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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

JUNE 2011

Organisation No. A0024750J

C/- The Kelvin Club, 14-30 Melbourne Place, Melbourne 3000

www.vffa.org.au

June Meeting – Thursday, June 16, 8 pm at the Kelvin Club -
Guest Speaker – Rod Barford (President of the ATF) –
talking about the Australian Trout Foundation, and lots of other things.

July Meeting – Thursday, July 21, 8 pm at the Kelvin Club -
VFFA Auction Night – with Marty Rogers wielding the hammer.

These events are preceded by Dinner at the Kelvin Club,
commencing at 6 pm.

All members invited. Please make your booking by -
Phone: 9654 5711 or Email – bookings@kelvinclub.com

THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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June Meeting: Rod Barford – President of the ATF

Rod is the current President of the Australian Trout Foundation, and a founding member of the Foundation. He is currently Victorian State representative and past-President of the Australian Professional Fly Fishing Instructors and Guides Association (PFIGA), past-President of the Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs (CVFFC), and was the inaugural President and founder of the South Gippsland Fly Fishing Club.

His previous memberships include the VFFA, Southern Fly Fishers, and the Seymour Fly Fishing Club. He is a current member of the Recreational Fishing Roundtable Forum, and has been involved in the Stream Classification Project, along with several other initiatives. His interests include fly-fishing (of course!), fly tying, deer stalking, bushwalking, and camping.

Rod started guiding professionally in 1989, and manages arguably Victoria's longest continually-running guiding operation. He started fly-fishing in 1963 at Nagambie, where he fished the Nagambie Lake and the Goulburn River from Nagambie to Lake Eildon, along with all the creeks in the district (Hughes, Sunday, Sugarloaf, Dabyminga, etc), which were then all thriving trout fisheries.

He tells us that the first time he saw a trout was whilst wagging school (a common occurrence) and swimming in the Nagambie Lake on a very hot summer's day. He spotted these beautiful fish with gorgeous brown spots and knew instantly they had to be trout. From that moment on he wanted to become a fly-fisher, though numerous excursions to Eildon in the 1950s with his dad to fish the river below the weir with big longtail flies didn't bring him





Fish River, Blue Mountains, NSW

much closer. It wasn't until he commenced high school that his skills as a fly-fisher gained momentum, as the school was only a short distance from Goulburn River, and wagging school became a regular part of his high school curriculum (to his mother's despair!), despite having to sneak past the headmaster's house to make the last 100 yards to the river.

His first trout was a brown of 3 lb, taken on a Red Tag (what else?), and this capture spawned a long-time friendship with the local doctor, Bill Coates, and the Shire Engineer & Surveyor, Bill McGrath, both dedicated fly men with a wealth of gear and willingness to share with a newby. Dr Coates loaned Rod a copy of McCausland's classic *Fly Fishing in Australia and New Zealand*, and Rod used the colour plates as a guide to his fly tying.

This was the beginning of a long association with Dr Coates and Bill McGrath. Bill didn't seem to mind a bit when Rod wagged school on the many days they spent together up on Hughes Creek, doing 'road inspections and surveying'. These were wonderful days in which he learned a great deal, including how to imitate a surveyors' chainman, and more importantly how to fish a dry fly upstream.

High School days at Seymour also saw Rod befriending Mike Griffiths and Grant McCallum, and together they spent many wonderful days on the local waters. In those days the Goulburn around Seymour was a superb trout fishery, with many shallow riffles and glides, pools of all sizes, and a very obliging population of plump rainbows.

They also camped frequently on the Trawool Reservoir, which then had a respectable head of browns up to 6 lbs or so. They knew the place so well they had names for its various areas - Barford's Bay, McCallum's Walk, Griffith's Point. But despite their best efforts they never caught 'the big one'.

Rod will talk about the ATF – it's many recent achievements, and future plans and projects. But he is also willing to field questions on trout politics in Victoria, the current state of our trout fishery, and the prospects for next season and beyond. As a professional guide, he has accumulated a vast reservoir of experience in all areas of the state, and is very willing to share his wisdom with our members.

This will be a very entertaining and informative evening.



Fishing Lagoon of Islands, Tasmania

An Evening with Geoff Hall

Geoff spoke to us at length about the threat to our waterways posed by the rapidly increasing populations of European carp. Carp are prolific breeders – a one kilogram female can produce 600,000 eggs, so when conditions are ideal their numbers explode. The problem created by carp is that they suck up the mud on the bottom of rivers and lakes, creating high turbidity and clouding the water so that sunlight cannot penetrate. This in turn kills off water weeds which are vital links in the chain of life that supports macro-invertebrates, birdlife, native fish eggs, platypus habitat and the whole interconnected environment.



Geoff Hall

In Europe, where they originate, the very cold winters and predators such as pike keep the carp numbers under control, but here in Victoria, where our winter temperatures are much milder, they can breed five or six times a year, and hence their numbers increase rapidly

During the 10 years of drought the carp population was controlled to some extent by predation on the young carp by our native fish, but the recent heavy rainfalls and subsequent filling of dams and waterways has seen the carp numbers really explode and they are now found in large numbers in many of our rivers and streams. (John Pilkington reported seeing carp at the falls in the Big River at Enoch's Point – a long way up from Eildon).

So what are we to do? Over the years efforts have been made to control carp numbers, one such being the 'Daughterless Carp' project, which aimed to use recombinant DNA to produce carp that could only produce male offspring. The end result of this project would have been for the carp population to breed itself into extinction. Work continues on this project at the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) under the auspices of the CSIRO.

However some five years ago there was a significant discovery. A virulent virus, known as the Koi Herpes Virus (KHV), was spreading across Europe, wiping out whole carp populations. This virus is lethal to carp and is European carp specific – it has no effect at all on any other species. The virus has been available here in Victoria now for the past five years but has been kept under wraps. Obviously the 'Precautionary Principle' requires that it be exhaustively tested to ensure that if it was released in our Victorian waterways, it would not cause any damage or affect any other species. So years have passed while the virus is being tested and evaluated, and in the meantime our fish populations are being overwhelmed by the carp numbers.

