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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

JULY 2013

Organisation No. A0024750J

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

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

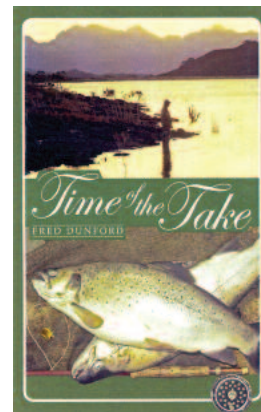
## **July General Meeting - Fred Dunford** **Thursday, July 18, 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club -**

Our guest speaker for the July general meeting is Fred Dunford. Fred has lived at Cooma in the NSW highlands for several years, and over these years has spent countless hours fishing Lake Eucumbene in all its seasons and moods. Accordingly he is widely recognised as an authority on the trout fishing in this area and has written several articles and a book outlining his fishing experiences and findings. He is also well known among trout fishers for his superb mudeye pattern, the *Corduliid*, which imitates the dragon fly larva so prevalent in Lake Eucumbene.

**Fred Dunford is an exceptional angler and an observant fly fisher and fly tier, and will be a very entertaining and informative speaker at our July meeting. So mark it in your diary – Thursday, July 18, 8 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 5 pm on Wednesday, July 17, by Phone: 0498 254 497, and leave a message or a text message.



# THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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## The July Meeting – An evening with Fred Dunford

Our guest speaker for the July meeting is Fred Dunford. Fred has lived at Cooma in the NSW highlands for several years, and over these years has spent countless hours fishing Lake Eucumbene in all its seasons and moods. Accordingly he is now recognised as an authority on the trout fishing in this area, with several articles published in angling magazines to his credit. He is also well known among trout fishers for his superb mudeye pattern, the *Corduliid*, which imitates the mudeyes so prevalent in the lake.

Fred is well qualified to research trout food as he has a degree from the University of New England in biological sciences and was awarded the Howard Sheather prize (1975) for his undergraduate work. He had earlier graduated with a Diploma of Commercial Art from ICS, Melbourne. In the 1990s he fought and achieved a famous victory in his 'Save the Eucumbene' campaign, where he stopped large scale commercial developments along the shores of Lake Eucumbene.

A couple of years ago Fred decided to record his knowledge and experiences in a book, and in September 2012 the *Time of the Take* was published. Signed copy of the *Time of the Take* will be available for purchase at the July meeting.

Fred Dunford is an exceptional angler and an observant fly fisher and fly tier, and will be an engaging, entertaining and very informative speaker at our July meeting. Don't miss this one!

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## Advance Notice – The August Annual Dinner with Jim Allen

This year's Annual Dinner is scheduled for Friday, August 23. It is our 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Dinner, and will again be held at the Celtic Club in Queen Street, Melbourne. The cost is \$65 per person, and an invitation is included as an insert in this newsletter.

Our guest speaker for the evening is our own Jim Allen, a very popular and esteemed Life Member, and well known to us all as a very knowledgeable and skilled angler. Jim joined the VFFA in 1963 and so was awarded his 50 Year Membership Certificate earlier this year. He was President of the Association in the period 1972 – 1974.

Jim has fished all of his life and his fishing adventures have taken him all over the world. His passion for pursuing trout with a fly rod began in the early 1960s here in Victoria,



where he initially spent a lot of time fishing the Goulburn River, honing his skills to a high level. Not too many years later he discovered the wonderful trout fishery in Tasmania. He is now recognised as an authority on Tasmanian trout fishing.

But Jim has contributed far more to our fishing than simply becoming very adept at catching them. He has devoted countless hours to promoting and advancing the cause, and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) last year “for service to the sport of recreational fishing through a range of business, promotional and voluntary roles.”

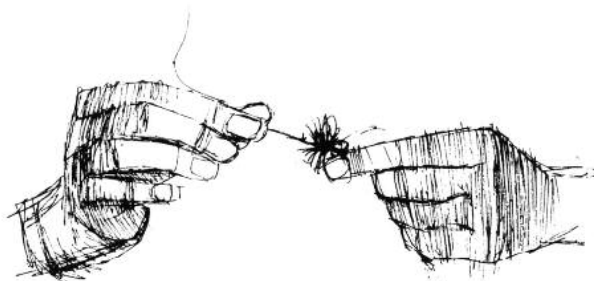
The citation on his award continues – “Jim Allen has been an ambassador and promoter of recreational fishing in Australia as a businessman, film and radio presenter, and through voluntary roles with fishing associations for over 40 years. He is a former President of the Victorian Fly Fishers’ Association, former President of the Game Fishing Association of Victoria, former Vice-President of the Swordfish and Tunny Club of Australia, former Victorian Representative of the International Game Fishing Association, and Publicity Officer for the Victorian Fishing Tackle Association. Other positions held include Former President of the Australian Trout Foundation and Director of Trout Unlimited, a habitat sustainability organisation.

He was Co-Presenter with Greg Norman of the *Clear Water, Big Fish* television/DVD series, assisted with the *Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures*, and was a regular panelist with Rex Hunt and Clive Stark on Victorian Radio. He was also an appointed member on the Victorian Recreational Fisherman’s Advisory Council for the Department of Primary Industries.

Jim is perhaps best known to anglers through his Compleat Angler stores. He is the founding owner and manager of the Compleat Angler chain of tackle and fishing stores, which he established in 1968. He has also been a generous donor towards fishing publications, providing interest free loans to the VFFA for the publication of *The Australian Trout* by Jack Ritchie and *How to tie Trout Flies* by Ted Dawkins. He assisted the Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society with the publication of their history and funded the reprints of David Scholes’ first three books and his *Memory Hold The Rod*, which won a Galley Club award.

Though now retired from work Jim continues to fish as often as he can, and clearly has an incredible background in fly fishing to draw upon in preparation for his talk at our Annual Dinner. His topic for the night is “The disease of Angling - a modern and Neanderthal view of why we do it.”

Jim is an accomplished and very entertaining speaker, his topic sounds most intriguing, and we are definitely in for a great night with him.



# President's Message

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As we are now past the winter solstice it is great to see the daylight hours increasing bit by bit each day. Make use of this extra daylight by rising earlier than you usually do on a Sunday morning and join the VFFA regular attenders at Sunday Casting at the Red Tag Casting Ponds at Fairfield. All are welcome and the coffee and continental sausages are a wonder to behold, thanks to our generous provider, Joe Haslauer. Any time after 9:00 – 9:30 am, MAKE THE EFFORT, “BE THERE” AND POLISH UP YOUR CASTING SKILLS.



This month's message seems as if it is going to be all about “BE THERE”. The next “BE THERE” is the July General Meeting on Thursday, July 18, to hear Fred Dunford speaking about his latest book (see further details in this Newsletter). Don't just come and hear Fred, come at 6:30 pm and join your fellow members for dinner prior to the meeting, but don't forget to book dinner by phoning 0498 254 497 by 5:00 pm the previous day to log your booking.

The weekend of August 9 – 11 marks the annual Bullen Merri Trip. The Convenor for this year's Trip is Richard Kos, who can be contacted on 0430 091 300. This is always a great weekend experience with the major feature being a sumptuous Dinner at the exquisite residence of Dr John Menzies, a very good friend of the VFFA. This weekend is definitely a “BE THERE” event. Again, see further details in this Newsletter.

One of the major events of the VFFA calendar is the Annual Dinner. This year the Dinner will be held at the Celtic Club on Friday, August 23. Your invitation is enclosed with this Newsletter so fill it out immediately to secure your attendance at this major “BE THERE” function. What makes this occasion something not to be missed is our guest speaker, Jim Allen, who needs no introduction to VFFA Members. The subject of Jim's talk will be: “Why People Go Fishing”. Jim assures me that it will be a light-hearted approach to the topic, so I suggest that you “BE THERE” to ascertain that this is true.

My final “BE THERE” for this month is to extend a personal invitation to all VFFA members to attend the “President's Casting Day” at the Red Tag Casting Pools on Saturday, August 24, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Join me for a barbecue lunch and refreshments and a chance to do better than your President in the casting competition (which should in fact be not too difficult). “BE THERE” and see how good you really are.

