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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

JULY 2012

Organisation No. A0024750J

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

www.vffa.org.au

July General Meeting: Peter Hayes – How To Catch More Fish

Thursday, July 19, 8:00 pm
at the **Celtic Club**



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

All members are invited, but PLEASE make a Dinner booking by 12 pm (lunchtime) on Tuesday July 17, by –

Phone: 0498 254 497, and leave a message,
Or Email – secretary@vffa.org.au

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July Meeting: Guest Speaker – Peter Hayes

Peter has informed us that the topic for his July presentation has the cryptic and intriguing title: “Helping You Catch More Fish.” Now that should get our attention!

And we would be hard-pressed to find a more qualified instructor than Peter to talk on this subject. He has a well-deserved reputation as our pre-eminent casting coach and is one of our most experienced and skilled Tasmanian fishing guides. So whether it’s about casting, or presentation, or fly selection, or tactics, or finding fish, Peter has the knowledge and the expertise to offer thoughtful and practical advice. We will all be better and more successful anglers after attending this meeting.



The date – Thursday, July 19.

The August Annual Dinner – Friday, August 24



This year’s Annual Dinner, on Friday August 24, will feature Mike Stevens as our guest speaker. He has been a member of the VFFA for many years.

Mike lives in Launceston, Tasmania, and is a keen, accomplished and very knowledgeable angler in those fabulous Tasmanian rivers and lakes. However perhaps his most important connection with our Association is as a publisher of fly-fishing books and magazines. He is the publisher of the *Tasmanian Fishing & Boating News* magazine, and published our VFFA *Geehi To Great Lake* Anthology and, more recently, our official history – *The Country For An Angler*.

He has also published a number of other fly-fishing books, including those by authors such as David Scholes, Noel Jetson, John Brookes, and Roy Dean.

Mike is very busy in fishing and boating affairs. As well as being Managing Director of Stevens Publishing, he is also Chairman of the Australian Fly Fishing Museum, Chairman of the Anglers Alliance Tasmania, and a board member of both the Inland Fisheries Advisory Council and Marine and Safety Tasmania.

He is a lively and engaging personality and undoubtedly will provide a very entertaining and challenging contribution to our Annual Dinner. He is planning to talk about the significance of fly-fishing in Australia and the setting up of an Australian Fly Fishing Museum, which will open on May 4, 2013, on the banks of the South Esk River in Tasmania. Many may think fly-fishing started around 1864 with the introduction of trout, but it was much earlier – around 1833.

Mark it in your diary – Friday, August 24, at the Celtic Club. An invitation to attend the dinner is included in this issue as an insert.

June Meeting Report: Communication and Safety Equipment

Just how much interest is there among members for information on communication equipment? Plenty apparently. The June meeting was well attended, and our guest speakers – Shahid and Tarique, from Time Plus Communications, and David from Pacific Telecommunications, were inundated with questions during their talk. They were kept back for quite some time after their presentation with a host of further questions, particularly about the equipment they had brought along to show us.

Their presentation focused mainly on three items – Epirbs (Personal Locator Beacons), two-way radios, and satellite phones. At times it became quite involved, with the discussion wallowing in issues of bandwidth and range and similar technical aspects. But many of our members were clearly well-informed on these issues, and appreciated the obvious knowledge and expertise of our guest speakers.



*David Simic, from Pacific
Telecommunications*

Epirbs (costing around \$400) were of obvious interest as safety devices. If you are out of normal mobile phone range (with Tasmanian Western Lakes and many areas in the Victorian high country as examples) and have a medical emergency (broken leg or snake bite being the commonly mentioned possibilities) then an Epirb is your key to survival. Just press the button and wait for the helicopter to arrive and whisk you away to the nearest hospital. These days Epirbs will give details of your specific location to an accuracy of 30 metres or better.

But our guest speakers were quick to point out that Epirbs can only be used for medical emergencies. If you are out fishing by yourself in some very isolated area and discover when you return to your car that it won't start, despite all your best efforts and bad language, then the Epirb is not your answer, but a satellite phone is.

So the discussion turned to a couple of very popular models of satellite phones. These items used to be prohibitively expensive, but times have changed. Some models can now be purchased for less than the cost of a quality fly rod, and calls are down to about \$1 per minute, which is not a lot to invest when you're stuck out in the bush. There was quite a deal of interest among members in the current prices of satellite phones, and the comparative features and various prepaid plans of the two most popular brands. Some models include a Personal Locator Beacon facility. It was of interest to hear that satellite phones can be hired for about \$120 per week, with clear implications there for VFFA groups going away for trips to Tasmania and other exotic locations. Without the subsidy, satellite phone models varied in price from \$800 to \$1500, depending on features. An obvious requirement for using these phones is that the user must be outside in the open so that the phone can 'see' the satellites.



Some of the latest technologies

Much interest was shown in the latest two-way radios, with their obvious uses for communication between individuals and groups on fishing outings. The recommended models here are waterproof (an essential feature for anglers), and typically come in powers of 0.5 Watt up to 5.0 Watt. Our presenters were very keen to suggest that the 5.0 Watt units were the best buy. Yes, they are more expensive, but the major issue with two-way radios is their range and the less powerful units often don't offer sufficient range, particularly in hilly country. And we do go fishing in hilly places. The more expensive units (from Uniden) were about \$400 each (and you need two!), but they come with additional batteries and heaps of other features. With 5 Watts of power they have ranges from 3 km up to 15 km, depending on the terrain. They are compact and light, and would obviously fit comfortably into a vest or backpack. They can also be used in cars, but the metal body of the car then limits their range, so an external antenna needs to be used.

There was some discussion on the use of 'repeaters'. A 'radio repeater' is a combination of a radio receiver and a radio transmitter that receives a weak or low-level signal and retransmits it at a higher level or higher power, so that the signal can cover longer distances without degradation. These units are placed strategically in many popular tourist places, and thus enable contact between groups in hilly country. Websites provide details of the locations of these repeaters, so interested anglers can determine where they are in the areas being visited. Mount Buller was suggested as a popular location in Victoria well-served by repeaters, and the websites provide full details of their locations in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania.

From a safety aspect, our presenters pointed out that police in country areas have UHF radios in their cars, so a two-way radio could be used in an emergency to contact police. Farmers also often have UHF radios.

Our presenters talked briefly about GPS units, with the Garmin brand being their recommendation. There are several models available, and features are obviously linked to cost. The more expensive units offer lots more features. But they all offer a 'back-tracking' facility, enabling you to follow your track back to your starting point.



President Rick had some questions

In concluding their presentation the Time Plus representatives reminded us that they are one of the largest suppliers of GPS units in Victoria, selling Magellan, Garmin, Uniden, VMS, OZTopo Maps and Ozi Explorer GPS software. And, then those magic words – VFFA members can negotiate discounts, especially on the purchase of topographical maps.

So ended a very informative and entertaining meeting. Our thanks to Shahid, Tarique and David.

VFFA Casting with Peter Hayes



Sunday July 22, 2012, commencing at 10 am and finishing at 4 pm

BBQ Lunch & Drinks provided. Cost – \$145 per member

Venue - the Fairfield Casting Pool

Come along and learn the techniques that Peter has perfected from over 20 years of competing in casting and fishing competitions.

If you are attending, please bring your favourite casting rod, matched with a bright coloured easy to see fly line, a chair, and some eye protection (i.e. sunglasses).

The Warrnambool Annual Dinner

Secretary Jim Blakeslee has informed us that the Warrnambool Fly Fishers will be holding their Annual Game Dinner on Saturday, July 28. The venue is again the Brauer-Ander Park Running Track Pavilion, which is adjacent to Brauer College, Caramut Road, Warrnambool. The cost is also the same as for last year - \$60 and byo drinks.

VFFA member are most welcome to attend.

Before dinner drinks with canapés will begin at 6:00 pm, and the first course will follow at 7:00 pm for the start of what will be another night of fine food and company.

Because of the size of the venue, the total number attending is limited to 65, so it is requested that VFFA members wishing to attend should confirm their intention as soon as possible, and certainly no later than July 20.