Geoff has had a lot of contact with anglers from South Australia, and they tell him that their rivers have been almost totally taken over by the carp. Here in Victoria Leakes Lagoon on the Goulburn, once a wonderfully clear backwater for polaroiding, is now filthy and turbid due to the infestation of carp.



President Rick Dugina introduces the guest speaker

In Victoria we now have a very supportive Director of Fisheries in Travis Dowling. But the Cooperative Research Centre draws its funds from a number of separate sources, and as a consequence there has been much buck-passing and no-one is prepared to give permission for the virus to be trialled in our Victorian waters.

Back in the 1970s a German entrepreneur obtained an aquaculture permit allowing him to use farmers' dams for growing European carp, which could then be harvested and sold for profit. Many farmers signed up, and this led to a huge expansion in carp numbers. When the menace of this was appreciated strenuous efforts were made to stop the trade, but it was another five years before it was finally closed down. By then the damage had been done and European carp were widely distributed. As indicated earlier, during the years of drought both cod and yellow belly were preying on the small carp, and this period provided a wonderful opportunity to reduce carp numbers and remove them from our waterway. Unfortunately it wasn't taken.

So the next step must be to have the KHV virus released. What's the hold-up? We must prompt CRC into action, particularly as their funding will cease in 18 months.

So Geoff is suggesting that we need to get moving. We need to get into the ears of those in authority and become 'serial pests'. Politicians and senior bureaucrats monitor media very carefully and will respond if there are seven or more individual complaints about a particular issue. So organisations such as the VFFA, VRfish, Fish Victoria, and the ATF all need to get into action. We can write directly to the Minister in charge, or go through our local members. We need to have the virus released into our waterways, and as it's a waterborne virus, it needs to be released at the headwaters so that washes downstream. It will be advantageous for members to individually write letters.

Geoff provided a list of suggestions, as follows:

What can we do about European carp?

- Raise the issue in every conversation about recreational angling. Inform yourself and your friends about the solution offered by KHV (Koi Herpes Virus);
- Initiate a motion for debate that proposes the liberation of KHV to your organization or club. The motion should direct the club to write to the Minister for Agriculture, The Hon. Peter Walsh, demanding the release of KHV;
- Individually write to Minister Peter Walsh insisting on an answer. A question should be posed: “Why has the release of KHV been delayed, when it has been proven to be benign to all organisms except European carp?” “Why is the catastrophic infestation of European carp being ignored?” A letter that poses a question requires the Department to send a reply addressing the issue;
- Send emails of a similar nature to Catchment Management Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment;
- Demand to know the status of research being conducted by the CRC for invasive species. Ask why KHV release has been delayed for so long, and what is the status of the Daughterless Carp project;
- Use words and phrases that indicate you are informed about KHV. Ask why it wasn’t released whilst the drought had carp confined to chains of waterholes. Now that floods have inundated the flood plains of Victoria, it is even more important to initiate carp eradication from our waterways;
- Address the issue of having it raised at VRFish Council, angling club meetings, round table consultations by Fisheries Victoria, Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs, and any related recreational angling organization;
- Call, email or write to Rex Hunt’s Future Fish, asking them to join with yourselves, Professional Fishing Guides Association and Trout Foundation;
- Adopt this crusade to save and restore our aquatic environments for future generations of fly fishers. Make it personal. Make it your own;
- Fob off ideas that carp could be harvested, controlled or utilized, or that native fish could solve the problem;
- Write or email Craig Knowles, Chairman of the Murray Darling Basin Commission. Call on Native Fish Australia to join the fight. You can find them all on Google;
- Create a critical mass of individuals, clubs, organizations, government departments and the like, all demanding the release of KHV. Only this way can we defeat the danger of European carp in our waterways.

(Want to know who your local member is? Check

<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/members>. The list of Ministers and their addresses is at <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/members/ministers>.)

Advance Notice – Annual Dinner

This year's Annual Dinner, on Friday August 26, will feature Charles Wooley as our guest speaker. Those of us who watch *60 Minutes* on Sunday evenings will be very familiar with his presence.

Charles is a very well known Australian journalist, reporter and writer. Born in Launceston, he moved to Hobart at age 16, where he gained an honours degree in history from the University of Tasmania. He returned to Launceston in 1970 to work as a cadet with *The Examiner*, and two years later joined ABC Radio and moved to Perth. He soon moved to television, working on *This Day Tonight*, *Nationwide*, and *Four Corners*. He later served as the ABC's European correspondent based in London.



In 1985 Charles joined the Nine Network's *Sunday* program. In 1991 Charles left *Sunday* and worked briefly for *A Current Affair*, before joining *60 Minutes* in October of that year. In January 2006 he became the host of a new regional morning program, *Charles Wooley Across Australia*. As well as presenting his radio show, Charles continues to work on a casual basis for *60 Minutes* and also narrates some television programs for Channel 9. He is the author of several books, including an up and coming guide to walks in and around Hobart, Tasmania. His daughter Anna Wooley is an award-winning documentary film maker.

His most memorable reports for *60 Minutes* have included a story on barramundi, in which he caught a 42 pounder on camera (fish have never gone metric); voodoo in Benin in West Africa; returning to France with decorated World War II heroine Nancy Wake; and profiles on American billionaire "Mr Spud", J.R. Simplot, singer Melissa Etheridge, model Elle McPherson and actors Gary McDonald and Mel Gibson.

In 1999, Charles moved his family back to Tasmania where he is able to live a more peaceful life - and indulge his passion for fly-fishing.

We look forward very much to hearing about Charles' passion for fly-fishing!

Marie Garvey – Farewell

It is with great regret and much sadness that we inform members of the death of Marie Garvey, beloved wife of VFFA secretary Richard Garvey. Marie passed away on Monday, May 23, following a long battle with Leukaemia.

Her Funeral Mass was held at St Monica's Church, Moonee Ponds, on Friday, May 27, and was well-attended by her family and many friends. The VFFA was represented by President Rick Dugina, several members of the Council, and a number of other members. Our deepest sympathies and thoughts are with Richard and his family at this very sad time.

President's Message

It has been a hectic few months but I am getting through my duties with a little help from my friends. Touring around Tuscany was great but it was really tough getting over the time difference on our return.