Finally, members may have seen recently in the daily press that the Celtic Club site has been sold and the Club is looking for alternative accommodation. At the time of writing this Message, this actually is not the case. The facts are that the Celtic Club has for some years been looking at options to develop their existing location. Certain recommendations have been made to members and they will vote on the recommendations at a meeting to be held on Thursday, August 15, 2013.

From a VFFA perspective, regardless of the outcome of the vote, nothing would appear likely to impact on our tenure at the present site for the next 18 months at least. Rest assured that I will keep you informed of things as they develop.

Best wishes, *Terry Rogers* (President)

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## **This Month's Yarn**

(from March 1961)

“I suppose you’ve all heard about the bloke who sprinkled self-raising flour on his flies to make the fish rise,” said McTaggart, “but I tell you it sometimes pays to take things quite literally.”

“Go on!” exclaimed Dermot, plonking his glass down in surprise. “I shall,” continued McTaggart. “My nephew Clarence expressed a strong desire to go fishing at an early age, and when he was about seven years old his mother persuaded me to take him out with me one day. Now I didn’t want the boy tagging along behind me all day, so I set him up with a strong greenheart rod and a tin of worms. I showed him how to cast it out and move the bait around a bit, and then I left him at a decent sort of rocky pool that ought to have kept him busy for an hour or two, then started off downstream to fish back up with flies.”

“Did you have any of that self-raising flour with you?” queried Jon Kenfield. But McTaggart ignored him, and continued on: “I hadn’t gone more than thirty yards when I heard Clarence yelling: ‘Uncle! Uncle! I’ve got a bite! What’ll I do?’ ‘Strike!’ I yelled back, ‘Strike quickly’.

“Now in my hurried advice to the lad I had forgotten to tell him how to strike. So he took my instructions literally. He struck all right – downwards and hard, just as you would if you were trying to kill a snake. However it worked out surprisingly well. When I got back to the boy there were four medium-sized redfin floating stunned at the edge of the pool. Obviously a shoal had been cruising past when Clarence struck. I scooped them up in my net.”

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## **New Member Welcomed ...**

Again we have the pleasure of welcoming a new member this month. John Fasso has joined our ranks and we trust he enjoys many years of pleasurable membership of the VFFA.

## A Tribute to a Long-Standing Member – Ray Yates



It is very sad to report that Raymond Arthur (Ray) Yates, a long-time member of the VFFA, passed away peacefully on June 12, 2013. Ray was aged 94. He was born on February 10, 1919, at Greensborough, and attended Greensborough State School and then Carey Baptist Grammar School. He commenced work as a Junior Clerk at Colonial Mutual Fire Insurance in 1935, at the same time studying Accounting. After 12 months he accepted a position with Trustees Executors, and worked there until November 1949, with this period including 5 years of War Service with the Second AIF.

Ray's age group was the first to be called up for military training when war was declared, and in February 1940 he found himself in an Army Camp on the windswept plains near Torquay, where he received elementary training in the Army Medical Corps. He was sent to Sydney for embarkation overseas but at the last minute was transferred to Western Australia because of his attributes as a trainer.

Ray married Marjorie Smith in July 1944 at the Gardiner Church of Christ. Their happy and devoted marriage lasted almost 69 years. They lived in North Balwyn for many years, and were active members of the North Balwyn Baptist Church.

In the early 1950s Ray worked as an accountant with two companies before being approached by Alfred Mellor, who he had known at Carey, and invited to become a Partner in Mellor's business. Ray then became a member of the Melbourne Stock Exchange. He remained a Partner until 1966 when he resigned and accepted a position with the Melbourne City Mission, where his expertise and skills enabled the Mission to survive some very precarious and difficult days.

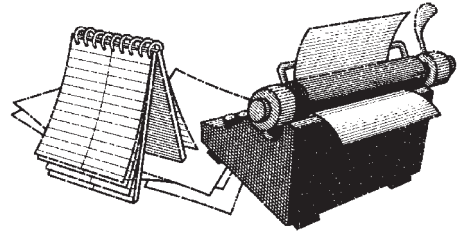
Throughout his life Ray has been a keen fly fisherman. From a young age he had accompanied his father and uncles on camping and fishing trips in Victoria's north-east, and he became a member of the Victorian Fly Fishers' Association in the 1960s. He is mentioned in fishing reports with other VFFA members of this period including Harold Darby and Graeme England. He introduced his two sons to fly fishing and a love of the bush.

Ray had a long-time interest in classical music and thoroughly enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan musical comedies. He had a great sense of humour, and was always very generous with his time and financial expertise in helping others. He is survived by his wife Marj, sons David and Neil, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



*About to go fishing*

# From the **EDITOR'S DESK**



“You can be a casual bait fisher and you can even be a casual lure fishermen, but you can’t be a casual fly fisher. There is too much to learn, to keep on top of, and to practice.” (Philip Weigall – top fly fishing guide and writer).

“Practice doesn’t make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect!” (Ron Barassi, renowned Australian Rules Football player and coach.)

“To follow John Goddard’s lead in knowing entomology and really understanding what fish are eating is the difference between whether you’re fly fishing or just fluff chucking”. “The wrong fly in the right place might win you a fish, but the right fly in the wrong place rarely will”. (These last two quotes are from articles in a recent UK *Trout Fisherman* magazine.)

Two thoughts from these quotes – in trout fishing there’s so much to learn and lots to practice. No surprises there. For a creature with a supposedly pea-sized brain those trout continue to challenge us and surprise us and confound us. In a feature article in this newsletter Philip Weigall gives us some insights into trout behaviour, and recommends that we make a serious effort to learn more about them. The learning comes in all sorts of ways – reading, watching, talking, experimenting, and of course listening. At our July meeting Fred Dunford will be speaking about his experiences fishing the lakes in the Snowy Mountains. There is no doubt that Fred knows a lot about catching those Eucumbene trout and his stillwater strategies and tactics will undoubtedly be transferable. So I, for one, will be listening with great interest.

And, as Philip suggests, there are skills involved in our trout fishing that can always do with some practice. I try to tie my own flies, and they catch me a few fish. But knowing something of the skills involved in fly tying gives me a healthy respect for those who do it well. I’ve spent hours watching masters such as Mick Hall and Hubert Reichelt dexterously conjuring up exquisite patterns with fingers that seemed to dance all over their fly tying vices. Yet Hubert assures me that when he settles down to tie several dozen flies for his fishing mates, as he does on occasions, he keeps the first half dozen flies for himself – because these are the less than perfect samples he produced while “getting his eye in”. So even the masters need a few practice runs to get up to speed.

What’s your knot tying like? There are those who claim they can join leaders to tippets behind their backs with their eyes shut. Not me, so I keep a couple of short lengths of coloured string in the dining room, and while the cook is busy hustling up the evening meal I’m surreptitiously tying a few Penny knots or reminding my fingers how a Perfection Loop goes together. Yes I know – strange behaviour for an adult. But knots are fun, and being able to tie secure connections out on the river is a useful skill.

Casting is another aspect of the art that is eminently worth practicing. I’ve got an old rod threaded up with a very tired line resting in the corner of the garage. A couple of times a week

I'll take it out onto the road in front of our house and give it a 10 minute workout. My neighbours have long since given up asking how many I've caught; they just smile and wave as they cruise past. My usual exercise is to simply false cast, trying to produce the tightest loops I can manage over a range of different line lengths. It's easy and relaxing, and keeps the casting muscles in some sort of shape. Occasionally I grab two or three rods and head off up to the local footy oval for a more serious session. A few months ago I was there casting to some plastic lids spread around on the grass when one of the local matrons trotted past with a couple of dogs on leads. Yes, you guessed it. As the squad moved past one of the pooches raised a hind leg and lubricated a favourite Sage rod which had my best Lamson reel attached. Ah well!