Jim will be overseas from June 14 until July 20, so those wishing to contact the WFFC during that period should phone the President, Adrian Jacobs, on 0437 620 972. Prior to June 14 Jim can be contacted on his email address (jtblakeslee@westvic.com.au) or by calling him on 03 5562 5168.



AGM in September

The September meeting is traditionally the Annual General Meeting. It's still a few months away, but our President is keen to remind readers that all financial members of the VFFA are eligible for nomination and election to the Council. Most years a few Councillors decide to retire at the AGM, thus leaving a small number of vacancies that need to be filled. A steady turnover of membership, with new people coming on board with fresh ideas and a willingness to assist in the organisation of our Association, is clearly a good thing. Council has been meeting once per month, but there is a proposal to reduce this to meeting every second month. All the management issues involved in running the Association are dealt with at Council meetings, so the general meetings can be given over totally to the advertised activities – guest speakers, auctions, fly tying demonstrations ...

So if you have some experience and talent in management, and a keen desire to see our Association remain strong and vibrant and responsive to the needs of members, please give some thought to nominating for Council. Be assured, meetings are lively and entertaining, and you'll find yourself in the company of some very talented, hard-working and committed anglers, many of whom hold significant positions in business or the professions. You will be enriched by your participation, as well as contributing your wealth of skills and knowledge to our Association.

Notice papers relevant to the AGM will be distributed as inserts in the August newsletter.

President's Message

Once again the members of the VFFA need to combine their voices in a united roar of disapproval. But first, we must applaud the vigilance of Mick Hall in being our eyes and ears within the inland fishing industry. His increasingly frequent emails are very welcome as they alert us to changes in tactics and policy making.

The government apparently is again developing policies for the management of invasive freshwater pests. Members should check the websites (DPI) or look up Mick's comments. We need to be involved so that we can keep some elements from destroying our fishing. It is about time that our trout were removed from this 'list of invasive freshwater pests.'



On the other hand, it seems that fisheries officers have been active and successful in apprehending several groups of fishing vandals. I hope they throw the book at them. It will hopefully convince others to abandon their illegal practices.

While I'm on the soapbox I have another proposition related to the question of fishing license fees. It is my opinion that when you look at the quality of fishing in places such as Tasmania and New Zealand it seems obvious that with more funding we could do more to provide the type of fishing opportunities that you see in these other areas. Now that we have water in abundance we should be taking advantage of this and upgrading the stocking programs, along with providing better access from the road to the river and keeping the farmers happy, such as they do in Tasmania. So I'm suggesting that our Victorian fees are way too low, and the fact that Seniors don't have to pay once they reach 55 years of age is simply ridiculous.

Children and pensioners should be exempt, but others should be prepared to pay for the right to have fishable rivers and lakes. We must remember the old adage "you get what you pay for". It also seems to me that the system for collecting these fees at tackle shops is outdated and inefficient. Our government departments should look at our neighbours' methods and get up to date. I applaud the Tasmanian and New Zealand systems that allow me to pay in advance over the internet. Very efficient, and I get a plastic card that doesn't get destroyed when I fall in.

On to local VFFA business. At our next meeting we have Peter Hayes speaking on his favourite subject. Those members who have not been on one of our Tassie trips should not miss the opportunity to hear him, so book early for dinner and be there.

Next we have the Annual Dinner in August. This is the highlight meeting for the year. I am confident we will be presenting another Jack Ritchie medal this year after a long absence, so keep tuned. There is limited seating so make your booking early. A booking form is included with this newsletter.

The new library is looking good and very usable, and Marty, our librarian, will have it operating very soon. We still need to determine access times so if you have any ideas give one of your councillors a call.



Beware the night stalker. Brian Rich at Millbrook Lakes

Council is in the process of setting up activities for later in the year and negotiations are still taking place, but mark the Christmas meeting date in your diary as another 'must' to finish the year off.

Cane day was a huge success. My very grateful thanks to a marvellous organising effort by David Grisold. There was bamboo being flung in all directions, and the appreciation of the old material in a new guise was felt by all. That is, until some very unfriendly weather rolled in, though fortunately not before I had demolished a couple of sausages and a nice glass of red.

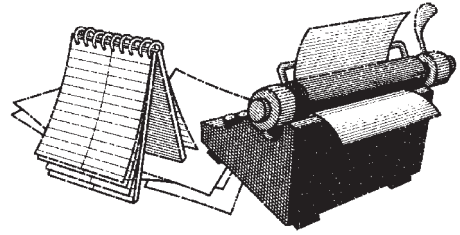
Lastly, I urge all members to be financial and thus eligible for voting at the AGM in September. Consider nominating for a position on Council - you will find it very satisfying to be at the sharp end. If anyone is thinking about running but is unsure, then give me a call and we can discuss it. We are also looking to appoint two delegates to attend CVFFC meetings as the VFFA representatives. Besides, it is too cold to go fishing. Or we could tie some flies - over a scotch.

Tight Lines, *Rick Dugina*

New Member Welcomed ...

Again we welcome two new members this month – Nobuyuki Kawano (from Japan) and Michael Kretschmer. We trust that their membership of the Association brings many years of pleasurable enjoyment and involvement.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



I can recall a fishing trip I made many years ago - back in the 1960s in fact. It was in my pre-fly-fishing Philistine days, when trout were caught on things dug up in the garden or bits of metal that spun in the water. (In my defence I hasten to add that fly-fishing was on the bucket list, though several years were to elapse before I finally managed to acquire all the necessary bits and pieces).

Prior to this particular fishing trip I had done my research – I had purchased a book on trout fishing by a Mr Lance Wedlick, and having read it from cover to cover, felt that I had this trout catching caper pretty much under control. My enthusiasm must have been contagious, because I had no trouble in recruiting one of my brothers to join me on the planned expedition. In due course we left home very early one morning and headed for the recognised trout mecca – Lake Eildon and the rivers that ran into it and out of it. We subsequently drowned our worms and flogged our spinners in a lot of places separated by a lot of miles. Finally, late in the evening, we headed for home - skunked. We hadn't caught a trout. In fact, we hadn't even seen one.

The trip home saw the inevitable inquest (post-mortem?) into why the fishing had been so dead. I was reflecting on the wisdom I had gathered from Mr Wedlick and was ticking off all the factors I'd gleaned from his book that should have ensured our success. My brother dismissed all such musings with a cynical: "Nah! You're talking rubbish. The reason we didn't catch any fish is because the trout up here haven't read Wedlick's book. We need to fish for more educated trout."

I hasten to assure my brother that since that day I have encountered more than my fair share of educated trout. Just try those excruciatingly difficult and well-instructed browns that inhabit the Mataura near Athol in New Zealand's South Island. This area is just an hour's drive from Queenstown, home of some 50 fishing guides, so the upper Mataura is flogged by these guides and their clients. As a consequence the trout here are well acquainted with the best of Whiting hackles and Rio flylines, along with the latest in Simms waders and the most recent Sage rods. Doubtless they're also very familiar with the Four-wheel Drives the guides arrive in. Now as it happens these fish are quite easy to spot because the water is so clear, but just dare to make one gentle and inoffensive cast and the game's up already. They don't flee – they just settle quietly on the bottom of the stream and raise the odd quizzical eyebrow at the various offerings and concoctions floating past. You finally give up and move on, at which point the trout give each other a quiet nod and resume feeding.

But these trout with their post-graduate degrees in fly recognition and leader construction can be found in lots of other places too. I've encountered them in Tassie, in NSW, and in plenty of streams and lakes here in Victoria too. And yes, I know - if it was always easy we'd quickly lose interest and wouldn't bother anyway. It's the challenge and mystery that keeps us going out. But there is some science to it, and there is an accumulation of knowledge and wisdom that adds some predictability to our efforts. So this month's meeting, with Peter Hayes as our guest speaker, will be invaluable. Peter needs no introduction – he's known to so many of us,

and as a guide and angler he is truly exceptional. I, for one, look forward very keenly to his July presentation.

My thanks to Dermot O'Brien for his intriguing final episode of 'Misty River', and for his report on Cane Day. He mentioned the presence of Malcolm Elms at Cane Day, and wasn't it a delight to see this cherished Life Member and magnificent contributor to our Association over so many years out and about again. Now in his 90s, he is still sprightly and full of wise advice on casting and trouting. Malcolm – it was so great to see you there.