I was finally able to catch up with the local club in Tuscany. If you want to do a search on the web check out Mosca Club Alto Tevere. I was pointed to these people by Mick Hall, who had attended an international fly-tying conference there. Luca Castellani was not able to meet me but arranged for Giulliano, the Head River Warden, to show me around. We met at their club-house near the Tevere tailrace which eventually becomes the Po River that runs through Rome.



The club has control of about 6 kms of river, mostly wadeable, with an abundance of brown trout. They collect some 5,000 license fees annually and plough this money back in to maintaining and developing this section of the river. I spent several hours with Giulliano, discussing various topics about the club and its management duties, models of which could be tried in Australia. The photo shows Giulliano in the club-house with displays of flies from the recent championships.

This took place on our last day in Tuscany, as we had to get to Milan the next day for our trip home. It happened to be a week prior to the season opening, so I didn't get to fish this attractive little stream. If anyone is going to Tuscany near San Sopolcro at the right time of year you are welcome to contact the club, and experience some Italian fly-fishing. There is an abundance of agri-tourismo (farm stay) accommodation in the area. In fact there is one next to the club house, with a short stroll to the river.

Your Council has been hard at work with the upcoming activities. Check your calendar as we have some great activities lined up. Next meeting will feature Rod Barford, professional guide and ATF President. We also have the Partners' Dinner, when the wives get a chance to share stories about their wonderful husbands. Another day not to miss is the fabulous Cane Day, which over the years, has become an icon of our fly-fishing calendar. July will see another eagerly anticipated Auction. If you need to divest some tackle here is your opportunity. Check with Marty Rogers asap, or miss out, as there will be a limit to the number of items going under the hammer. Planning is already underway for the Annual Dinner, so when you get your invitation get it back quickly to be certain of a spot.

Be sure to read the talk by Geoff Hall on the Carp Menace. He explained the latest information available and urged us all to get involved by writing to the officials involved. We must take action or risk losing our Victorian rivers and our future fishing to this ecological disaster. You will also note my enclosed letter to the Minister on behalf of the VFFA.

As the Nike people say "Just Do It"

See you at the Sunday Casting Rick Dugina

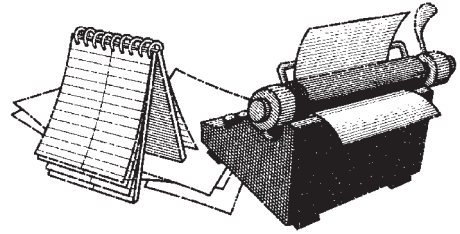


Giulliano with some of the best tied flies you will ever see.



Very comfy Can I have a clubhouse like this ?

From the EDITOR'S DESK



You will have undoubtedly noticed some differences. At the most recent Council meeting it was suggested that a few changes to the format of our newsletter might make it easier for members to access information about impending events. So the front cover will now carry bold and clear details of upcoming meetings, and a more detailed Calendar will be given on the back page. The contact details of office bearers is now found on the inside cover (page 2). We hope these changes, once we all get used to them, make details of important events easy to find.

This issue carries a report on Geoff Hall's talk at the May meeting. Geoff was a very concerned and well-informed speaker on the danger to our fishery of the rapidly growing carp menace. At the end of his talk his presentation was very warmly and generously applauded, with a number of members affirming their intentions to write to the Minister and/or local member seeking answers and some action. Rick Dugina refers to this issue in his President's Message, and the letter written on behalf of Council is also included (on page 12). All members are encouraged to drop a line or send an email. The more letters we write and the more fuss we make, the more likely it will be that we see some action.

We have also included in this issue a brief note from Philip Weigall, explaining the function and importance of 13FISH calls. This was prompted by an outing I made a few weeks ago to Hepburn Lagoon, near Daylesford. We all know about Hepburn. It was a large dry hole in the ground a couple of years ago, and then the rains came. It filled, and Fisheries, with some help from the ATF, restocked it late last year with 20,000 rainbows. Surprisingly (to me at least) this once dry patch of ground suddenly seemed to have lots of trout tucker, and the fish, yearlings released just months ago, have stacked on condition and are now averaging about 2 pound, with the odd 3 pounder turning up. So, there was movement at the station, for the word had passed around ... Hepburn was running hot, and since Easter the car parks on any day of the week have been well filled.

On the day that I ventured out, a Wednesday, there were some 20 anglers crowded into an area around the North-West corner. A few of us were casting flies, but the majority were dunking Powerbait, and doing pretty well with it too. An angler fishing a short distance from me took 7 nice trout in a bit over an hour, and dropped the lot into his Esky. No qualms about the 5 fish limit. I spoke to another fly-fisherman later in the day whose personal hackles were well up. He had been noting the 'success' of another bait fisher who had commenced operations early in the day and appeared to have caught and kept at least 20 fish. Talk about rape and pillage. Such gross greed is just so offensive. If we anglers look after a fishery such as Hepburn through exercising some basic catch and release, and deciding that perhaps just one or two fish is sufficient for the table, then the fishing at Hepburn in the next couple of years might well be brilliant. But the alternative is pretty obvious too.

Another matter that aggravated your editor was the treatment many of the fish were subjected to. As they came out flapping, most were immediately gutted and the entrails pitched over a

shoulder into the grass behind. By the end of the day the grassy verges were looking and smelling like a third world abattoir. Someone suggested that the foxes and magpies would clean up the mess. Yeah, right.

I recalled some words of John Gierach: "... trout are so incongruously pretty as to seem otherworldly: that metallic brightness, the pinks and oranges and yellows - and the spots. One of the finest things about catching a trout is being able to turn it sideways and just look at it. How can so much color and vibrancy be generated by clear water, grey rocks, and brown bugs? Trout are among those creatures who are one hell of a lot prettier than they need to be." I agree, and those Hepburn fish deserve better.

But we mustn't be too negative. The long range weather forecast for the winter is for a return to 'average rainfalls', so let's look forward to lots of cold and bracing but delightful days on our well-stocked stillwaters and reservoirs.

Tight lines,

Lyndon Webb

Advance Notice - July Meeting: VFFA Auction

Yes, the July meeting will be another of those wonderful VFFA auctions, with the magnificent Marty Rogers wielding the hammer.