I've been doing some different casting practice recently. My right (casting) shoulder had been complaining for a while so I was given a cortisone injection in the moving parts. This apparently is the magic brew that fixes all such problems, but just in case it doesn't I've been frantically practicing my left-handed casting. Aesthetically it's not a picture of great beauty and double hauling is beyond me, but at least I can get some line out - and it doesn't hurt either. I mention this simply because all my whingeing to others about my dodgy shoulder has elicited an alarming number of stories from friends and colleagues of aches and pains and throbbing shoulders and dodgy elbows and wobbly knees and arthritic hips. And as we all know, prostrate problems of one sort or another are almost a condition of membership in the VFFA. It's a sharp reminder that so often we take our good health for granted. Be mindful of it, and take care of yourselves.

Tight lines, *Lyndon Webb*

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## VFFA Glasses

The VFFA has a very innovative and energetic marketing man. Hugh Maltby organizes the stocks, and is always on the look-out for new items to attach a VFFA logo to and sell to members. Thus we have badges, caps, shirts, polar fleece jackets, cloth badges for fishing vests, ties, diaries, and even a fine BBQ apron decorated with the VFFA logo.

And the latest addition – fine sets of wine glasses or whisky glasses. These are of excellent quality, and come in a set of six, for the modest sum of \$40 per set. An excellent gift – for yourself, spouse or colleague.



Stocks are kept in the VFFA room at the Celtic Club, so members wishing to purchase a set of these glasses merely need to bring their money to a meeting.

## June General Meeting – Bill Classon in South America

(Bill had a recent trip to South America – Argentina and Patagonia. Here is the text of his presentation.)

I'm here tonight to talk about a special trip I had to the South American continent. I must say at the outset that I prefer to fish locally. About nine months ago I caught a 1 kg trout in Belgrave Reservoir, and that to me was a very exciting thing as it was a wild fish - the area hadn't been stocked. But tonight I'm going to talk about my trip to South America. I first heard about the brown trout fishing in South America some 20 years ago. Then more recently I spoke to Rick Dobson and heard stories of his fishing there, so I pricked up my ears and thought maybe a trip over there would be good.

I started looking at fishing the Rio Grande, but it's a very big river requiring double handed rods, so instead we booked with a company called Far End Rivers that have a lodge on the Irigoyen River, some 200 km further south than the Rio Grande. I travelled there with a mate, Lachlan McCulloch, and it took us 50



hours of travel time from Melbourne to reach our destination. When we finally arrived we had six days of fishing ahead of us, and were accommodated in a very comfortable lodge that was a converted homestead. I can highly recommend it – our accommodation was of surprisingly good quality.

They only have six anglers there at a time, and their season normally opens in November and closes in March, although the climate can affect this. The season can be shortened if climatic issues demand it. We went in February to avoid the cold. The river we were fishing was probably the most southern trout fishing river there is.

The river, which ran quite close to the lodge, was smaller than the Goulburn. We could wade across it at many points. The normal daytime temperatures ranged from 8 to 12°C, but on our first day there the weather changed mid-morning and we found ourselves fishing in a snow storm with air temperature of -3°C.

There was about 20 km of river to fish and you could easily wade across the runs. However there were also lots of big pools, mostly created by beavers which were regarded as vermin because they had done a lot of damage to the river. The trout were found mainly in the bigger pools and the style of fishing was wet flies either fished across and down, or straight downstream. There was no sight fishing as such.

The river rose some 80 km back in the hills and the lower section that we fished was divided into three major beats. We mainly fished the bottom beat, from the lodge down to the ocean. The trout running up the river were brown sea runners. They had never seen a fly or a human, and did not actually feed a lot in the river. They had come in to spawn.

In terms of the gear used I had a lot of research before the trip and finally settled on a Sage TCX 7-weight 9'6" rod with a Sage TCX 6-weight 9' rod as a back up. My reel was a Loop



*Bill's fly box*

Opti Runner, and the lines I took included a Scientific Angler WF7 Floater Steelhead Taper, a Scientific Angler WF8 Floater Magnum Taper, and some Intermediate lines as well. We used 8-weight lines because we were fishing for some really big fish. My leaders were made up with 25 lb butts and to these were attached either 12 lb or 15 lb tippetts.

What flies to use? You all know that when you go overseas to fish you take a large collection of flies and still manage to not have the right flies with you. We discovered that our most effective fly was basically a large Woolly Bugger. A lot of the flies I took were just too bulky and wouldn't get down in the deeper water to where the fish were.



*Bill had an attentive audience*

We were rising in the morning at about 5:00 am and fishing for a while, then coming back to the lodge for breakfast. We then fished again until lunchtime at 12 noon. After lunch most of the anglers and all of the guides took a siesta. I didn't bother with the siesta, preferring to keep fishing.

For our first four days there the fishing was very slow - there were no fish in the river. The guides suggested that we needed some rain to increase the flow and get the fish going. So we mainly fished a big sea pool just inside the estuary, about 25 minutes walk from the lodge. I'd fish it by casting an intermediate line as far as I could and then retrieving the fly back.



*A 20 lb Jurassic rainbow*

The night before our last day there we had some rain. The fishing then improved dramatically and we finally had some truly great fishing. Lachlan caught a 15 lb fish on his second cast. I fished the next pool up and connected with a trout that straightened the hook. This fish was estimated at over 20 lb. Every year there are brown trout caught there between 20 and 30 lb. It's all catch and release of course, and when the fish come into the estuary they are silver coloured, being typical of sea runners.

This part of the trip cost us about \$5,000 each for the seven days there, and on top of that we were expected to provide a 10% (\$500) tip. Despite the cost and the tip the guides were very reluctant to share their flies around among the clients, even though their flies were clearly the most effective. And one of the guides even dropped his cigarette butt on my best fly line and burned it through, so I had to splice the two halves back together.

Our six days of fishing were finally completed and we left the lodge for the second part of our trip. After we left we heard that the place had copped a metre of rain in five hours, so the camp had to be closed for the rest of the season.

For the second part of our trip we flew to El Calafate, and then endured another 5 hour drive to get Lake Strobel (Jurassic Lake), which is 300 km from El Calafate and 900 m above sea level. Jurassic Lake is a volcanic crater lake like Purrumbete, and is some 25 km across. We stayed at a place called Green Lodge and to reach the lake we had to take a 20 minute drive in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The winds here are ferocious and the bay we fished was called 'Two Metre Bay' because the average wave height there was 2 metres. Most of the fishing is in the protected lees of course, because of the wind. Normally there are about 10 days per year when there is no wind, but we were very lucky indeed – we had four days with no wind and were able to polaroid the monster rainbow trout there in Tassie style. The average fish there are 10 – 12 lb. They were only ever stocked once and that was 30 years ago. Since then all the fish are wild fish, spawned in the river running into the lake. The food in the lake is mainly micro-shrimp. We again found that the Woolly Bugger was the best fly, but tied in the local style on a #2 stainless steel hook.

Over the next five days Lachlan and I caught over 200 fish. My largest was 15 lb, and my average was about 10 lb. Lachlan caught two over 20 lb. All of these were steelhead quality rainbows.

We were booked in for six days but the fishing was so good that we decided to bail out after five and return to El Calafate to do some sight-seeing. The week there cost us each about \$4,600. In terms of clothing, it was cold and warm clothes and several pairs of gloves were essential items.



*One of Bill's magnificent sea run browns*

## **Bullen Merri Fishing Weekend & Dinner**

**Date – August 9 - 11**

Hugh Maltby has done the preliminary organization for our annual visit to the Camperdown area to fish those two fabulous Western District lakes – Bullen Merri and Purrumbete. The weekend also includes a magnificent dinner at the property of Caroline and John Menzies.

Accommodation is booked at the Purrumbete Caravan Park from arrival on Friday August 9 until departure on Sunday 11 - four cabins with three guests in each cabin. Cabins booked are numbers 6 to 9 inclusive. Participants need to bring their own bedding.

The park has a wonderful fully enclosed area with log fires and TV for the footy and really good BBQ, so there is usually a BBQ on the Friday night.

The Saturday evening dinner commences at 6:30 pm for drinks, BYO (please bring your favourite). Cost of the meal is \$55. Dress - sports casual.

For all enquiries and to confirm your place please contact this year's Convenor - Richard Kos on 0430 091 300 or 9744 2375. A copy of the VFFA Event Registration Form (ERF) can be easily downloaded from the VFFA website. Log in, click on the 'Members' drop down list - 'Accounts, Forms and Payments' then download the Event Registration Form.