Finally – are we breaking new ground? The recent Partners' Dinner was well-attended and the meals and service provided by the Celtic Club first class. Well, that was my impression. But the many ladies in attendance are undoubtedly far better qualified to comment. So we invited three of them to give their impressions and assessments. Our sincere thanks to Rhonda Grisold, Cara Pilkington, and Judi Rogers for contributing their reports on the big night out.

Tight lines

Lyndon Webb

Lakes Bullen Merri and Purrumbete Fishing Weekend & Dinner

Date – August 10 - 12

Richard Goodall has passed the baton to Hugh Maltby, and Hugh is organising this year's trip to Camperdown's twin crater lakes, Purrumbete and Bullen Merri.

The highlight of this weekend is a traditional Scottish Dinner at the property of John and Carolyn Menzies on the Saturday night, with bagpipes, haggis and lots of laughs.

This trip is becoming more popular each year, with 17 attending last year.

We have made a few changes this year that we hope will further enhance this fabulous weekend - we will now be staying in cabins at Lake Purrumbete Caravan Park, situated on the banks of this magnificent fishery.

With good rains over the past 18 months the water levels are now well up, providing easy boating access from the ramp within the park. Being able to access this lake by boat adds a new dimension for those who wish to bring a boat along.

For the shore fishermen good sight fishing can be expected around the edges using Woolly Buggers, Tom Jones or some of Muzz Wilson's range of Fuzzle Buggers.

Some of us will be venturing down earlier in the week and all are welcome if you wish to extend your stay. The park has very good facilities including an all weather enclosed kitchen and entertainment area that I am sure will get a good workout.

So don't miss out. Ring Hugh on Mobile 0423 283 079 or Home on 9459 2201 to reserve your spot.

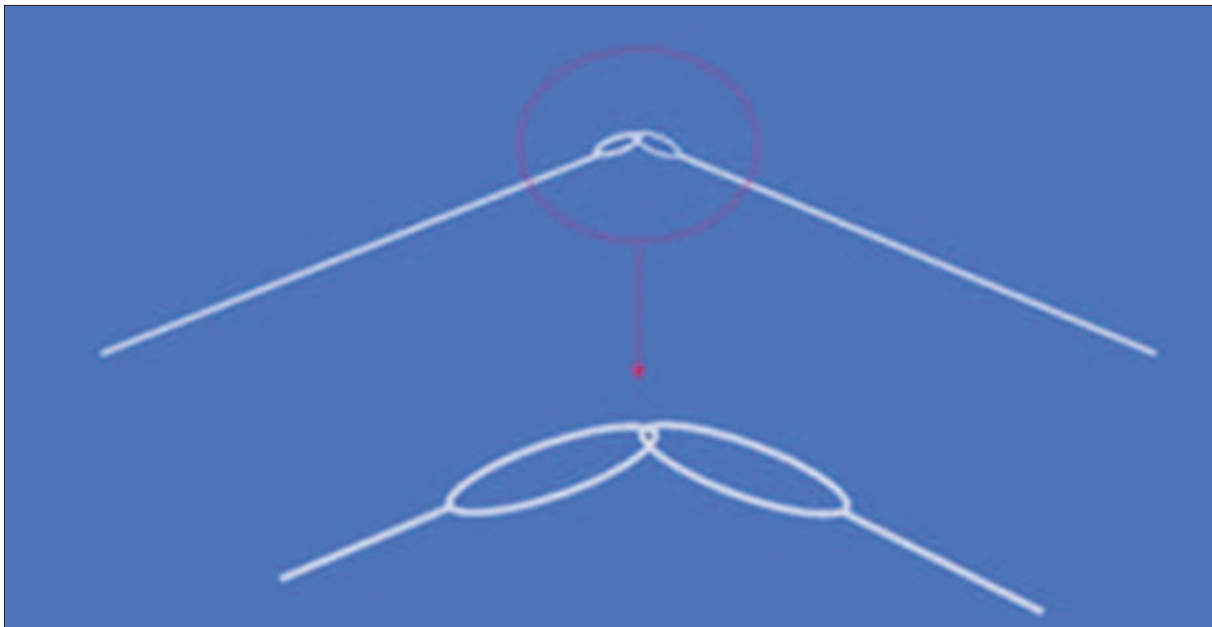


The Loop Leader

(Readers may recall Philip Bailey's article on designing fly-fishing leaders in last month's issue. In his article Philip referred to the practice by Italian anglers of connecting the sections of their leaders with perfection loops, so that these sections could move around more freely in the varying currents in a stream, thus reducing drag. The following notes are from the website Philip gave in his article and provided by Massimo Magliocco – Director of Fly Fishing Masters. Massimo has worked with many leading European fly-fishing manufacturers and is a leading mentor in Italy. This is how he explains his new theories on leaders.)

It is not fully appreciated that the construction of the leader is of extraordinary importance in overcoming drag. The loops used in the leaders described below are micro-perfection loops that are used to join the various sections of monofilament when making a knotted leader.

Let's get things straight. Starting from the principle that in order to fight drag we need to use specific anti-drag casts (and Philip will be submitting a further article on the Italian style of casting). But it is also necessary to have a specific leader with certain characteristics in regard to its length and its taper. There was a theory that more knots in a leader created more rigidity. Thus self-made leaders tended to have a minimum of four knots, and attempts were made to tie smaller knots that were less bulky than the knots normally used. However this theory has now been discarded with new approaches to leader design. Very elastic monofilaments were tried, but in my opinion all this was not enough.



One more step was missing in order to make the leader more supple so that it would adapt to the surface currents in the case of the dry fly and to the underwater currents in the case of the nymph. So on which component of the leader should I work to achieve these results?

I had the idea of connecting the various sections of monofilament not with classical knots but with micro-perfection loops. A leader made in this way may seem useless but you really need to try it out! The major problem with drag arises not so much in rough water but rather

in calmer sections, where it is more important to reduce the wake effect caused by the fly and the tippet. In these calmer sections there are micro currents which are invisible to the naked eye but no less treacherous.

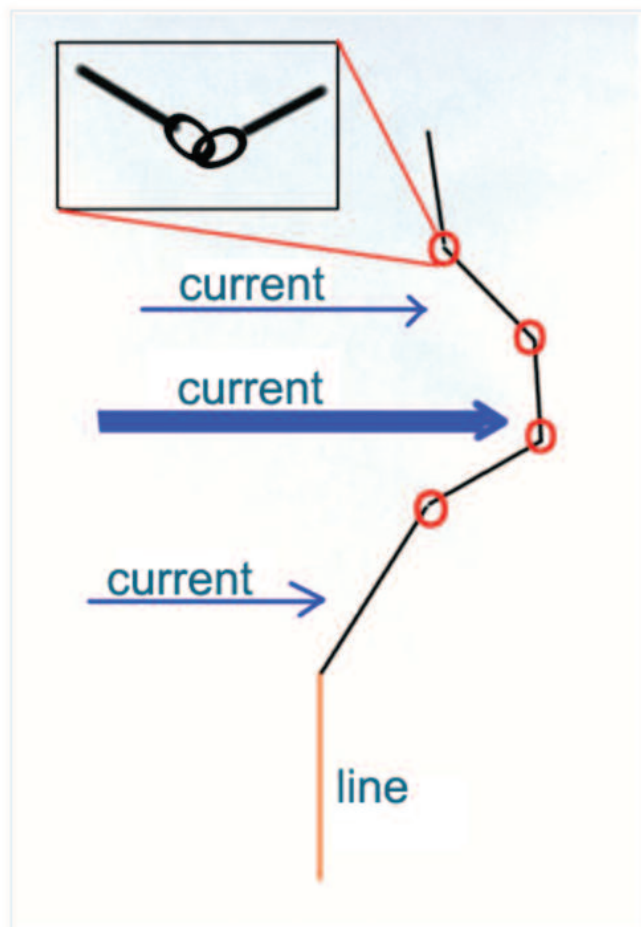
These micro currents are usually generated by rocks which are 50 to 60 cm under the surface, but the water still appears to flow down quite smoothly in places where you would normally cast without considering the consequences. In other words, strong currents are easy to see but these minor ones are not, especially to the untrained eye.