Marty has also taken over the preparations for this event, and is preparing the Catalogue and numbering the lots. An early draft of the Catalogue is included as an insert, but members need to be aware that the final list of lots will be larger, with some 100 items to be sold.

While many of the lots were part of the late Dudley Lee's estate, all members are welcome to offer items to be auctioned. At this stage, there are more than enough books for sale, so Marty is now only accepting items of fly-fishing equipment – rods, reels, vests, lines, fly tying equipment and materials, etc. However, for obvious health-related reasons, boots and waders can only be sold if they are brand new.

So if you have any unused or unwanted items that you would like to offer for sale, give Marty a call on 9481 1501 and arrange to have them listed. Be aware, though, that the preparations take time, so the closing date for acceptances will be Monday July 4.



Marty taking bids on a fine rod



THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC

C/o The Kelvin Club
14 -30 Melbourne Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

The Hon. Peter Walsh
Minister for Agriculture
Parliament House
Spring Street
Melbourne 3002

RE INFESTATION OF CARP IN VICTORIAN WATERS

Dear Minister,

The members of our Association are extremely concerned at the continuous delay to eradicate European Carp from our waterways. Their ability to breed and multiply rapidly results in their overwhelming all other species as they spread exponentially. They change aquatic environments by pumping mud through their mouths, raising turbidity and increasing suspended solids so that the sun cannot penetrate the water. This in turn kills off the water weed species vital in the chain of life that supports macro invertebrates, bird life, native fish eggs, platypus habitat and the whole inter-connected environment.

We appreciate the efforts made to reduce carp via mechanical carp traps in non-riverine waters and the Daughterless-carp project, and are disappointed that these strategies have not solved the problem. We are lead to believe that the Arthur Rylah Institute has done the necessary testing to prove that the Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) is the only viable method of fighting this menace. It has been compared to the Myxoma Virus in rabbits. It is a virulent virus that is specific to European Carp. KHV has had no known effects on any fish species other than European Carp.

What is the status of research being undertaken by the CRC for invasive species? Why is the KHV release being delayed so long?

With the flooding that has taken place in Victoria over summer the carp have been able to spread and an explosion in numbers has been witnessed in many areas. We have been told that it is extremely important to release the KHV before the spring rains so it can have the flow down effect to maximize its efficiency. As a resident of the northwest you would be acutely aware of the devastation that has occurred in the past and the more serious effect that the next influx would reap.

The VFFA believes that Victoria's waterways are one of our state's great natural assets. We request that you do all in your power to protect and improve them for the benefit of all.

We look forward to receiving your response,
Yours sincerely,

Rick Dugina
President

13FISH – A Phone Call Can Make A Difference

See someone exceeding the bag limit or taking fish during the closed season?

Philip Weigall says you can do something about it.

There's a lot of good news on the Victorian fly-fishing front at present, with the best trout fishing in years, and some great estuary action – both due in part to the exceptional rainfall and a concerted stocking effort by Fisheries across most of the state. But there's a sour note too: the unacceptable behaviour of some anglers who seem to regard the boom in fish stocks as an opportunity to take more than their fair share.

I can't remember the last time I heard so many complaints about anglers breaking the law. Everyone from tackle store owners, bait fishers, fly-fishers, fishing club officials – you name it – has a story to make you bristle. The two anglers who came away with 60 trout from the Howqua at Easter and bragged about it; the bloke at Hepburn Lagoon just last week who had killed 20 trout and was still going.

It's enormously frustrating to hear about these things, let alone encounter them personally. And a common response from my fly-fishing contacts is just that; a sense of frustration. The belief is that without a fisheries officer being there on the spot to deal with the offender, the cause is lost.

But the cause is not lost, or at least it needn't be. For several years now, Fisheries Victoria has run the 13FISH (133 474) fisheries offence reporting service, and the current government has announced it will be extended for at least another 12 months. 13FISH has proved to be very effective with numerous offenders caught and dealt with as the result of calls to the service. However it can only work if anglers use it. And here's the catch – many fishers assume their call won't make a difference, so they don't bother to make it. Talk about a self-fulfilling prophecy!

How 13FISH Works

The service is staffed by a trained fisheries officer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you ring the number during normal office hours, your call will be automatically directed to an operator at the Department of Primary Industries, who will identify it as a 13FISH call. The operator will ask you:

- Time and date of activity.
- If the observed activity is continuing or has finished.
- Place
- Number of people involved.
- Vehicle / boat registration.
- Nature of activity.
- Equipment being used.

Now you may not be able to provide all this information, but that's okay – anything is helpful. You will also be asked for your name and phone number, which you don't have to provide. However immediately after your call the operator will page the details to the 13FISH duty

officer, and they will probably want to call you direct for further information and detail.

If you phone 13FISH after hours, your call will divert directly to the duty officer's paging service. In this case you can leave a brief description of the offence and your name and phone number – this way, the duty officer can call you back and ask the relevant questions. Again, should you wish to remain anonymous, you can simply provide the details as per the dot points listed above. However it is likely your call will be more effective if you provide contact information.

It's important to note that the personal details of anyone using 13FISH are protected. The reason contact details are requested (and to repeat you don't have to give them) is simply to enable further information to be collected if needed. Even Fisheries staff cannot subsequently access caller details without proper authorisation, and details are never released to offenders or alleged offenders.

What Happens Next?

Following your call, a number of things swing into action. The simplest, and in some ways the most ideal outcome, is that Fisheries Officers operating nearby will be able to attend while the offence is taking place and the offenders are still there. However there are obvious logistical reasons why this may not be possible. For example, officers may already be attending another incident, or the site of the reported offence may be too remote to access quickly.

But here's the critical point: the lack of immediate attendance doesn't mean the call was in vain. In the course of their professions, many VFFA members will be aware of the value of intelligence, and it's no different when it comes to Fisheries enforcement. The information collected from every 13FISH call is logged in detail, adding to the Fisheries database. There are numerous examples where information gleaned from a single call has ultimately contributed to a successful prosecution, even though there was no immediate action on the day. Thanks to computerised databases, it's only too easy to, say, match a registration number associated with someone exceeding bag limits, and a subsequent report of suspicious fish sales.