## **Notice of Major Event (NOE) Bairnsdale Donger, July 10, 2013**

**VFFA Major Event\*:** Weekend trip to Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' (BFF) lodge on the Mitta Mitta River near Omeo for the Dudley Lee Donger fishing challenge between VFFA and BFF. Date - 25 – 27 October

**Event Co-ordinator (EC):** Mike Jarvis (0418 265 390) or email - mc.jarvis2@bigpond.com; also Peter Campbell on 9744 3308.

**Event date:** Friday, October 25 to Sunday, October 27, 2013.

**Cost:** To Be Confirmed

**Event location & address:** BFF lodge on Mitta Mitta River near Omeo.

**Travel directions:** Information from co-ordinators.

**Transport requirements:** NA

**Accommodation:** Shared lodge accommodation or own camping nearby if preferred.

**Sleeping requirements:** Bring own bedding and towel.

**Catering/ food and drink requirements:** Self catering. BYO drinks

**Travel insurance:** NA

**Description of fishing areas:** Mitta Mitta River and nearby streams in the Omeo area.

**Mobile phone coverage areas, or otherwise:** None

**How physically challenging:** Varies from location to location - from easy to difficult.

**Fishing license required:** Yes if applicable.

**Strongly recommended personal equipment:** Waders, wading boots, wading staff, gaiters if wet wading; brimmed hat; glasses/sunglasses, sunscreen; wet weather gear, warm clothing; UHF/VHF radio; torch; water and lunch food.

**Essential equipment when fishing out of sight of other participants:** UHF radio

**Essential equipment for Remote Locations:** NA

**Guiding:** NA

**Event Registration Form (ERF):** To be completed and returned to Mike Jarvis by October 18, 2013.

**Date of issue of this NOE:** As above – July 10 (mandatory for quoting in ERF)

**Event Registration closing date:** October 18, 2013

**[Please note – the Event Registration Form (ERF) can be downloaded from the VFFA website or obtained at the next meeting]**

## Philip Weigall at the Flyfisher – June 2013

(In June of this year the Melbourne Flyfisher Store held a Fly Fishing Expo, and Philip Weigall was a guest speaker. Philip spoke for an hour, and using a PowerPoint presentation gave a fascinating and well-informed assessment of our current fishing here in Victoria. The following is a summary of his talk, and is reproduced with permission from both Philip and the Flyfisher.)

Thanks for coming along everybody. Fly fishing is obviously about being a good caster, selecting the right flies, and seeing trout that are there to be seen. Now while these are all necessary to being a good fly fisher, I'm going to talk tonight more about the actual fish themselves and their behaviour. So this is not going to be about how to catch trout so much as how to understand them, particularly in the context of the last several months.

We've had three unusually kind years, particularly on the rivers, where the fishing has been really good and we've had very few problems in terms of bird predation, water flows, bush fires and those sorts of things. However over the last six months our river fishing has been quite a bit tougher and I've heard comments such as "the birds got them all", "the water was too warm and I stopped fishing when the temperature got above 19°C", "Fisheries won't restock the rivers because the Greenies won't let them", or "there are no fish left since the fires". To put it bluntly, I think some anglers have over-reacted.

I want to talk tonight about how trout and rivers go through various cycles, how they respond to certain situations, and why come October I think we will probably again have fishing the equal to the really good fishing we've had over the last few years. And I'm sure that comment will surprise some of you.

The photo I have put up on the screen here is a recent photo of the Wonnangatta River, one of our dozens of beautiful mountain rivers. Like all rivers you can think of the Wonnangatta as a living thing. Now I think we all have a tendency to prefer our world to be 'homogenised'. We like a bit of change but not too much. And I think our natural inclination is to hope that every time we go to somewhere like the Wonnangatta we want it to look like this picture – perfect. Perfect height, clear, easy to cross at the wide riffles, and with a good flow. Basically a little bit of paradise. But that's a fleeting glimpse of the Wonnangatta, as it is for all the rivers that we fish. They are living things. Their entire structure will change with floods. They are subjected to fires and they get ash run-off. There are ebbs and flows in their fish populations due to circumstances that often have nothing to do with people, but are just part of the natural cycles in the environment. So let's grasp this idea that trout fisheries are fluid things that go through cycles, both good and bad. But an overriding theme is that we are lucky in that trout are a very fast recovering species. They grow quickly and, as we will discover, have all sorts of strategies for bouncing back from tough times.

As I said at the beginning, to be better fly fishers we need to devote time to learning about the trout themselves. The longer I teach people to fly fish the more I've come to the realisation that you cannot be a casual fly fisherman. It's just the way it is. There is too much to learn, to keep on top of, and to practice. If you want to be a successful fly fisher then either go out every single time with a guide, or put some energy into learning how to do it. It takes time, it takes reading, and it takes doing it when it's tough. There is no point in just pulling out your



fly rod when everything looks good, because there are plenty of times when that won't be the case. But I can guarantee that if you go out when it's hard you will become a better fly fisher. If you want to be a good fly fisher you need to understand the species you are fishing for, and in the case of trout there are some really fascinating things you need to learn.

Here is a photo of the Indi River in April this year. My mate Christopher is fishing and there are four fish rising in that pool. It looks like paradise and it was. But according to a lot of the science those trout should not have been there. The temperature of the Indi got to 26°C two months earlier, and for the best part of three months it was over 20°C. And these temperatures are supposed to be at best very uncomfortable for trout, and at worst lethal. So I hope this destroys the myth that you read in so many books that you should stop fishing for trout when the temperature gets to 19°C - 20°C, and if it reaches 26°C then the trout will all be dead. This would be bad news in Victoria because every summer many of our rivers reach those temperatures. Yet two months after those high summer temperatures we were catching 30 or 40 fish per day on the Indi, suggesting that trout can tolerate much higher temperatures than we were led to believe. And it's the same deal in lakes.

About 10 years ago I said to one of our Fisheries scientists, "Paul - we are catching fish in 25°C water, and they are coming up and taking our Royal Wulffs and are not even struggling for breath. How can this be, because all the books tell us that at these temperatures they should all be dead?" He said, "Good question!" He then had the same experience when he

fished the Goulburn that year in November. It was a late irrigation season and the natural flow coming out the top of the Pondage was running at 22°C or 23°C. All the trout in the trout farms were dying but the fish in the river were rising flat out. Paul was as mystified as I was.

So he went and read the research, and discovered that there was support for the idea that trout could tolerate higher temperatures. There are two factors that contribute to this, the most important being the acclimatisation time. If you gradually increase the temperature to which trout are exposed, which happens every summer in our rivers, then their tolerance increases. If I were to get a trout out of the river now and put it in a bucket of water at 25°C it will probably die, but in the middle of summer they survive these temperatures quite comfortably. I suspect they do this because their red blood cell count increases with gradual exposure to increasing temperature. Trout die in high temperatures because of the lack of dissolved oxygen. Their metabolism is racing and they have a greater need for oxygen, but there is less dissolved oxygen available in the warmer water so they can't get the oxygen they need and so they die. But if their red blood cell count increases sufficiently this gives them much greater ability to get the oxygen they need from the water. That to me would be a logical explanation, although I haven't actually seen it proven.

Whatever the case we know through studies that trout can adapt to warm water through gradual exposure, and this is pretty much the case the world over. I was reading a *Flyfishers Guide to Montana* and came across this sentence: "I once caught a lively 20 inch rainbow in 27°C water, a temperature that the textbooks tell us is fatal." And this was in Montana, the epicentre of trout on planet Earth. In other words this is not some quirky adaptation that occurs in hot old Australia, it is something you can find all over the world. So the stuff that you hear such as "Oh, the water was 23°C so all the fish must be dead" is by and large not true. And with care you don't need to feel guilty about catching fish that are feeding in water at those high temperatures. Just don't keep them out of the water long. Use barbless hooks, and get them off and back in the water quickly.

This applies to both rivers and lakes, though lakes are more complicated because they stratify and have deep water refuges. However trout survived in Tooliorook and Wendouree last summer - two very shallow lakes where temperatures hit 26°C or 27°C.