It is on these latter currents that a looped leader comes into use and can be more productive than one tied with normal knots. The micro loops act as hinges, and hold very well both when setting the hook and when playing the fish. The instructors at my school (FFM- Fly Fishing Masters) and I have tested these leaders and have never had any problems. In the beginning we had some understandable doubts, such as would the leader be strong enough, would there be sufficient transmission of energy, would they be accurate? The doubts soon dissipated and this gave me great satisfaction. These leaders hold well and there is no collapsing effect in the transmission of energy, which we thought may have happened because of the hinges. Our biggest doubt was to do with accuracy, but even here we had no problems as long as the tension on the line was kept constant during casting.

So once our doubts had been dissipated we started evaluating the advantages we could get, especially regarding drag. We tested both classical leaders and looped leaders in the same conditions and got some extraordinary results, especially in those conditions where there were treacherous micro currents and subtle surface tensions. We found that drag on the new designed leader with loops lessened the effect on the fly, resulting in a longer natural drift. While the difference is noticeable it is still only a second or two, but that small time had a dramatic effect on our catch rates. We seemed to be able to get a better drift over the fish and induce a rise.

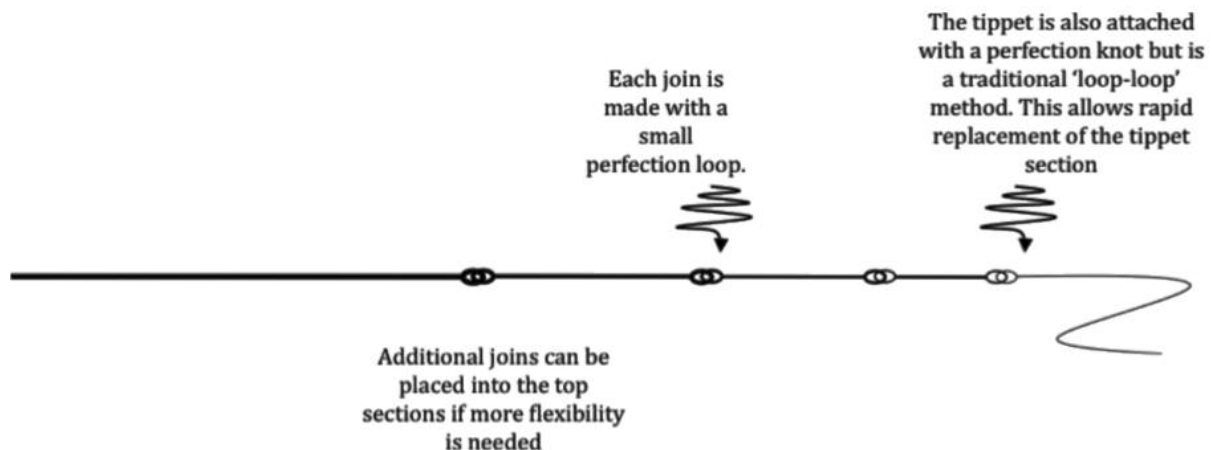
I take this occasion to thank my friend Massimiliano Nucci, who is a FFM instructor and expert in knots for the technical support he gave me during trials. In conclusion this leader could revolutionize the concept of the leader whose importance is equal to that of the casting technique in fighting drag.

Our own member – Philip Bailey, himself an instructor with FFM in the UK – has been quietly using these leaders for his dry fly fishing and can confirm that they do make a



difference. He says they can take a little time to build but not that much longer than a normal leader.

The diagram below explains how the leader is built based on the design criteria in last month's newsletter:



This Month's Yarn

(from December 1963)

“You know, you don't always catch a lot of fish because the water is heavily stocked,” said Alf, ordering another refill of lunch. “You're right”, agreed McTaggart, “The most heavily stocked water I ever fished was a small lake on one of Peter Boag's properties up in NSW. On my first visit to this water I encountered a really heavy hatch of damsel flies. Thick clouds of them were fluttering all over the surface of the lake, and there were so many fish in the lake that when they all jumped out together, which they did every minute or so to snap at the damsel flies, the level of the lake dropped about 4 inches. It was a truly remarkable sight.”

“I guess you caught a heap of fish then”, mused Alf. “No. As it happened I didn't get any at all,” lamented McTaggart. “Every time I cast my line it spooked the nearby damsel flies, and as they were of a particularly nervous species, they all fluttered off quickly to another part of the lake. And of course the trout followed them, so I found myself constantly casting into fishless water.”

“Well, did you let it go at that, knowing that Boagie's lake was so full of fish?” asked Alf. “Not at all,” replied McTaggart. “But I still didn't get any fish there. I went back a couple of days later and found that while the hatch was over, the water was far too discoloured to fish. It seemed that the repeated rise and fall of the lake level, caused by so many trout leaping in unison, had eroded the banks and muddied up the whole lake. So I missed out again!”

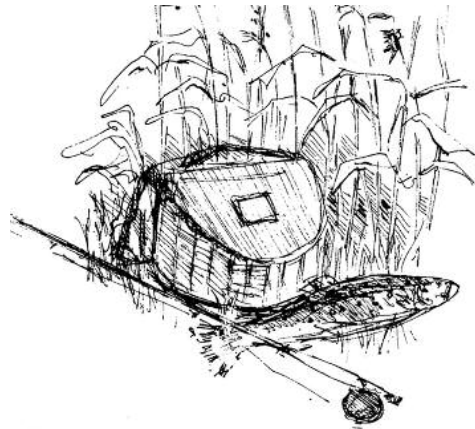
The Ghosts Of Misty River – Part 3 ...

By Dermot O'Brien

(In Part 2, the author while trying to unravel the mysteries of a hidden stream met the ghost of fly-fishing legend Frank Sawyer, the originator of the Pheasant Tail Nymph.)

Time must have stood still. When I dragged my mind back from the abyss - the abyss of trying to understand how I could meet first Lee Wulff and then Frank Sawyer, both long dead - I was still standing waist-deep in the stream. The cold had hit me and hit me bad.

It was no longer light and the wind was howling; it was giving the bush a voice. The trees bent and strained, and somewhere in the blackness trees and branches cracked, some broke crashing to the ground.



A long and dangerous trudge back to the car was ahead of me and I did not want to damage the two precious fly rods in my care. It was one sopping wet step at a time when suddenly something swept past my head. A big bat or an owl? A screech ... a cockatoo in the darkness. Too dark to see anything, but it was coming from in front of me. The bird's noise was up ahead, leading me! Now, a speck of light deep in the trees, a camp fire. Step by step towards the light ... and an old man sitting by the fire and warmth. It was Finn McTrout!

The old man smiled across the fire as he moved the old blackened billy hissing and spitting into the coals. The cup he handed me was welcome, was hot, was bloody good. He rubbed a weathered hand across his stubble and said: "That should warm you up." I could see he was comfortable. From what I knew about him there must have been many camp fires, many nights in the open.

He was as I had last seen him, long, lean and still strong, work pants and faded plaid shirt. He poked the fire. "You've met some of my old friends. I knew them well."

It was easy to recall the discovery of a hidden stream and the mystery meetings with fly fishing legends from the other side of the world. It was really easy; after all I had had nothing else on my mind for days. In fact, it would have been impossible to forget.

"What is all this about?" I asked the old man. "I have your seaman's chest, I have read some of your journals, but I don't understand the stream and strange meetings. I don't understand this moment right now!"

McTrout then patiently told his story. The story of a young man determined to travel and find adventure, and it was in fact fly-fishing that was the "thread" running through that life. He favoured wild and remote places. He told of varied jobs.

"When I needed money I worked on railways, farms, but mostly I was worked on merchant ships. You see," he said: "I have a marine engineering ticket."



He prodded the coals again and stared into glowing red embers. Maybe it was the past that was reaching out to him. I asked him about the fly-fishing. He thought for a goodly period; I wondered if he had finished his story.

“There are not many things you can do in this life where it is like stepping into a beautiful landscape painting. And trout and salmon live in the most wonderful pristine places, though perhaps that is a little less true these days,” he said with a wistful look in his eyes.

“There were times when it was also about the company and then times when it was about the solitude,” McTrout said as he continued to tell me about travel into wild places, sometimes staying for months and even years.