Even general information is useful. If several reports are received about people exceeding the bag limit at Hepburn Lagoon, or trout fishing the Howqua during the closed season, this may well lead to targeted patrols of these places.

The Big Picture

Among law-abiding anglers at least, it could be said that too much fisheries enforcement is never enough! My experiences fishing interstate and overseas suggests there's an almost universal desire for more fisheries enforcement presence. In Victoria's case, just what constitutes an acceptable number of dedicated fisheries officers, not to mention an acceptable division of effort between, say, commercial fishing offences and recreational fishing offences, is a question not easily resolved.

But regardless of that debate, in the case of 13FISH there's a real opportunity for fly-fishers themselves to have a direct impact on how effectively fisheries laws are policed. Put 133 474 into your mobile and if you see something that's not right, note what details you can and give 13FISH a call. The more we anglers do this, the better the compliance and enforcement result will be.

The background image shows an outdoor event with a large display of fishing rods. Two people are visible: one in a grey jacket and white hat, and another in a blue cap and dark jacket. A red plastic chair is also present. The rods are arranged in a large 'V' shape, with their handles on the ground and tips pointing upwards. The setting is a grassy area with trees in the background.

VFFA CANE DAY 2011

SUNDAY 19th JUNE 2011

**RED TAG POOL
FAIRFIELD PARK**

Be there – 9:00 am till 2:00 pm.

It's approaching fast -
the day when no cane rod
should be left at home alone.

Bring your dear old friend,
and admire someone else's.

Come and talk to some of
Australia's Best Cane Rod Builders
who will be present.

Barbeque lunch and coffee provided.

Chocolates as well!

There will be tent set up displaying rods from a
number of makers, and other items will be available for purchase.

For further details contact:

David Grisold: 9459 4401 (home) or 0419 558 462 (mobile)

French Nymphing

(In the May issue Jeremy Lucas gave a fascinating account of his involvement with the Australian team competing in the World Championships in Poland. Jeremy had recently retired as a member of the British team, after more than 20 years of competing at the highest level, and was invited by Peter Dixon to assist the Australia team as a coach and mentor. In his article last month he referred to a style of angling known as French Nymphing or 'Leader-to-hand' fishing. What's it all about? The following article is used with permission. It first appeared in the very popular UK based www.flyforums.co.uk, which is the largest fly-fishing website in Europe, and is just one of several successful fishing websites and forums published by the FISH&FLY Ltd, which also includes the North American based www.theflyfishingforum.com and informational sites such as www.troutatlas.com. These sites invite you to log on and check them out, with membership free to join if you'd like to take part in their forums.)

I was fortunate to see 'leader-to-hand' or 'French leader' performed to the highest standard. Now, I have always had a problem with this technique, ever since its genesis in the latter part of the last decade. Firstly, I had thought that it might be an overly destructive method in low water conditions, and secondly that it was applicable only to low water conditions. I was incorrect on both counts. Although it was certainly a minor tactic through the World Championship on the San, most competitors from the top 10 teams gave the approach some river time, even during the flood conditions of the last session. This technique allows the angler to place, with high precision, small nymphs exactly where the fish are. It is hugely visual, being a short range presentation technique, often with sight of the fish, but always with minute movements of the leader indicating the gentle takes that this method is so good at registering.

All the Poland team members fished a custom built 12' rod for this, with similar leader (to hand) rigs, armed with two smallish, dense nymphs (sizes 14 and 16). I also watched French and Portuguese competitors explore with the same approach, though with slightly shorter rods. One or two of the Australian team, most notably and successfully, Jonathan Stagg and Joe Riley, also experimented early in the campaign with the general technique, but also with shorter rods. The entire experience and series of observations led me to conclude that while this is an extraordinarily effective method, particularly in low, clear water, it requires at least as much skill in its execution as other possible appropriate methods (dry fly, duo, conventional double nymph or upstream spider), and we all noted that it rarely scored more heavily than those other methods.

The editor (of FISH&FLY Ltd) asked if I might update readers on the so called 'French Leader' technique, to which I give the more generic and descriptive name of 'leader-to-hand'. French leader is a specific form of this general approach to nymph fishing. It was also probably the original form, though northern competition anglers Howard Croston and Paul Davison might justifiably argue the toss here, because they came up with braid nymph fishing (a highly specialised version of the method) around about the same time as the French were at least popularising their radical approach.

The common feature of this style of nymph fishing is that no fly line extends from the reel. The leader is in the hand throughout the fishing process. In braid nymphing, most of the leader consists of non-stretch braid – which produces a highly tactile and sensitive rig - while only

the tippet, bearing the nymphs, is fluorocarbon. The French, and many of the Continental anglers, went down the alternative path of using sight indication rather than tactile take detection, and so used thick (which is more comfortable in the hand) and tapered Nylon monofilament for the leader, and concentrated on the indicator area and the tippet itself. These two approaches are at opposite ends of the leader-to-hand spectrum.

The fundamental idea is to be able to present imitative nymphs exactly where they should be, in front of target fish, with the minimum of disturbance and maximum take sensitivity. A long rod is absolutely crucial for the highest efficiency possible with this method. While originally we made use of 10' to 11' rods for braid nymphing, and early attempts at the French leader, these cannot allow the optimum presentation and control required. At 10' you will get nowhere near the desired level of control. 11' is just about reasonable, but to do the job properly you will need upwards of 11' 6", and preferably 12' (FIPS-Mouche rulings in European and World Championships currently limit the rod length at 12'). All the top European anglers are using custom made 12' rods.

Think of it like this: you will most usually be fishing the point nymph at between one and two rod lengths from the rod tip itself. If you use a 10' rod, the absolute maximum range from the rod tip is 20', but in practice, nearer 14' for fair control. With a 12' rod you really can have good control upwards of 20' between rod tip and point. This can correspond to upwards of 30' (around 10 metres) from where the angler is standing in the river, though in practice, again, you will do better shortening the range from this.