Here is a photo of the Steavenson River, and it shows some nice trout caught in the Steavenson. But this photo was taken in April 2010, just 13 months after the horrendous Black Saturday fires. Those fires were incredibly savage and the poor old Steavenson was in the middle of it. And yet, as you can see from the photo, within 13 months we were not only catching fish in the Steavenson, but they were better fish than we would normally expect from this river. This is obviously a function of the ash run-off, which is initially a bad thing but over time a good thing, because it fertilises the water. Most of our trout streams are comparatively poor in terms of productivity, unlike our lakes, and the nutrient boost of ash temporarily gives them a kick. Once those nasty ash run-off events have passed through and the river is left with a lot of dead trees and silt on the banks, the fish come back. And it is really surprising how fast they come back. Just 13 months after that terrible fire the Steavenson wasn't just back to normal, it was better than normal.

I've heard a lot of comments this summer about how the Ovens River is gone because of the Harrierville fires. I can assure you it's not gone. The fish are coming back there already. One of the strengths of the Ovens' situation is that, unlike the Steavenson, it has lots of tributaries

that weren't affected by the fires. So the fish in the Ovens had places to retreat to such as German Creek, Morse's Creek, the Buckland, and any number of little streams in between. Undoubtedly the Ovens trout population took a hit, and some fish were probably killed, others probably starved, and some others moved out. But just watch how quickly that river comes back. There are bushfires and there are droughts, and things go in cycles, so this idea that 'Vale the Ovens and may it rest in peace, and wasn't it a wonderful river for so many years' is just part of the cycle.

It is unusual for an entire trout catchment to be eradicated by a bushfire, because there are usually some nooks and crannies that survive even in a really bad fire, and these are refuges for the fish. They are places that trout can migrate into, or where the existing trout population can find safety and then later recolonise the river.

Something that fascinates me a lot though is that within any trout population there seem to be 'wanderers'. We have not studied this much in Australia, but in New Zealand they have done a lot of tagging and it makes fascinating reading. In the Nelson district of New Zealand a guide friend of mine caught a trout in the Matakotaki River that had been tagged 18 months earlier. It had swum down the Owen River, which is about the size of the Howqua, then into the Buller River, which is about the size of the Goulburn, then down the Buller and finally up the Matakotaki River. By the shortest possible distance it had travelled 70 km.

It would take a lot more research to understand why there are trout in populations that do this. I guess there are two possibilities, one being that it is a genetic trait that in any batch of trout there will be the 'home bodies' and the 'wanderers'. There are fish that never stray far from their home pool and there are other fish like this tagged trout that travelled 70 km. Why did it do that? Is it competitive pressure? Is it a fish that keeps getting kicked out of the pools that it stops off at until eventually it is big enough, or it finds an empty bit of river that has been sabotaged by some natural event. New Zealand has cataclysmic events. They don't have bushfires like ours, but they have floods that beggar belief. My brother fished a river a couple of years ago that had experienced a flood coming down at 100,000 mL per day – the equivalent in water volume to Cairn Curren going down the river every day, and 70 feet up there were trees rammed into other trees.

So New Zealand trout have their crosses to bear, and they survive them. The Matakotaki is a beautiful river but it does get subjected to horrendous flood events, so maybe this poor trout was kicked out of pool after pool until he finally found his way into the Matakotaki and into a pool where there weren't any other trout kicking him out. And that fish was nothing compared to the one tagged in the Selwyn River near Christchurch which swam down the Selwyn, out to sea, then 500 km down the coast of New Zealand and finally up the Mataura River. By the shortest possible route that trout had travelled 700 km in the space of 18 months.

So trout will search for new areas to colonise. It's why we find those fish in the headwater lakes in Tasmania. I often ask myself what madness possessed those fingerlings to swim across wet grass, which is about all there is connecting some of those headwater lakes. What drove those fish to do that – were they basically going to die of starvation, or did they just have wanderlust? They will fight their way up the tiniest trickles or difficult waterfalls. And that's a reason why come next summer some of the rivers that have done it really tough recently will have fish in them again.

But that's if there was a problem to begin with in the first place. I learned many years ago that I am fairly pathetic at assessing how many fish there are in a river. It's easy when they're out and about, but when they are not I can't tell how many are there, even on a small stream. Brown trout especially are absolute masters at hiding. They've survived millions of years being hammered by predators and so have got very good at hiding. A lot of you looked at a picture I showed earlier and said to yourselves, "What's that blob". It was a 5 lb trout in 6 inches of water in among rocks in a New Zealand river, and it was barely discernible. And if a 5 pounder can hide like that imagine what a typical 12 inch Victorian fish can do.

So if you ever come across me somewhere don't say: "There are no trout here. I haven't seen any," because it is a meaningless statement. Anglers say, "Not only did I not catch any, I didn't even spook any." Really? That's just not the way it is. I've had the experience of walking up a river and seeing zip and thinking to myself, "This is not looking too good," and then of course there was a hatch or a termite fall and the river had suddenly come alive. So it takes an awful lot for me to believe that because I or any other angler are not seeing fish they are not there.

One of the issues we've encountered over the past six months are cormorants. They have impacted on the Eucumbene River, they have impacted on several Tasmanian rivers, and they have certainly impacted on the Victorian streams. And there is no doubt that the cormorants have eaten a lot of fish. So what's the sensible strategy for a trout living in a river being hammered by cormorants? It's to hide. The survivors are the hiders, the ones that are good at hiding and only come out at night. I guess we've all had the experience where we have let a fish go in a small clear river and it swam out of our hand, went about a metre, and then poof - it was gone. It vanished. Just amplify that thought. You had the luxury of seeing that fish swim out of your hand. What about the ones that saw something or heard you coming. Or just decided a couple of months ago, after seeing Joe and Bill get eaten, to hide during the day.

I was asked how the cormorant plague affected the Tasmanian rivers. Fortunately it appears that they didn't get all the fish. The St Patrick's still has plenty of fish, though the Meander was hit hard. There is no doubt that cormorants are very efficient predators and take a lot of fish, so trout are sensibly terrified of them. I would far rather find another fisherman on a river than a cormorant. You're fishing up a river and suddenly it all goes quiet. You fish around a couple more bends and there's this big black B52 who can hardly take off because he's so full of fish. And that section of the river will be gone for the rest of the day. Give me someone else fishing up ahead of me any time, because within an hour or so I'll be able to catch fish again. (A member of the audience asked: "What's a good fly for a cormorant?" Philip's answer: "Something with a lot of lead in it!")

I'm hearing a lot of stories now, at the end of the season, from people who have been out in the last couple of weeks in places like the Otways. It's really nice to hear their stories though not surprising. "Hey Philip, I went to three streams in the Otways the other day and there were fish everywhere." Really? Weren't they all wiped out? Apparently not! And this pattern is being repeated in lots of places. Did the fish take a hit in some of our rivers this past summer? No doubt about it, they did. Should we be really worried about the coming season and what it holds? Not at all.

One subject I hear a lot about whenever the fishing gets a bit tough on the rivers is that they need to be stocked. I'm afraid I'm becoming more and more zealous in my belief that

stocking self-sustaining rivers is not a good strategy. In fact you would struggle to find a fishery scientist anywhere who would support stocking a river if it already had a breeding population of fish - perhaps not many fish but still some surviving trout there. The trout just do it so much better than we do. And stocking is expensive. There is a finite number of trout produced in Victoria every year, and every fish costs money. If you decide that you want to stock the Ovens, for example, then where are those fish going to come from? Do you want to pull them out of Wendouree or Newlyn, because there is not an infinite supply and they are expensive little critters to grow. They need oxygen and they need food and they need good quality water which is chilled in the summer, and they need antibiotics and all sorts of other things.

Now I love stocked fisheries and I fought tooth and nail for many of our lakes to receive more trout than they were getting, and for lakes like Tullaroop to receive trout when they previously hadn't. So I am absolutely pro-stocking, but I am completely against the stocking of rivers that retain some fish and have excellent spawning facilities. At best it is an expensive waste of money. If there are any trout left at all they will recover the trout population much faster than we can by stocking artificially.