“It was not catching fish that was important,” he said, “it was the pursuit of something wild, and it was the friendships made along the way that were the really important things.”

I must have dozed off, for next I knew I was cold and stiff from sleeping on the ground. This was the first time I had been caught overnight in the bush, and I was not prepared. “Where was the old man,” I said to myself, “A hot drink would be magic.”

But there was no billy sitting in the coals either. There was no old man and no sign that he had even been there.

I reached for the two cane rods, but they were gone. Now it was just my graphite rod leaning against a tree. It was still rigged up with the nymph I had used last night.



Near where I live there is a bridge over a busy freeway and because of the local parks and golf courses there is plentiful birdlife. Sometimes on an early morning walk across that bridge, small flocks of Sulphur Crested Cockatoos sit on the rail. Up to a dozen at a time. And, if I do not stop and do not reach out they will just sit there and not move.

They are whiter than white, their eyes bright and healthy. Yes, some may say they are suburban wild and not completely wild, like those up the bush. But their screech is just the same, and every time I hear one I think of Finn McTrout and I think of that puzzling and pleasant dream. You know, that dream I had when I was caught out in the bush for a night not so long ago.

THE END

Fishing the Ballarat Area – 1953

(The following article is reprinted from the Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club Journal of April 2012, and is used with permission. Ballarat member Barry Whelan was searching around in the Club's historical records, and came across the 'Minutes of the Monthly Meeting ... held at the Ballarat Anglers Lodge on Tuesday the 23rd of June, 1953'. They give a fascinating insight into the fishing in the area in those years. It would be interesting to compare 'Mr Milne's findings and theories' with those of today's top lake anglers.)

The members were introduced to the speaker of the evening Mr Hugh Milne, of Bendigo, and a fellow member of this Club. The title of his talk was "Trout Fishing and Insects". In introducing his subject, he stated 'that his conclusions were the results of eight years intensive study of trout foods and habits'. Stream fishing generally did not provide the observer with the formidable list of unanswered questions that lake fishing did, and for that reason Mr Milne concentrated on lake observations with the result that with new flies and techniques, it was possible to improve one's fishing to a tremendous degree. Observations took place from mid-August, usually at midday, on a calm day and using polaroid glasses.

August weather governs the season, piscatorially speaking. With a warm August, a good season is assured for this reason - insects begin to hatch early in the season and multiply to proportions required to bring the fish onto the surface to feed early in the season. The past four seasons have been cold in August, with the result that the hatching of aquatic life has been delayed and never reached the required proportions. With six or seven reasonably mild days in August fish come into the shallows for the myriads of various aquatic bugs hatching in the warmer water of the shallows.

At this time there is no activity in the deeper water. Fish begin to beat along the edges very close in, and providing the weather holds until opening day, these fish will still be there and are "sitters" if fished correctly. The fish are usually taking scud (tiny shrimp-like bugs) in mid-water, and will cruise all day taking these, along with any stray nymphs and caddis which may happen along. All that is necessary for a "take" is a Cow Dung, Claret-Brown, or nymph presented head-on to the fish and moved away. This is usually sudden death, but when presented side on to the fish is very often refused.

Although feeding well, fish are very often very selective and best results are secured by copying accurately the food being taken. For nymphs it was found that cat's fur was an absolute winner, in that the fur takes down imprisoned air, which gives life to the lure. Numerous tests have shown that when fishing "wet" and the lure is "right", the fish take cleanly and without a boil. This is in lake fishing, where there is no current drag to swing the lure away and cause the fish to charge the lure. For selective feeders, a very tiny fly is very often successful. Dress it as follows - on 000 hook, just a few turns of peacock herl and a small black beard. Fish it as a backswimmer and very slowly retrieved. This is an early season technique.

Next comes the most important hatch of the whole season - the March Brown hatch. During a drought year the hatch will be early. Midday is usually best of all and good conditions prevail from the end of September to the end of November (waters north of the divide). When the hatch begins it takes about a week for the fish to realise that the hatch is on, after which it is

necessary to be on the spot not later than 11:45 am. Very often in October and November there will be no evening rise. Factors governing the rise are as follows –

- a) Buoyancy of the nymphs - when conditions, such as water temperature, etc, are correct, the nymph naturally rises to the surface).
- b) Degree of ripple on the water - if the wind is sufficient to ripple the surface the effect of the broken light prevents the fish from seeing the fly. In this case, the fish takes nymphs in the surface skin.
- c) Fish take best on a cloudy day, when the water is not rippled. It has been noted that nymphs hatch better in rolling waves. Under these conditions fish a hackled nymph as a floating nymph.
- d) On a calm cloudy day the nymph is useless, and thus a good imitation of the dry fly is necessary. The Hare's Ear is very good, but "fish them small" is an excellent motto to remember.
- e) Quoting a case at Harcourt Reservoir where the trees grow out in the water, March Browns were hatching in great profusion in the shade cast by the trees. Mr Milne found the answer to yet another question - on dull days no hatch occurred under the trees. Therefore it was a matter of light and shade - on sunny days you find clouds of March Browns hatching in the shade, whereas on cloudy days you find March Browns hatching all over the water.
- f) Often it will be noticed that March Browns hatch out in the scum blown from the opposite shore, providing it is in the shade.

The evening rise of Red Spinners was next studied, and the following conclusions reached. August weather governed the March Brown hatch and therefore the Red Spinner hatch, and these conditions prevailed right throughout the season.

Following the March Brown hatch, the Mudeye assumes its place of importance in the diet of the trout. Until now, the life cycle of the Mudeye and Dragonfly has not been fully understood, and more than one professed authority has been astonished at the accuracy with which Mr Milne has traced and predicted the behaviour of this insect.

It was not known that the moon played a major part in the lifecycle until Mr Milne's investigations proved this to be the case. Over the years he has noted that terrific hatches of mudeyes occurred at certain periods, and under certain conditions of the phase of the moon.

Eventually given these conditions, he could predict to within a quarter of an hour when these hatches would occur. This has been happening probably for millions of years, yet it passed everyone by until one man had sufficient natural curiosity and intelligence to fit together the results of his studies and provide us with the complete answer.

The following conditions govern the Mudeye hatch where mild August weather sets the necessary lifecycle in motion. In December, January and February, after a full moon, the Mudeye becomes buoyant, because it is a nocturnal insect, and clear nights bring it to the point of hatching. Under natural conditions the Mudeye hatches in light. This can be proved by the fact that Mudeyes can be kept a long time in the dark without hatching. (Those that do hatch had already begun that stage).

The exact time for the major hatch is the second night after the full moon, although there may be a few on the first night. The hatch may continue for 3, 4 or 5 nights, occurring a quarter of an hour later each night until conditions change, but the major hatch occurs on the second night. To catch fish into the rising moon, use an imitation Mudeye or a large Alexandra. Contrary to popular belief the Mudeye is not jet propelled - not at this stage anyway. It swims with a normal swimming action just beneath the surface, and the fish take by silhouette. When the hatch takes place in one section of a lake, fish will leave other food and come as far as 150 yards in a hurry to cash in on the Mudeye feast.

The next hatch of note is the Dragon Fly. If the weather in January is hot, then good Dragon Fly hatches can be expected. The rule of August weather, which influences March Brown hatching, also applies to Dragon Flies and Damsels, as good hatches of these latter insects follow good March Brown hatches. It is Mr Milne's experience that fish actually take Damsels or Dragon Flies either during a complete cloudy day or during cloudy intervals of an otherwise bright day. The theory is that the sun prevents the fish from seeing the insect until shade of some kind is cast over the immediate spot. The ideal time to fish the Damsel is the cool change following a hot spell. Method - drift either a wet or dry imitation in the waves. Often there is a Dragon Fly rise in the evening, when fish appear to rise to the reflected sunlight on the insect's wings. It is an accepted fact that fish are hard to catch during the hot part of summer, but scale readings shows that fish continue to feed and the growth rate is normal right through this period. From Mr Milne's studies, it seems certain that the fish are deeper, taking water snails, which appear to become free swimmers at this time of the season. The problem therefore is to produce a suitable imitation of the water snail, and then to fish it at the required depth and in the right part of the lake.