Braid nymph is best in what we regard as a 'big water', with plenty of flow, so that a heavy nymph on point can bounce along the river bed while the dropper nymph(s) can be fished slowly down and across the stream. Leader-to-hand, however, as most commonly practiced by top international competitors nowadays, is definitely best in a low, clear river. Ideally, we need to be able to see more than a target area, but actually individual target fish, then to be able to 'pitch' the nymph (or maximum two nymphs) upstream of the fish so that by the time they have sunk to the feeding depth they are within a few centimetres of the fish's mouth. The very best of this method is being able to see the merest movement of a fish (usually to the side, or perhaps the flicker of white of the fish's mouth opening and closing) which has indicated that it has intercepted the fly. Often, though, we cannot see the fish, or the very slight movements which reveal that it has mouthed the fly. We then rely on indications in the leader. This is where the various coiled leaders came into being. Like little, sensitive springs, they stretch slightly if a fish intercepts the fly. Nowadays, I notice, most people dispense with greased coils and rather use a fluorescent section of level leader, right above the tippet. In very clear water, where inevitably we find sensitive, spooky fish, I would strongly recommend dispensing with any bright colour near the fly (within 10' at least), and rather use a dark section (stained with indelible marker pen). At sub 10 metres range, this stands out remarkably well, and avoids spooking fish.

Good presentation involves wading technique (always, with any river method). It is imperative that one can close the range sufficiently (sub 10 metres) until you can pitch the nymph(s) into the target area, upstream of the fish (visible or not) such that they drop immediately into the feeding zone, close to the river bed. There should be no slack in the line, and none lying on the surface. If the latter is not observed, you will have very little control. Some anglers like just that amount of contact such that the flies are led very slightly through the water. I prefer a dead-drift, with an occasional slight tightening in order to induce a take. Honestly, the dead-

drift is nearly always better accepted. You will find that the rod tip is always held high, in order to hold the long leader off the surface. You know that presentation is getting close to ideal if the leader does no more than intersect the surface at a pretty open angle, and then this intersection simply wanders downstream at the same rate as the current. If it stops, or the indicator stops or moves atypically, then either a fish has taken the fly, or you have caught on weeds or the river bed. It is surely extraordinary how often it is fish!

Leader-to-hand gives a measure of sensitivity, coupled with lack of disturbance, not possible with any other nymph method. This is its great virtue. It was heralded as a panacea method, of course, but it is very far from that. Indeed, it requires a careful rig set-up and immense skill (with that long rod) and superb wading technique, in order to perform well. While I once became fairly proficient with braid nymphing on big grayling rivers some years ago, and then dabbled with French leader set-ups when fishing thin European and Alpine rivers, I have on only two occasions worked with the leader-to-hand as described with anything like the desired level of expertise. I have seen it performed, however, by a handful of Eastern and Western European anglers (every one of them a top international), to such a level, and I have been filled with admiration, possibly even humbled if I had not been able to catch fish in similar conditions (low water, bright weather) on my own fail-safe method of micro dry fly or micro duo.

Is it a worthwhile method, if not a panacea? Certainly, but don't be tempted to attempt to master this technique with a short rod, because it just does not work. 11' should be seen as a minimum, though I have managed to make it work with a 10' Streamflex (4-weight) rod in undisturbed water. I remember one occasion on the San, when two French National team members were practicing the method. I steadfastly stuck to Duo or single-plume-tip dry and outperformed the French leader exponents, but I would put this down mostly to the prevailing conditions. Given very low, clear water, then leader-to-hand is unbeatable, but it is not for everyone. Frankly, I do not like the method, because it is not as versatile (for me) as either Duo or single dry, though in expert hands, it just might be. So, if you're fishing a championships in low water, for spooky fish, then this method just might put you in the frame, but if you're out there engaging the ethos of the sport of fly-fishing on a wild river somewhere, then I wonder if there is a place for leader-to-hand. You can be sure that if you see me out there on such a water, I'll be fishing CDC dries in one form or another. Then again I don't fish FIPS Mouche anymore (competitively), so don't need to do anything I don't want to do! It is your choice. What I do not accept, however, are people knocking this method as being unsporting or somehow only for the blinkered and narrow-minded competitive anglers. Trust me, this is a very difficult method to master. I know of but a handful of true river experts who have indeed managed this.

For a leader-to-hand rig, try 20 lb breaking strain level leader (which is just about comfortable on the fingers), all the way to the tippet section, which consists of a ~9' taper (including the indicator section at the butt) down to three or four lb fluorocarbon tippet bearing the nymph(s). Go for FM World Class, Rio or Hardy fluorocarbon; Frog Hair is good too. Use three turn Water Knots for any connections. Don't be tempted to fish three flies; you will have no control whatsoever beyond fishing under the rod tip. One fly is great: two is workable. Use small, dense nymphs. The Continentals have a penchant for ceramic nymphs. I use slim, dense PTNs, hare fur bugs, Tup Wool Bugs and River Devils (slim profile Diawl Bach style nymphs with 2.0mm tungsten beads) in small sizes (16 to 20). But I have seen the method used with fly sizes up to size 12, in a big flow river such as the San.

Go West Young Man! Find Your Fortune

Where The “Fatman” Resides

(A Tale of Adventure by Andy Hodson)

For years tales of sea-run trout have fascinated me. Fired up by Hugh Falkus with tales of tubes and trebles, suitable recipes, and the right dogs with which to wade the estuaries of Great Britain ... this was something I just had to do at least once.

Although I was aware of sea runners in the South-West of Victoria, time and tide never coincided during my residency there. And it has taken some 15 years of living in Tassie before it all came together last October. The dream of fishing the New River in the deep south still remains a dream, so sights were set a little more realistically.

The sea-run season is dependant on the whitebait runs. An excellent little booklet published by the Inland Fisheries Service outlines the various species and their habits. It is well worth a read, and might inspire some fly-tying. In general, activity usually begins mid-October and extends through to December. Areas in Tassie known for sea-runners include the north coast rivers (Mersey, Forth, Leven, Don, and Duck), rivers below Hobart such as the Derwent, Huon, and Loon, and of course the west coast rivers. The northern rivers tend to flow through settled areas and I have no local knowledge of access, etc. Living north of the ‘Mason- Dixie’ line in Tassie I also have no knowledge of the rivers south of Hobart. West Coast it must be then!