But there is a darker side to this. If you stock large fish into a river they have a head start over the wild fish that were naturally recruited there, and there is a lot of science to show that those stocked fish displace the little wild fish. And even worse, as you know if you have ever turned up at Newlyn or Hepburn or Wendouree just after they've been stocked, the little trout straight out of the hatchery are very vulnerable to predation from both people and birds. So you end up with this awful double whammy that I've seen happen a few times, mainly with hatchery escapees. A river is overwhelmed with hatchery fish and everyone says, "The fishing here is great, and they are so easy to catch." These fish have eaten just pellets for the past few months so they are not very discriminating about flies. And of course the birds are very pleased to see them too.

Then after a few months all the stocked fish are gone. But in the meantime they have out competed the little wild fish, so now you are actually left with nothing. I appreciate that when you are fishing a favourite river that's been affected by a bushfire and you are not seeing as many fish as you normally would, your natural inclination is to say, "I wish someone would stock this river." It's an understandable reaction, but sadly not a practical solution. But the good news is that so long as there are some trout left in the system, and they don't have to be in the river but just somewhere in the system, they will replenish the population all by themselves, and quickly for all those reasons we discussed earlier. Trout do not like a vacuum – if there is habitat there that's ok and there's nothing in it you can bet your last dollar that a little trout will find its way there.

These are often the 'also-ran' fish - the ones that nearly all die in a good year, the ones that if they didn't die then trout numbers would explode exponentially. Female trout lay 1,000 eggs per kilogram of body weight when they spawn, so they make rats and mice look slow when it comes to reproduction. And this is their strategy for exactly this situation. For the last three years most of the spawning that went on was a waste of time because only a very tiny percentage of the hatching trout survived to more than fingerling size. But in a year like this it's the strategy that is going to put fish back in our rivers. And because the competitive pressure has been low, not only will those fish survive but they will thrive because they will have a lot of food to themselves. Of course if there are no trout left at all then it's a different

story, but provided there is a small but viable population of survivors in the system we are much better off letting them do their thing. We know it works because we've seen it happen so often in the past. And of course these are the fish that were brought up in that river so they will have little evolutionary adaptations that are going to help them do it that much better than a trout from somewhere else.

The season is now closed for the rivers, so let's talk about our winter stillwater options. The lake options are in fact very good because we are in a very good period just now. The photo on the screen was taken at Tullaroop last Monday, where I fished with my brother Mark. This lake is a long-time favourite of mine, even more so now that Fisheries is stocking reasonable numbers of trout into it. It is crystal clear and fishing solidly. It is one of our many lakes that was pretty sad and sorry during the drought years, but this year going into winter it is sitting at about 60% and there are three year classes of trout in there. My brother broke his hook on a very big fish and he had a few things to say that I heard clearly from the other side of the bay. So Tullaroop is a really good option for the coming months.

Hepburn and Newlyn are both carrying good stocks of fish. Hepburn is low but the winter rains are coming. The fish there have come through the summer pretty well and there are some really big browns in there now. Hepburn is not a place for an inexperienced angler. It's a lake that requires a bit of dedication, and to make matters worse it fishes best in bad weather. But the rewards are some really good browns and the odd big rainbow too. Newlyn is close by and I like Newlyn when the weather is fine and Hepburn when the weather is foul and crappy. I prefer it settled at Newlyn because I like to be able to see the fish, and you can see them from a long way away if the surface isn't too broken. Catching fish in Newlyn is about 70% seeing the fish first, and most days if you walk far enough you will see fish because there are plenty of them in there. So these stillwaters are a good pair. If you want to do a bit of suffering you can go to Hepburn and earn a 6 pounder, and if you want a bit of comfort you can go to Newlyn.

I don't need to say much about Toolondo. At the moment it's a fish factory, so of course is getting a lot of pressure. If you haven't been there it is a really beautiful lake and a nice lake to fish. The level is being held at about half its old level, and this makes it a better fly fishery as there is much more shallow water and you can find a lot more trout over the shallow flats. Wartook remains just a good steady performer, and is probably experiencing a little less pressure because Toolondo is nearby and fishing so well.

Purrumbete and Bullen Merri are quite interesting this year. The stocking regime has changed in anticipation of the return of Chinook salmon. We nearly lost them - we were down to about 20 or 30 breeding pairs in the hatchery, and once they were gone there is no way Quarantine would ever allow us to bring in fresh stocks of them. The ones left in Snob's Creek Hatchery were the only ones left in Australia. However the recovery program has been phenomenally successful and they have bred so many in fact that they will probably end up stocking them in other waters too. But at the very least there will be some good stockings of Chinooks into Purrumbete and Bullen Merri.

Chinooks need lots of little fish to eat. They thrive on eating little fish and they grow very fast as a result, so to get the best bang for your buck from Chinooks you need to put them somewhere where there are lots of baitfish. Anglers are already catching some decent Chinooks in Bullen Merri, and they are great fish that pull like fury. They will be stocked into

Purrumbete in the next month or so, and as they are fast growers don't be surprised if by mid spring we are catching 1½ lb Chinooks. These two lakes are good winter options anyway, but I think the Chinooks will really add some spice over the next year or so, and certainly towards the end of this winter.

Lake Wendouree is probably fishing as well now as it has ever fished. I don't ever remember so many quality fish being caught there. So it is truly wonderful how a paddock that was catching fire every couple of years has been turned back into such a fabulous fishery. It's a credit to everyone who has been involved. Fyans is a great lake and a good winter fishery, and is also probably benefiting from the attention that Toolondo is getting. I haven't fished Tooliorook myself this winter but I have heard some reports of good fishing there since late autumn.

Wombat is a great little lake near Daylesford that carries a good head of fish. It's a good lake for less experienced fly fishers as well as being a good winter option. More often than not you will find fish rising there. They're not big but they're good fun, and great practice for getting your confidence up on stillwaters.

Cairn Curran was my favourite lake in all of Victoria prior to the drought, and when it refilled and Fisheries restocked it I thought, "You beauty!" But then it became horrendously muddy, and it's only in the last few months that it has started to clear sufficiently to fish with the fly. I've only had two short visits there and I caught a trout. The trouble is my resolve rapidly collapses with Tullaroop just up the road. But nevertheless Cairn Curran is showing a lot of promise so it's one to keep an eye on.

For Cosgrove it's probably business as usual. It is not a favourite winter fishery of mine; I prefer it in autumn when the fish are on the windfall bugs out of the trees, and there can also be some action in spring. It will certainly have a healthy head of fish, but for me it doesn't compete with Hepburn and Newlyn and Wendouree that are close by. But by all means give it a crack because there will be fish there.

There are a lot of other good lakes that I haven't mentioned, such as Upper Coliban, Lauriston, Malmsbury, and Harcourt. I've had some success recently at Lauriston and Coliban, and these are all well worth having on the list. Upper Coliban is in good shape and at Lauriston it is business as usual. Green Hill is another one that might be okay. It produced some good fishing before Christmas, but since then the jury has been out.

The list could go on and on, but I don't think you want me to talk about every trout water in the state. Those that I have mentioned are the ones that take my fancy at the moment.

A few final thoughts. In fishing lakes one of the first things to do is to get the depth right. A very crude and simple approach is this - if the water is clear and it's sunny then fish a stick caddis very slowly, or try a Tom Jones. If the water is a bit coloured and murky then fish a Woolly Bugger and don't forget the 'hang' at the end before lifting your line out for your next cast.

