get your friend to prepare for the photo. As long as the fish is in water there is no rush. You do not need to "squeeze" the fish as this damages internal tissue and organs and the fish will die. Try to use two hands if possible with one hand cradling the head and the other hand under the fish just in front of the tail – keeping the fish in the water until you are ready.

When ready, gently lift the fish out of the water for that magic photo. Be quick about it and then either release the fish into water that is sufficient for it to swim away or back into the net ready for release.

Solo photo taking

The same applies here for handling your fish as above. Get prepared!

1. Using a timer and tripod and camera

A good inexpensive waterproof camera will give you a better picture than a mobile phone and can be used with a mini tripod. While the fish is in your net **AND** in the water, get your camera out and set it up on the tripod. Practice will tell you how far away it needs to be. Get used to using the timer so that you can follow the same approach as above. If you have a backpack then the camera could already be

attached to the tripod with timer set. You only need to set it up and turn the camera on ready for that special shot.

2. Taking a photo while holding the fish

While the fish is in the net recovering from being caught, get your camera or mobile phone out. Take your time, mobile phones don't react well to being dropped. Nor does a non-waterproof camera. As long as you follow the guidelines above your fish will be okay.

Once you have the camera ready gently cradle the fish with your other hand as far forward towards the heads as possible without losing balance and lift it out of the water to take a photo.

Once you have taken the photo put the fish back into your net and water so that you can put your mobile phone or camera aside. Then release the fish.

3. Innovative photography

With careful handling of the fish you can take some very interesting shots:

- Take an underwater shot with the fish out of the net ready to be released. Have the net under the fish and in the picture for balance. (<http://www.uwphotographyguide.com/fish-photography>)
- Point the head of the fish towards the camera. This extenuates the size of the head and gives an interesting perspective of the fish. Keep the fly in the fish to add to the photo. (<http://www.grahamowengallery.com/fishing/Fishing.html>)



FLY OF THE MONTH

... Glen Cox's Ovens Purple Nymph



In the years that I have been editing our newsletter we have featured over 150 flies in our Fly of the Month segment, and every one of these flies has been a highly effective fish catcher. At least I like to think so. And the same confidence is attached to this month's offering.

Late last year I spent a few days at Bright, and on one of those days I drove to Harrietville to catch up with VFFA member Brian Eddy. Brian soon had me out on the Ovens River at the back of his property casting to fish. We weren't at it for long when Glen Cox, ex-president of the Northern Fly Fishing Club, caught up with us. Glen had been fishing the river for some hours with his friend Leon Wilson. They had commenced downstream of Harrietville, and between them had caught and released a pile of fish. The Ovens late last year had fished exceptionally well, and another of my trout compatriots had reported fishing the same stretch for just an hour and in that time had landed and released 12. So the trout in the Ovens at this time were exceptionally cooperative.

The obvious question to Glen was: "Well, what did you get them on?" He replied by passing across a small purple nymph, our Fly of the Month this month.

Glen has offered the following notes:

"I must admit I was a little reticent to reveal all, as up until now only a select group of fishing mates have been shown this fly. But I guess I can't keep it a secret for ever!

The bones of this fly were developed about 30 years ago by Northern Club members Ross Garwood and Peter Cogdon to represent the rock-crawling nymphs

found in the Ovens and similar rivers. The original fly was tied with a gold bead and a mid to dark brown body. (Any dubbing of that colour works fine).

The fly in that form has served us well for all the years since, and was known to those of us using it as the 'Ovens Nymph'. But it works well in any freestone river here and overseas.

Then about 10 years ago I read on an American website that anglers were having great success using a purple Adams dry fly. So I tied up a few, and yes they worked a treat, and I've been using them regularly ever since.

The Purple Ovens Nymph

Following the success of the purple Adams I thought I should tie up a few Ovens Nymphs with the same purple dubbing. Instant success!

I have no idea why, but the colour purple seems to attract more attention from the fish. My default setup when fishing rivers is a dry with a nymph in tandem, and it is not unusual to find me fishing the "double purple" (an Adams and an Ovens Nymph)."

Materials for the Ovens Purple Nymph:

- Hook:** Size 14 Tiemco 103B, or similar wide gape hook
Thread: Purple 8/0 Unithread
Bead: 2.8mm tungsten gold bead
Body: Hend's Microflash dubbing in purple (colour No. 18). (Glen purchases his supply from Jim Baumgurtel's FlyFinz store at Lilydale, but no doubt other stores will have it in stock.)
Tail: 6 - 8 black hen hackle fibres tied in three times longer than the body.

Tying Notes:

I also tie this fly in #16 and #18. Just adjust the size of the tungsten bead to suit the smaller hook size. In tying the fly create a sharply tapered "V-shaped" body from the full width of the bead down to a point at the tail end. The extra-long tail provides some movement and life to the fly.

Tying Procedure:

1. Slide the gold bead onto the hook around to just behind the eye, then put the hook in the vise.
2. Wrap some thread turns behind the bead to hold it in place, then run turns of thread along the hook shank to just before the bend.
3. Tie in 6 – 8 black hen hackle fibres as the tail making turns of thread back towards the bead.
4. Take turns of thread back to just before the bend again, then take a small amount of the purple body material and spin it onto the thread. Wind turns along the hook shank.
5. Keep adding the dubbing material and building up the body so that the V-shape is created – a thick body behind the tungsten bead decreasing uniformly to being thin at the bend.
6. Make the last addition of body material winding back to just behind the bead.
7. Then finish the fly by making a whip finish with turns of thread immediately behind the bead. Then cut the thread.

VFFA 2022 meetings & other activities

(... all events subject to Covid restrictions)

February 2022

- 2 Wednesday First Council Meeting for 2022 – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
- 6 – 12 Trip to Currawong Lakes private fishery in Tasmania (subject to possible border crossing restrictions). Event Co-ordinator – Jon Kenfield (solutionist999@gmail.com)
- 12 – 20 Tasmanian trip to Hayes on Brumby’s (subject to possible border crossing restrictions). Event Co-ordinator – Chris Gray (chris@graysmail.com.au.)
- 24 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
“Liars’ Night” – reports from members on their summer fishing.
(Our president David Hooke is asking that members who have some good stories to tell should contact him with the details.)

March

- 9 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes for the Autumn visit, 10:00 am till dark.
- 17 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
Speaker - Frank Gadea, who will speak about some of his worldwide angling adventures.
- 30 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm Zoom meeting.

April

- 8 – 10 Big River Trip. Event Co-ordinator – John Pilkington.
- 15 – 17 Easter 2022
- 21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
Speaker – Kiel Jones, with a presentation on “Mayfly Scenarios”.
- 27 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

May

- 19 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
Speaker – Peter Morse.
- 25 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm Zoom meeting..

June

- 1 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes for a Winter visit, 10:00 am till dark.
- 15 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.
This will be our annual auction of books and equipment.
- 29 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

(The Council is considering plans for some casting instruction days – one for ladies, and another for all interested members. A Donger Weekend with the Bairnsdale FFC is also being negotiated – possibly late autumn or later in the year in November. We will keep you informed.)