Other hatches of importance to the angler (and the trout) are the ant and beetle hatches. To anticipate these rises, watch for the nuptial flight in October and November, usually on a very cloudy night. If these conditions prevail, but with even a faint light from the west, then a good rise will take place, and with the correct imitation good sport is assured.

Much has been written on the effect of changes of barometric pressure on trout, but in the speaker's opinion, the actual change in pressure has no effect on the fish, although conditions which accompany the change do have a very big effect. To support this statement, Mr Milne quotes the effect of the change of pressure when a fish cruising at say 50 feet deep, suddenly decides to surface and leap into the air. One would expect the fish to blow apart at the sudden release of all pressure if they were so sensitive to changes of pressure. In his opinion, the sudden change which accompanies a barometric drop results in a change of temperature in the water, to which fish are more sensitive.

The presence of a lot of cloud at night, when not enough light is available for the fish to see even a large object, means that one cannot expect to take fish. Referring to March Browns hatching in the evening, it will be noted that if a series of bright days occur, conditions will not be suitable for the hatch to take place. Then, evening reproduces the conditions similar to those required for a daylight hatch, and it is then that browns are seen in large numbers in the evening. Fish into the rising moon, as for the Mudeye hatch, but it will be found that as soon as the moon reaches an angle of 45% the rise will taper off and finish soon after. This applies to all moonlight rises, be it Mudeye, Ant, Beetle or March Browns.

At this juncture, Mr Milne called for question, and spent some time clearing up points raised by the members.

Supper was then served, during which Mr J. Blackie proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Milne, voicing the feeling of all the members when he said that never before had the Club been treated to such a well-presented and informative talk. Mr Milne, in devoting so much time to the study of trout feeding habits and insects, had amassed a store of knowledge, probably second to none in this particular field. Having proved his theories to be correct, he was anxious to pass this knowledge on to his brother anglers, so that they may also benefit from his discoveries. In this, he was to be commended for his unselfishness. The President, in conveying to Mr Milne the vote of thanks, endorsed Mr Blackie's remarks, and spoke of Mr Milne's sportsmanship and good fellowship when encountered at Newlyn or elsewhere, and that this Club was proud to claim him as a fellow member. The vote was carried with acclaim, and a very enjoyable evening drew to a close.

Report From Way Out West

(Our regular correspondent, Jim Blakeslee, is in California at present. The following notes were sent a few weeks ago.)

While Melbourne and especially Gippsland were copping all that rain a few weeks ago, we didn't get anything much at all down here. So rivers are still low and clear. Adrian Jacobs and I decided to have a few casts at Lake Tooliorook near Derrinallum today. This fish (the photo) is the result. The rainbow slashed at a large black Woolly Bugger just as I lifted it out of the water and he swirled around looking for it. I splatted the fly straight back down on the water in front of him and he smashed into it. Some very exciting action followed until Jake netted him for me a few minutes later. I pulled out the old Salter scales and they told us the hook-jawed male rainbow weighed just over 6 lbs. Sadly we didn't get a rise or follow from another fish.

We'll try to get in another day or two on the upper Hopkins or Emu before the season closes this weekend. After that, I'll be getting ready for my trip to the USA. I leave on June 14 and will be spending time with family in California but will have some time to fish too. I won't be back to Australia until July 20 - in good time to get ready for the Warrnambool Flyfishers Club Annual Game Dinner. Hope to see you there.

Cheers JB



Nice trout Jim!

Rainbow Bass (Guapote)

(by Harry Robertson. Harry is a close friend of Paul Squires and fishes in exotic places – this time, Nicaragua)

I have spent the last few years exploring the species available in Costa Rica that I could fish for using a fly rod. During this search I was often stationed in the north-east part of the country, at a now defunct lodge, Casa Mar. On many of my trips there I had pleasant visits with Carlos Barrantes, who I had met through our mutual affiliation with the International Game Fish Association. During our conversations I had often mentioned to him that I wanted to find a location where the ‘street fighter’ fish I had caught in smaller sizes were available. I had seen examples of two to five pound mounted fish in Carlos’s fishing shop in San Jose, and, sadly, on the wall of my lost Casa Mar. I had also heard of fish being caught in Lake Arenal, Lake Nicaragua, and a private power company lake in the wilds of Costa Rica, but all reports suggested that the fish had been netted in these areas and only small fish were available.



Harry's 2.5 kg Machaca

One evening Carlos and I were chatting in Upalla, a small town near where we were fishing for Machaca in northern Costa Rica. He suddenly became very animated and said, “Why have I not put you in touch with my friend, Dr Alfredo Lopez? He is one of the owners and is manager of Rio Indio Lodge, which is known as a fine eco tour location in Nicaragua! There are reports of large Guapote there, and the remote location and sound conservation ethics of the lodge are protecting all species from over harvesting.”

Carlos introduced me to Dr Lopez, and I soon had arrangements in place to visit the lodge with a small group of angler friends who were willing to accept the gamble of a trip to assess the facility, and more importantly the fertility and potential of the larger Guapote. Many of you reading this will balk at the thought of travelling to Nicaragua for any reason. The history and the remaining images of the Sandinista jungle war incidents are still vivid memories. But much time has passed and I never felt threatened in any way.

I asked lots of questions about the best season and tackle and methods for taking the Guapote, and was happy to learn that my amiable new friend “Doc” was trying to find a way to introduce fly-fishing for his species to the worldwide market. Sometimes things are just meant to be. Doc told me of miles of canals and hidden lagoon offshoots that had not been visited in years, and he produced recent pictures of 6 and 7 pound Guapote caught on light spinning tackle. I had trouble falling to sleep thinking about the upcoming trip.

The lodge is located near the confluence of the Rio Indio and San Juan Rivers. These rivers exit Nicaragua and flow into the Caribbean Sea just thirty miles north of where I had enjoyed



A Guapote or Rainbow Bass

great success at Casa Mar on earlier trips. We flew to San Jose, Costa Rica, and on the next day travelled by van for a two hour very scenic drive to the town of Sarapiquí in the area of Porto Viejo. From there we journeyed three hours by boat up jungle rivers which offered abundant wildlife photographic opportunities. While in transit we had two border crossings, one as we left Costa Rica and then another when we entered Nicaragua. Both stops required a show of passports, but this was handled efficiently, and we were treated with courtesy and quickly resumed our journey.

We arrived at the lodge, were greeted by Doc and his staff (primarily Rama Indians from a nearby village), and shown to comfortable rooms, each with a private bath. We were given a quick tour of the surrounding property with its manicured nature trails, and then a boat ride through the nearby canals with an explanation of future plans and where the following day's fishing would start. We were also given a tour of a marvellous airstrip just ten minutes by boat from the lodge that will provide service to the lodge in the near future. Charters are using the strip now to deliver clients.



A Mojarra – bream-type fish

Following a gourmet dinner, a pleasant surprise in this jungle setting, I prepared my tackle for the next day. After serious warnings from the Doc and guides alike I chose an 8 weight, Winston BIIX 9 foot rod, with a 20 lb piece of fluorocarbon material as a leader. I was also to use nothing but a selection of surface poppers.

After breakfast the following day we boarded skiffs and started fishing very near the lodge. The guides were bilingual and needed just a bit of coaching in what a fly-fisherman needed from a guide. We paddled slowly through canals and into lagoons casting popping bugs to shore cover. The water was a rich dark tannin colour but perfectly clear. Within the first hour I had landed three species, one being a 4½ lb Guapote!

We had two and a half days of very good fishing. We caught and released Guapote, Mojarra, Machaca and Tiger Bass (a small feisty Guapote species). I was told I was there in the prime time for these panfish varieties; however, I do not think of 4 – 6 lb Guapote as panfish!

At present I have plans to return with a group in September. The fishing then will be the best



Tiger Bass – a very colourful fish

of their season for Tarpon and Snook. The water levels will be slightly higher and the “panfish” will have retreated to the edge of the jungle but still in evidence. I shall spend time with the Doc as we fashion a fly-fishing offering for the worldwide market. He has started to assemble an inventory of quality fly-fishing gear for future guests to use. We are implementing a guide training program for fly-fishers, and are fine-tuning the boats for comfortable fly casting.

Anglers interested in joining a hosted group visit or who have questions about the fly-fishing opportunities at the lodge should Google: Rio Indio Lodge, Nicaragua, or contact me on my Website at www.hanoverfly.com.