# About the VFFA Web Site

(Continued from June 2013, from Kevin Finn, our Web Administrator)

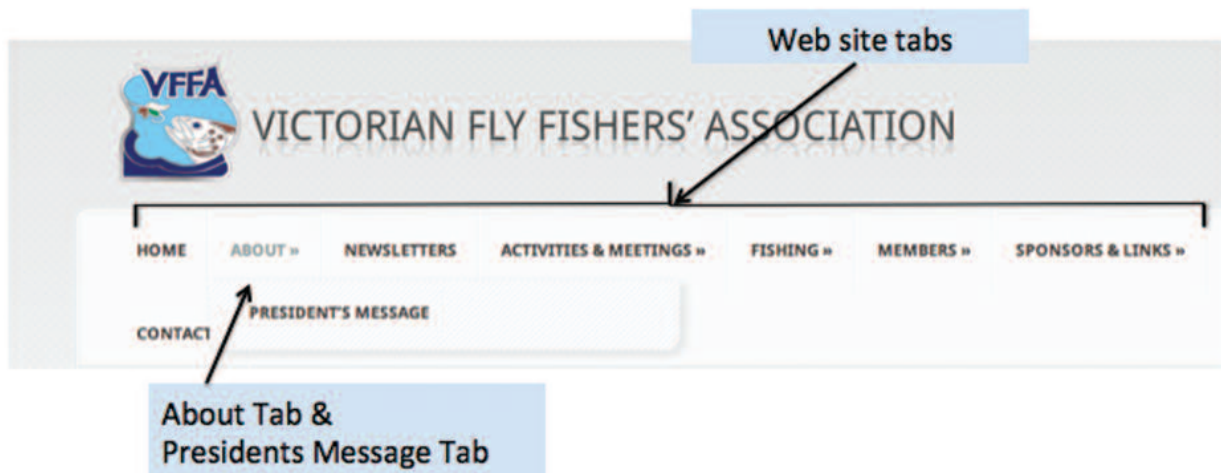
The VFFA created a new web site in July 2012 to meet the changing needs of our members. Connection to the Internet has become an accepted norm in our community for many of our communication needs. No longer are we limited to the monthly Newsletter, coming by post, to get updated club news; it now can be accessed 24/7 from any location in the world where an Internet connection can be achieved.

## Web site features:

The Newsletter continues as the Association's major communication method and now is available in its entirety or by prominent featured articles throughout the new website. In addition over 5 years of past copies are stored on the web site for easy retrieval.

## The Web tab Contents:

This article is the second of a series, and concentrates on the ABOUT and NEWSLETTER tabs and their content. A guide is shown below with the features highlighted by arrows and directions.



**ABOUT Tab** – This tab offer's the choice of two subjects:

About – A detailed history of the VFFA, then by clicking on the ...

“Presidents Message” dropped down tab. This tab contains the current President's seasonal message from Terry Rogers.

**VFFA**  
VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION

**Newsletter Tab**

HOME ABOUT » NEWSLETTERS ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS » FISHING »

CONTACT »

Home » Newsletters

## Newsletters



VFFA June 2013

VFFA May 2013

VFFA April 2013

VFFA February 2013

**Link to current Newsletter**

**5 + years past copies**

**NEWSLETTER Tab** – This tab offers a choice of the current month’s newsletter and the selection of more than 5 years previous copies and their respective highlights.

By clicking on the light blue area of the Newsletter month / year the Newsletter opens in a PDF format. It also offers full colour photo views in this format and the feature of readers being able to change the format size / text for easy reading.

The PDF format also allows the saving of the document into tablet type reading devices such as iPads. The Newsletter is then a potable digital document.

# Warrnambool Fly Fishers Annual Game Dinner

The Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Annual Game Dinner is on Saturday, July 27, at the 'Members Lounge' in the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion, Grafton Road, Warrnambool.

Because of the new venue this year, the cost for guests is \$70, to be paid on the night. It will be a BYO wine and beer night. Before dinner drinks with deep-fried crumbed abalone will begin at 6:00 pm, and we will sit down for the first course at about 7:00 pm for the start of what should be another night of fine food and fabulous company.

VFFA members wishing to attend the Dinner should notify WFFC President Adrian Jacobs, by calling him on 0437 620 972, with RSVP by Wednesday July 24.

There is a limit of 65 persons who can be seated in the dining room at the Pavilion and places are filling up fast, so a prompt response is recommended.

*Hafey Rock*, Secretary, Warrnambool Fly Fishers

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## Partners' Dinner - a Night for the Piscatorial Assassins Widows

On a cold wintry Melbourne night we were once again at the Celtic Club for the Annual VFFA Partners' Dinner. Twenty members and their partners enjoyed a hearty and wholesome dinner along with some fine beverages.

The mood on the tables seemed very happy with everybody enjoying themselves. After the main course Peter Boag somehow managed to coax four wary females to talk about the joys of being married to a VFFA member.

I discovered that some of the women actually enjoy fly fishing with their partners. In fact they cast better, fish better and definitely look better!!!

I would like to thank Judy Rogers, Jenny MacDonald and Phoebe Dickson for their stories. One thing that all the women agree on is it is nice when our partners go fishing.

On behalf of the women who attended, a special thank you to Peter Boag for his organisation.

Looking forward to next year.

*Rhonda Grisold* (Choco's Partner)

# Cane Day

It was enthusiasm plus again at this year's annual Cane Day.

Although numbers were down slightly, probably due to uncertain weather, there were still some 50 people attending at various stages. Cane and would-be cane enthusiasts were excited by the rods there and available for casting.

The day got off to a good, if not chilly, start with a stall with fishing gear available for purchase. And convener Bernard Holbery had been up early to pitch a marquee to cover the food and drinks area.

One of the highlights was the arrival of Tasmania cane rod maker Peter McKean. Peter had a number of rods available for inspection and casting. He says he has no shortage of orders and is kept quite busy. His new website is up and running and certainly worth a look:  
[www.mckeanbamboorods.com](http://www.mckeanbamboorods.com)

Another new rod maker emerged on the day. Pat Sheridan is making 5 or 6 rods per year and had two on hand for casting and inspection. He can be contacted on 0419 515 950. One of his rods was a 3 weight and was built with what he described as a 'progressive taper'.

Long-term VFFA member Bob Roles made the trip down from Bendigo to enjoy the company of like-minded people and inspect some of the cane offerings. He and Marty Rogers, who both spent many years fishing with cane rods, got their heads together over the modern day offerings.

Bernard Holbery was pleased with the 2013 event and was ably assisted by a number of VFFA and non-VFFA members. Special mention must go to Joe Haslauer, who provided coffee and kit that is normally the centre-piece of Sunday Casting. Peter Campbell's apple pies were well-received too. And finally, our sincere thanks to Bernard who, as Convenor and chief organiser, put in hours of preparation to ensure the success of the day.

The Cane Day remains a key date on the VFFA calendar.



*Cane Day stalls and marquees*



*Bernard's bicycle*



*Joe Haslauer trying one out*



*Andrew Orr sketched the action*



*These cane rods cast a nice line*



*Two old mates - Bob Roles and Marty Rogers*



*Hughie liked this one*

# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *Fred Dunford's 'Corduliid'*



*(Photo from Peter Leuver's wonderful fly tying book Fur and Feather)*

Fred Dunford is our guest speaker for the July meeting, so it is very appropriate for us to feature Fred's famous mud-eye pattern (i.e. dragonfly larva), the Corduliid, as this month's Fly of the Month. The following notes are Fred's description of how this very effective pattern was developed:

The Corduliid was born of dire necessity, its evolution commencing after a particularly demoralising rise at O'Neill's Bay, Lake Eucumbene, in March 1966, when a full-scale mud-eye migration left myself and several others completely baffled and defeated. The excruciating part about this particular debacle was that heavy fish were not only rising ad infinitum virtually under our rod tips, but from that night onwards I realised that these synchronous mud-eye emergencies brought up the best fish in the lake. Not only were these fish moving into the shallows en masse, but also it seemed to be the only time they did so. Quite obviously the autumn migration (March/April) was the fishing event of the entire calendar; yet all the flies of that period, and most of them since, were constructed on a wrong premise.

Even the most preliminary torchlight investigations revealed that no fly on earth could be expected to simulate the next-to-impossible swimming mode. The foreshortened front legs swim breaststroke style, the middle pair are tucked away underneath like aircraft landing gear and the more conspicuous back ones trail along behind in a stiff-kneed and jerky sort of sidekick style. Swim a Eucumbene mud-eye in a white saucer of water and you will notice waves of ripple shadow following him across the bottom as he sucks water into the rectal gill chamber at the tail end and squirts it back out again jet-boat style.