A family trip during Easter 2010 revealed the charms of Corinna. Being an old mining / staging post on the Pieman River half way down the west coast it is a treasure. Think of the old “Blue Duck” above Omeo, or the “Kevington Hilton” above Jamieson and you will have an idea. It is situated in the middle of the area now known as the “Tarkine”, and receives plenty of media attention for its natural grandeur and the quest for it to be reserved. Corinna is situated on the Pieman River (the origin of this name having various stories associated with it, including some involving Alexander Pearce the cannibal convict), halfway from its mouth at the Southern Ocean and the mighty Reece dam upstream. The distance from mouth to dam is about 30 km. Corinna now boasts a hotel and cabin accommodation. The cabins are new and very comfortable, and have all facilities. It boasts solar / diesel generation power and has no mobile phone or TV reception – what bliss! The hotel has an adequate dining room and selection of wines. There is also a camping area, complete with public showers and toilets for those who like to camp. Excellent boat launching and trailer parking facilities are adjacent. Situated in the north bank of the Pieman, it is connected to the southern bank by the “Fatman” – a cable barge that will take a 4WD and /or boat trailer with ease. Note that due to the isolation staff turnover can be an issue, but on both visits we found the staff to be very helpful.

On our family trip we approached Corinna from the north. The leisurely drive included Launceston to Burnie before turning south along the Murchison Highway. A pleasant stop at Hellyer Gorge was made even more delightful by a conversation with an old fellow and his daughter who stopped alongside. He was on a collecting expedition for species such as cheesewood and musk that he then turns in to chess pieces. He had a wonderful species board displaying all the different minor timbers and was very generous with his knowledge.

From here we ventured on, leaving the highway at “Fingerpost” to enter Waratah, another old mining town with very few residents. Then on to Savage River. The glacial blue of the water in the lake as we approached Savage River contrasted sharply with the starkness of this working mine town. There are no services for tourists, i.e. no petrol! The white quartz road then took us on the final run into Corinna. For us this had been a leisurely and very pleasant day, but for those with an itch to fish you are looking at about 6 hours driving with boat in tow.

Corinna can also be approached from the south and this is the way we came last October. I met with Don Urquart, Ivan Affleck and Richard Clark at our Miena shacks for a final fine-tune before heading off in the third week of October. Don was keen to show us the high life at that jewel of the West Coast – Gormaston! This is the new Miena for the exciting fishery of Burbury. After surviving the night it was on the road again. We had two vehicles and two boats, and given Don’s driving style, a few catch up stops were needed. One stop at Zeehan was particularly profitable for the lady running the second-hand shop. I’m sure Don is now on her mailing list! Heading north from Zeehan we turned off just shy of the Reece dam to again travel along a white quartz road. Though at times rather winding it is still quite accessible in a 2WD. Solid driving from Miena would have you at Corinna in five hours (towing a boat).

Now a word or two about the Pieman River itself. It is both majestic and large! At Corinna its width is over 100 metres, and it runs through a steep valley for its entire length. Dense rain forest grows right down to overhang the edge. Do not even think about trying to fish from the banks, and heaven help you if you became stranded. Trying to walk back to Corinna would be a nightmare; far better to let the hotel staff know where you are headed and ETA and they will send a boat out for you if you’re overdue. For those not familiar with the flora and fauna of the West coast I would suggest a pocket guide and binoculars in order to get the most out of your time there. In the last kilometre or so near the mouth the river broadens and there are some lovely flats, especially on the northern side. This area is reputed to be a favoured place for the sea-runners on their early migration. A small collection of shacks is found on the southern shore, along with copious piles of driftwood washed down from the forests above. The ocean beach is spectacular. On moving upstream the river is found to have interesting edges. It is relatively stable in height and along both banks there are ledges about 1-3 metre wide and 1-2 metre deep. These ledges hold an almost continuous ribbon of strap weed which provide highways for the whitebait. According to the “Fatman” operator we were apparently a bit early for the ‘main run’. When this is on the edges are a continuous black colour as the shoals of whitebait move upstream.

On approaching the dam we encountered a few rapids. During our visit the river was up a bit and these were not an issue – we made it right up to the dam wall without any hassles. Apparently at lower levels negotiating the rapids can be a problem, and indeed not allowed, although we didn’t see any signage to that effect. Close to the dam there are some shingle banks and these provided the focus of our fishing.

The water itself is tannin-stained and the salinity varies along the length. As it is down in a steep valley wind and wave don’t appear to be an issue. A V-nose punt or small dinghy would be more than adequate, though we did appreciate our 5 metre boats for their extra room. Trip time from mouth to dam was about 45-55 minutes at cruising speed, with no major navigation issues except for those rapids and the possibility of floating logs. Note that there is no petrol available at Corinna, so you need bring in adequate supplies. It being the West Coast one

must be prepared for rain, though we were blessed in our October trip with not a drop!

So after all this scene setting, what of the actual fishing? We arrived at midday and the boats were soon in the water. After a coin toss we headed upstream, scanning the edges for bust ups but to no avail. We finally settled on the shingles below Reece dam and began fishing. “Down and across” with 6 weight outfits delivering various streamer patterns soon yielded fish. Most were ‘residents’ with a couple of much brighter fish among them. Sizes were in the 1-2 lb range, and with the strong current gave good accounts of themselves. When cleaned all contained whitebait in good quantities. White seemed a successful colour for the streamers, with polar bear fur featuring in the ‘top’ fly for the day. Size 8 seemed about right and some additional weight would have been nice. A dozen fish on new water seemed a fair reward for the driving effort. Next time I must remember the wasabi paste and soy sauce for the sashimi. Although not impossible to obtain at Corinna it did cost us a few fish!

Next day was a scouting trip to the mouth of the river. Again all was very quiet along the edges and around the pin rushes. However the potential was obvious and time wasn’t wasted on the exquisite scenery. So back up to the dam wall after lunch for similar results to the previous day. The third day necessitated a trip by two to obtain petrol for the boats. The others entertained themselves with a slow troll upstream flicking flies into the bank for some reward. We had an early departure the next morning, involving crossing back on the “Fatman” in order to try the Henty on the way home. More of that later.

Would I do the trip again? A hearty “Yes!”, and the same company would be a bonus. Would I change anything? Yes – I would go a bit later, say in mid-November.