Harry Robertson

Some Handy Hints (from various sources)

1. Here's a suggestion - always cut the end of your tippet at a sharp angle with clippers or scissors. The sharp line end will then pass through the hook eye easier.
2. On arrival at the stream, wait for a while and watch carefully before casting. If nothing moves to give away the location of any nearby fish then make your first casts – but always along your own bank, then mid-stream, and only across to the other side when all else has failed. A cast across the river is very likely to scare a lot more fish than it will ever catch. And remember the old rule – never wade through water you haven't first fished.
3. Keep your rod tip down at all times when you're not casting. Anything moving, especially above eye level, is too easily seen by a fish.
4. Keep your eyes on your dry fly and remain alert and focused and concentrating all the time it is drifting back in the current. Remember - your fly is still fishing, even if you're not.
5. If you're fishing a stream with lots of bush and vegetation along the banks then an old pair of secateurs carried with you can be very useful for trimming away those obstructing blackberries and other twigs and branches that impede your progress.
6. Don't forget to take a bottle of water with you if you're out fishing for any length of time. The medics tell us that if you feel thirsty, you're already dehydrated.
7. And lastly - a fisherman's knot is simply a 'tangle with a name'.

Three Reports on the Partners' Dinner

(We invited three ladies – partners of significant members – to contribute their thoughts on the Partners' Dinner. Here are the reflections of Rhonda Grisold, Cara Pilkington and Judi Rogers)

Rhonda Grisold

It was with pleasure that I was again invited to the Partners' Dinner for the VFFA. It was the first Partners' Dinner to be held in the new surrounds, so I was looking forward to seeing the new home of the VFFA.



The main course was excellent

The venue is very nice and the food was very wholesome, especially on a cold June night.

When thinking about writing an article for the VFFA newsletter I thought, "Why not, as when attending these functions I feel I have quite a bit of knowledge on fly-fishing even though I don't even participate in it. When the men start talking about Black Woollys and Red Tags, along with this weight rod and that length leader I feel I know a bit (though only a little bit).

I hope they continue having Partners' Dinners, as you realise at such an event you are not the only loving, patient partner of a fly-fishing enthusiast, and understand how behind every great fly-fishing man is a truly wonderful woman ...!

Rhonda (Chocolette) Grisold

Cara Pilkington

The one VFFA event to which women are invited is the annual Partners' Dinner, which was held on a wintry night in June. As usual it was great fun with a welcoming champagne to greet us and lots of cheerful banter throughout the evening.



Mick Crewes thought so too

This new home of the VFFA at the Celtic Club has a very lively and contemporary ambience, and although I loved the open fire at the Kelvin Club, this seems an excellent move. The food, wine (and chocolates) were excellent.

We all had a lovely evening and I hope there are more opportunities for the fly-fishermen to invite the other half of the population to join them.

Cara Pilkington

Judi Rogers

I have been attending the Partners' Dinner with Terry since its inception, and I must say that every year when advised that: "We are going to the Partners' Dinner on such and such date", my initial reaction has always been: "Who will be there that I know?" Terry then reels off (no pun intended!) names saying, "You met them last year or the year before, don't you remember." The long and the short of it is that it always turns out to be a most enjoyable occasion and this year was no exception.

The new venue at the Celtic Club was extremely good and, as usual, the attendees were a delightful group, especially the long suffering partners who, like me, in the main know absolutely nothing about fly-fishing, but actually love the beautiful rods and the exquisite flies, and are delighted to see that our partners do in fact associate with a very respectable group of gentlemen who are able to converse at length about topics that, to the uninitiated, seem have no connection to actually catching fish. Such terms as casting, mending, striking, double hauling, reaching, loading, tippets, leaders, nymphs, woolly buggers, wets, dries, etc, take on a whole new meaning when heard being used in conversation by our expert partners.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Peter Boag for organising such an enjoyable evening, and especially for including in his speech the thought that you men are all thinking of your partners when you are out fishing!

I look forward very much to the 2013 VFFA Partners' Dinner.

Judi Rogers

Cane Day 2012

(Report by Dermot O'Brien)



Bernard's bike

Cane rod enthusiasts and VFFA members turned out in good numbers again this year (56 in all), despite challenging weather conditions. Many beautiful cane rods were available to cast and in some cases discuss with their individual maker. Cane rod enthusiast Bernard Holbery turned up with a magnificently restored ghillie-bike with cane baskets front and rear. Bernard's display was one of two, with Blake Swadling showing off eye-catching Willow classic reels made with Australian woods.

Cane rod maker Peter McKean made the trip up from Launceston, and also there to show off their fine rods were Boris Gaspar from Sydney and Melbourne maker Graham Foxman. Boris says he is self-taught and with two year's experience makes about four to five rods a year. A handsome 6'6" 3-piece was a delight to use over the pool.



Three Elder Statesmen – Duncan Milenkovic, Malcolm Elms and Richard Goodall

Graham Foxman from Rowville has set up a workshop, and makes and sells about 15 rods a year. He makes rods based on Griggs, Paul Young and F.E. Thomas tapers. He says currently orders will take about four months to fill and his rods are made under the GKF brand.

The Cane Day followed the Cane-makers Day at Yarrambat (held the previous day), which was organised by Andrew Connell. More than 20 enthusiasts had turned up for this event, including Peter McKean, Graham Foxman, Pat Sheridan, Blake Swadling, Boris Gaspar and Cliff Winel. Andrew Connell says that more than six new makers will be making their first rod as a result of the day.

The VFFA Cane Day, thanks to the vision of past President David Grisold, has helped lead the way in the resurgence in cane rods. The 2012 Cane Day was the eighth staging of the event, and Association President Rick Dugina said it was excellent to see that it had become a great tradition. More than 50 turned up again this year.

Creator of the event David Grisold has decided to stand-down as the chief organiser and has passed the “cane baton” onto Bernard Holbery for next year. David assures us that he and his great mate Hugh Maltby will be available to help. Apart from David’s magnificent organising efforts, this year’s Cane Day was helped by the Sunday morning casting stalwarts, Joe Haslauer and Mike cigar-chompin’ Crewes, who did the setting up. Hugh Maltby and Peter Campbell also contributed via their catering efforts.

As the day wore on it was good to see old mates chatting about all things cane and fishing. Master-caster Malcolm Elms was on-hand for his expert view on the rods, and so far this year he has made it to every Sunday morning casting session.

Cane Day will be back again next year and it would seem with more and more new makers.



Some of the makers of these new cane rods



Trying them out

FLY OF THE MONTH

The DBSB – Detached Body Shaving Brush



David Martin is one of our members as well as being a long-standing and very active member of the Ballarat Flyfishers' Club. (He is a Past President and Life Member of the Ballarat Flyfishers', and a Past President and Life Member of the Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society). He has fished the lakes around Ballarat over many years, and in the process has acquired considerable understanding of those legendary dun hatches occurring on these waters.

He has agreed to write something for a future newsletter on these hatches, but in the meantime has very generously provided details of one of the deadliest flies to use on these Ballarat waters – the Detached Body Shaving Brush ('DBSB'). There's a bit involved in tying this fly, but David assures us that the effort is well worthwhile. With a few of these in your fly box you may well clean out one of those lakes on a good day. And for those who don't fish the Ballarat Lakes, David has used this fly with great success in Tasmania, where he has taken heavy bags on both Little Pine and Arthurs Lake on a number of occasions. If you like a challenge, tie this fly in size 18s and use it as a Baetid imitation.

David has spent many hours scrutinising the hatches of the mayflies associated with the Ballarat lakes, and assures us that this pattern floats right in the surface film in exactly the same manner as the natural hatching duns.

Pattern Details:

Hook: Black Magic F12 or F14 is David's preference, with a Tiemco model 2488 as a reasonable alternative (or try a Kamasan B420 or Partridge 15BN Klinkhamer #20 hook. The essential requirement is for it to be a strong, light, short shank hook.)

Thread: Dark brown - 8/0 to tie the abdomen, then 6/0 to complete the fly.