Clearly what was needed to elicit the releaser stimuli was a completely new category of flatback flies. Largish leg-of-mutton shaped flies skulking along against the night sky when viewed from below. Ones that would plane as long as possible in the sub-meniscus, and put out a distinctive little homing wake.

And so began my descent into the darkest and most depressing days of an angling career. Even three years later in March 1969 it seemed as if nothing much had changed. In the shadows of the looming granite massifs at Middlingbank that night, yet another incarnation of the mud-eye fly was doing its customary penance the same as its long list of predecessors. Stoically I continued to rotate repertoires over individual fish. Fast retrieve; slow retrieve; dead drift; twitch; twitch and pause; whatever you can think of.

Then Whacketty-thump! From the perilously near vicinity a resonant and resounding thrash. He must have cut it too fine on the adjacent natural and hooked himself by default. Or so I thought at the time. For a disconcerting moment that solid weight at the other end held steady as if I was fast to the rock of Gibraltar, then with something akin to the brute power of a locomotive he humped his shoulder into the load and resolutely gathered momentum towards some destination out in the middle distance. Indeed he was a hefty fish, though how heavy I will never know.

But the rise showed no sign of abating and almost on consecutive casts yet another carousing monster pressed his luck just a little too close. But this fish was firmly attached and provided all the pulsating and see-sawing battle the aspiring angler ever dreamed of. And eventually after much thrashing, crashing and waving of torches my wife wrested him from the beached shallows at the nethermost end of 50 metres of flyline and backing.

So after three years, one month and eleven days of almost continual study of the insect itself, and much development of the fly, the Corduliid finally arrived, when three carousing monsters were finally banked and another lost during a hectic mud-eye rise at Middlingbank.

Since that night the fly has never really stopped evolving, to simplify and streamline the tying without loss of trout appeal. In fact I always left myself room for further development by stating from the outset that the fly was only a prototype, and never actually setting down the dressing.

### **Fred Dunford's Corduliid:**

Hook: Tiemco Model 9300, sizes 8 - 12

Thread: Black 6/0

Body: Hare's ear polydubbing

Wings: Four or five black duck breast feathers

Legs: Deer hair

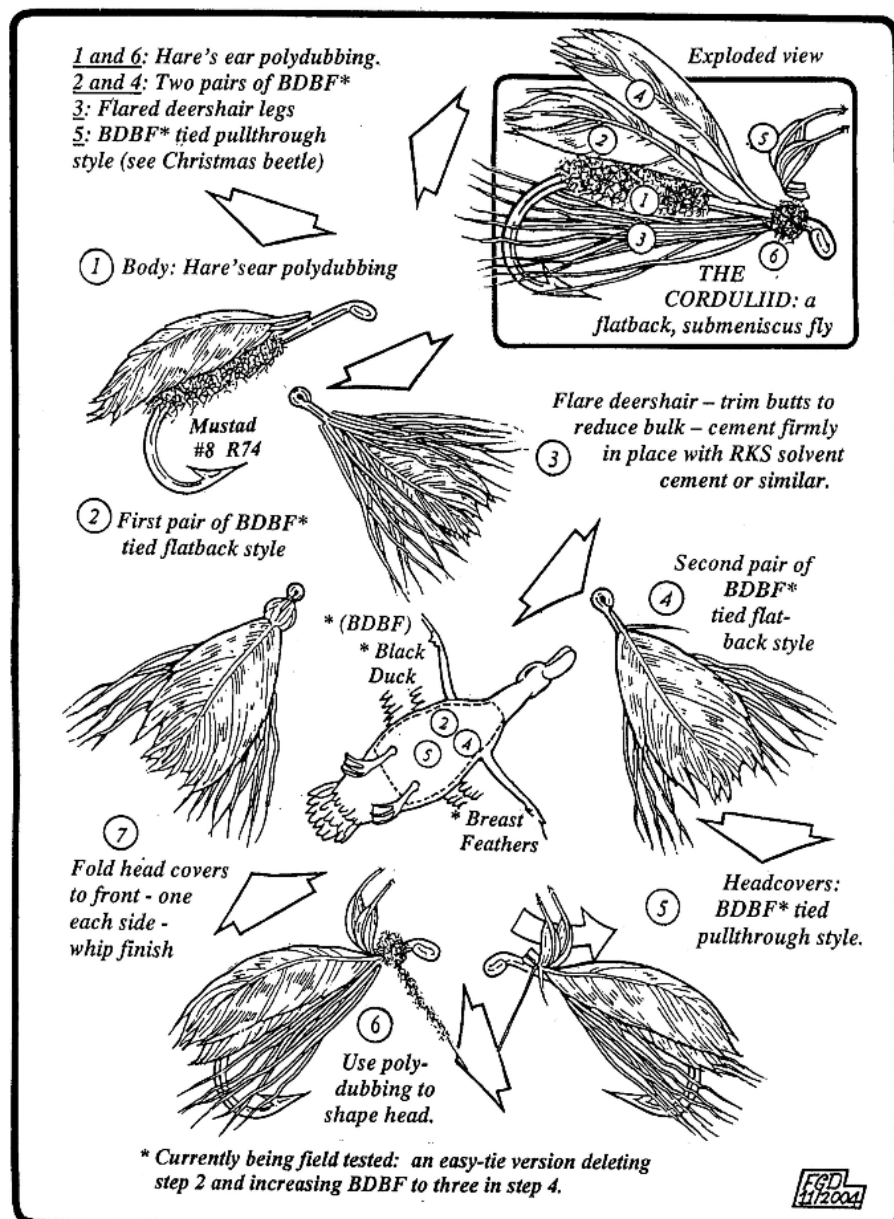
Head: Built up hare's ear polydubbing covered by two or three black duck breast feathers

## Tying Procedure:

- 1 Dub a slim body from about the midway point to the end of the hook shank.
- 2 Loosely tie in two matching duck feathers, one on top of the others. Pull the stalks gently to line them all up with their ends just past the hook bend. Then tie them in tightly.
- 3 Tie in some deer hair in below the shank and just in front of the wing. Flare them out against the body and then tie them in and cement them firmly in place.
- 4 Tie in two or three more duck feathers and treat as before, pulling them until all the feathers are lined up evenly at the back with their tips just past the hook bend.
- 5 Loosely tie in three more duck feathers by their stalks and facing up and over the eye, as shown in the diagram below:

- 6 Pull the feathers by the stalks until they set up as shown and then dub the head shape over the waste.

- 7 pull the feathers over the head, tie them down and trim the waste. Then whip finish and varnish the knot.





## 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 Peter Boag will be available prior to each general meeting to assist members wishing to borrow books or videos.

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

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

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

## V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA).....	\$70.00 each
Book "Geehi to Great Lake" .....	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts .....	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo.....	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon).....	\$35.00 each
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges .....	\$7.00 each
<b><i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie.....</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
V.F.F.A. car stickers.....	\$2.00 each

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

### VALUED DONORS

#### The following made donations for the raffle at the 2012 Annual Dinner:

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

## VFFA Meetings & Activities

### July 2013

- 7 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 14 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 18 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Speaker – Fred Dunford**
- 21 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 27 Warrnambool Annual Game Dinner
- 28 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)

### August 2013

- 4 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 9 - 11 Annual Bullen Merri trip (Convenor – Richard Kos)
- 11 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 14 Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club
- 18 Sunday Casting - at the Red Tag Casting Pools (9:00 am – 1:00pm)
- 23 Annual Dinner – Guest Speaker: Jim Allen**
- 24 President's Casting Day - 10am to 3pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools

### September 2013

- 11 Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club: preparation for the AGM
- 19 Annual General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club.**

### October 2013

- 17 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Speakers – Rick Dugina and Hamish Hughes**
- 23 Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club
- 25 – 27 Re-scheduled Donger Challenge at the Bairnsdale Fishing Lodge

### November 2013

- 15 - 17 Annual Warrnambool Trip – Convenor Hugh Maltby
- 21 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Book Auction**
- 27 Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

### December 2013

- 12 Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club - Guest Speaker: John Diggle (CEO Tasmanian IFS)**

### February 2014

- 15 – 21 Annual Trip to Tasmania, staying at Hayes on Brumby's