Tail: A bunch of fibres from Rhode Island red hen saddle hackle feather (the bunch being just large enough to pass through the eye of the hook, or as the second photo below suggests, a bunch of 10 -12 fibres is ideal). David suggests that the soft hen hackle fibres provide a better imitation of the natural dun tails than the stiffer fibres from a cock hackle. The tails of duns are apparently quite soft.

Abdomen: 1: A cylinder of firm closed-cell foam - 8 mm long by 2 mm diameter, coloured dark brown with a waterproof marking pen. This foam can be obtained from a grandchild's bath toy or from a gardener's foam kneeling pad. Cylinders can then be punched out using a circular leather punch purchased from a craft store or hardware store. The cylinders are then cut to length. (David has tried the commercial fly tying foam cylinders sold in packets by, for example Wapsi, but he has found these too hard. The foam must be softish and squeezable.)

2: Alpaca wool – preferably natural rich chocolate brown in colour. (Alpaca wool can be obtained from alpaca farms, or from sheep farmers who use alpacas to guard new lambs from foxes. It can also be purchased from the Woollen Mills at Creswick, just North of Ballarat. Knitting wool suppliers such as Spotlight carry Alpaca wool, but often it is a blend. The pure wool is better, and the natural wool better still. Alpaca wool is similar to seals fur in that when it is immersed in water it traps tiny air bubbles which, when viewed from below, give the fly a lively effervescent halo. It is also much easier to tie with than seals fur.)

Rib: Fine copper wire is used to rib the abdomen. Fine stiff monofilament line, 0.30 mm or less, is inserted through the foam to give rigidity to the foam (see later notes).

Thorax: Alpaca wool mixed with equal parts of fur from the base of a hare's ear, (preferably the winter coat).

Wing: Grey - brown deer hair, preferably with reddish tips. A patch obtained from the back of the deer toward the rump is often ideal.

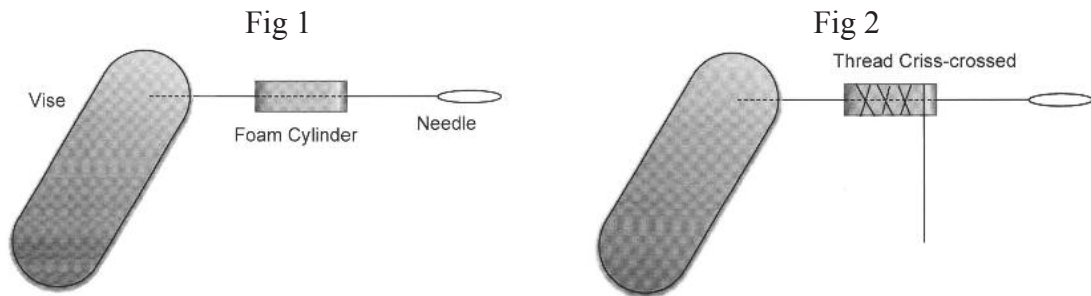
Head: Alpaca wool.

Construction:

The fly is tied in two parts. The abdomen is constructed first, and is then added to the hook, which has the wing already tied in position. The fly is then completed.

Constructing the Abdomen:

1. A size 10 - 13 beading needle (obtainable from a craft shop) is pushed longitudinally through the centre of a prepared foam cylinder until the point of the needle is exposed. (Any needle will do, provided it is thin and strong and has an eye large enough to take the 0.30 mm monofilament line.) The needle can be pushed through the foam by holding the foam and twisting it to work the needle through.
2. The needle is then placed in the fly tying vise with the point covered by the jaws (Fig 1 below).



3. Tie thread (the 8/0 thread) onto to the foam cylinder 2.0 mm from its end and tie open turns of the thread towards the vise, gently compressing the foam a little with increasing pressure (fig 2). Then tie some more open loops back to the starting point and secure the thread with a half-hitch. (Note: it is important to not compress the foam too much, or the fly will not float correctly in the surface film).
4. Coat the foam completely with flexible cement and allow it to dry.
5. Tie the thread with more open turns down to the end of the foam and tie in the tail fibres on top of the foam, the tail being about 6.0 mm long. Then tie in the copper wire for the rib on the underside of the foam.
6. Lightly dub the thread with alpaca wool and wind on the dubbing. Then wind on the copper ribbing (five turns) and tie it off and add a whip finish. Apply some cement to the tie off point.
7. Remove the needle from the vise, thread some of the monofilament line through the needle eye, and then gradually slide the needle out of the foam, pulling the line into the centre of the foam. Trim the line off level with the abdomen at the tail end but leave approximately 3.0 mm protruding at the other end. Cement each end of the line and put it aside to dry.
8. At this point you can use some jewellery pliers to gently compress the abdomen to form an oval appearance, as for the natural nymph. However David is not convinced that this improves the catch rate, and it can disturb the copper windings.
9. Put the abdomen aside and place the hook in the vise. Wind thread from the eye to level with the hook point then back again to approximately 2.0 mm from the eye, then add a half hitch.

10. Cut a small bunch of deer hair no thicker than a matchstick from the skin. Remove any waste with a dubbing needle, and then stack the deer hair using a hair stacker. Place the bunch on top of the hook and secure it to the hook shank with a couple of tight turns and a half hitch. Then take two turns of thread around the base of the wing to lift it up, and place two tight turns in front of the wing to fix it at an angle of 65o to 70° to the hook shank. The length of the wing should be about 10 mm for a size 14 hook and 12 mm for a size 12 hook.
11. Trim the butts of the hair, wind the thread to the rear, and then soak the butts with flex cement.
12. Now take the abdomen and place it on the hook shank, aligning it behind the butts, and working the exposed monofilament line into the butts. Tie the abdomen securely onto the hook with some tight turns of thread over the first 2.0 mm, then tie another half hitch.
13. Dub the thread with some of the alpaca/hare's ear mix, and tie it over the point where the abdomen is tied on. Wind thread over the wing butts and make a further two turns with the alpaca/hare's ear mix.
14. Wind the thread to the front of the wing and tie in a small amount of alpaca wool to form a head. Whip finish just behind the eye, and cement the thread.
15. To complete the fly take a dubbing needle and carefully pick out some of the alpaca/hare's ear mix over the butts (i.e. the thorax area).

Fishing the Fly:

Attach the fly to the leader tippet with a loop knot - a Penny Knot or a Lefty Kreh Uni knot. Ensure your leader sinks into the surface film and apply a little Mucilin to the tips of the wing, along with just a smidgen on the top of the thorax and to the tips of the tail.

(David fishes this fly on a leader 4 – 5 metres long, and his tippet is usually fluorocarbon so that it sinks a little below the surface film.)





LIBRARY NEWS

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

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

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

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

OVERDUE BOOKS

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

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

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

Members wishing to purchase any of these items should contact Hugh Maltby prior to the monthly General Meeting on telephone 0423 283 079.

VALUED DONORS

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

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

VFFA Meetings & Activities

July 2012

- 1 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 7 Sunday Casting - 9:00am at the Celtic Club – “The VFFA into the Future”
- 8 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 15 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 19 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Speaker – Peter Hayes**
- 22 Sunday Casting and Casting with Peter Hayes (Convenor – Rick Dugina)
- 25 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club
- 28 Warrnambool Annual Game Dinner (VFFA members welcome)
- 29 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools

August 2012

- 5 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 10 – 12 Annual Bullen Merri trip (Convenor - Hugh Maltby)
- 12 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 15 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club
- 19 Sunday Casting - 10am to 2pm at the Red Tag Pools
- 24 Annual Dinner: Speaker – Mike Stevens – Publisher of Fly-fishing books and magazines**
- 25 President’s Casting Day - 10am to 3pm at the Red Tag Pools

September 2012

- 12 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club: preparation for AGM
- 20 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: AGM**
- 26 First Council Meeting for the new Council – 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club

October 2012

- 18 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: (Possibly Safety and St Johns Ambulance TBC)**
- 24 Council Meeting – 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club

November 2012

- 9-12 To be confirmed - Opening Weekend Trip – to Warrnambool again this year, with Hugh Maltby looking after the arrangements. (Phone Hugh on 0423 283 079, or email him on reddtag@hotmail.com)
- 15 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: (Speaker to be confirmed)**

December 2012

- 5 Council Meeting – preparation for Christmas Dinner
- 15 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club**