EVERYTHING I KNOW I LEARNED FROM NOAH’S ARK

(from Andrew Braithwaite)

- ONE** Don’t miss the boat.
- TWO** Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- THREE** Plan ahead. It wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.
- FOUR** Stay fit. When you are 80 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- FIVE** Don’t listen to critics, just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- SIX** Build your future on high ground.
- SEVEN** For safety sake, travel in pairs.
- EIGHT** Speed isn’t always an advantage. The snails were also on board with the Cheetahs.
- NINE** When you are stressed, float a while.
- TEN** Remember the Ark was built by amateurs – the Titanic by professionals.

Steelhead on the Dean River, British Columbia, Canada

(Julian Newton-Brown)

After five days at Boca Paila we left to meet John Hiene at his house at Woodside, just out of San Francisco. He had left ahead of us and we found ourselves on a delayed and overbooked flight from L.A. So we arrived late for a barbeque and spent the night there. The next day we had some spare time before we flew to Vancouver, so we visited the local fishing shop where I bought some very sticky dubbing wax. One of Hienes' friends was with me and suggested we have coffee. We went to a coffee shop and he asked me how I liked my coffee. "A long black", I replied, not realising such a term was poor form in the USA. When he ordered for me he ordered a "tall drip", not realising such a term would be poor form in Australia.

We spent a night in Vancouver, then flew on to the Dean River via Bella Coola. The Dean River enters the Dean Channel, which is many miles of salt water and a long way from the coast. Due to low cloud we had to fly the distance below it and so took the long way up the Dean Channel from Bella Coola in a twin-engined Islander. When the landing strip came into view it looked way too small to land on and was hemmed in by tall trees. But we got down safely.

When we landed we were met by the party who were leaving after their week there. They told us how good the fishing was. The number of hookups was apparently about double the captures, which were all returned. Our fishing licenses specified barbless hooks only and all catches to be released.

Fishing the Dean River is strictly controlled, with the number of anglers permitted to fish there allocated annually. Hiene had managed to secure a slot each year in this allocation.

We settled into Nakia Lodge, which was set among native forest with flowerbeds around the buildings. Our course of action each day was to rise before dawn and fish until lunchtime, when a huge meal was served. I remember one of these consisting of a whole roast chook each, complete with roast vegetables, a soup and sweets. Each chook would easily have served four people. A few hours of siesta followed, then off to fish again until almost dark, when we returned for a few beers and a light supper.

The afternoons were quite warm and on one day it was very hot until the sun got lower in the sky. I couldn't find anywhere to escape the heat until the sun settled behind the trees, when the temperature finally dropped.

Nakia Lodge had been owned by Tony Hill and his wife Judy. However Tony had died tragically a few years earlier. He had been called out to assist someone in trouble during the river in flood but did not return, and it was assumed he had been taken by a bear. Some time later a helicopter flying low up the river spotted a body entangled in a rope caught in some rocks; it was Tony. Judy kept the lodge going and employed Adam Tavender as guide. Later on she and Adam married.

Nakia Lodge was situated just below the canyon, a narrow area of fast flowing water. In this section below the canyon there were a series of runs and pools with names such as 'the meat

hole', 'archeological', 'Tony's run', 'upper tidal' and 'lower tidal'. Each day some of us would be dropped off at each of those spots from guide Adam Tavender's boat. There had once been a bridge across the canyon at its narrowest spot but it had been washed away during a flood, leaving just the substantial concrete footings.

There were two options for fishing this water, and we alternated. One day we would fish below the canyon, and the next day above the canyon, where the water was shallower and wider. It was a five or six kilometre trip from the lodge to get to fishable water above the canyon, so each of us was given a four wheel motor bike to do so. At each spot where we parked the bikes there was an inflatable for us to use, so that we could get to the far side of the river. On one occasion when I was on the far side I was about to cast my fly in this very tranquil setting when I nearly fell over in the water - a king salmon of huge proportions suddenly leapt three feet above the surface just ten feet in front of me.

Riding those four wheel bikes was not without some danger. One day when Hiene and I were returning from the morning session we were flogging it when we both turned them over in a beaver dam. It was not deep and as we were wearing waders we did not get wet, but we didn't ever repeat such frivolity. Fortunately there was no damage to the bikes.

I don't remember how many steelhead we caught overall, but I managed only three for the six days we fished, though I caught quite a few pink salmon which do not grow as big but still give a good account of themselves. Although I had at least six hook-ups for three steelhead landed, I must say flogging a wet fly all day for them is not my preferred way to fish, even though the fish are exciting once hooked. After casting across the current there is a lot of line mending required using a modified roll cast to ensure that the fly arrives at a possible fish before the body of the line. We used large streamer flies, many tied with marabou feathers.

The wading was tricky, with big rocks below water in most areas. Jack Schultz, who we had met at Vancouver, left us earlier than intended as he fell over and got very wet every time he entered the water. The plane had to come in for someone else so he took the opportunity to leave.

There was an Indian camp just below the lodge and some of the Indians walked through the grounds of the lodge. They were well spoken and friendly, inviting us to visit their camp. I didn't accept the invitation and regretted this after the others described how good it was. There were bears about too, and these could be seen poking around the rubbish dump close by. I was told that the bears were afraid of the Indians, who ate game meat which produced a different body odour to ours and which spooked the bears.

Before I left the Dean River I bought a book on the history of the area from its author, who Adam had invited over. In it was a photo of a collection of outboard motor propellers mangled by the rocks in the river. All the boats we saw there used a jet adaptation, which saved such damage but did reduce the available power somewhat.

In Tasmania there is a loose association of characters called the Highland "C" Club, with the "C" representing a character or other term not so complimentary. Hiene's C name was 'Smelly' due to the fragrance of his flatulence, while mine was 'Dunny Brush', this the name of a trout fly that I developed.

The Canadians were astounded on hearing Hienes greeting me with: “How’re you going Dunny”, and my reply being: “Not bad Smelly.” We had to explain the meaning of “dunny” to them.

I took lots of photos during the week. The scenery was most spectacular, with snow still on the higher peaks. Fish caught close to the Dean Channel’s salt water often had sea lice on them, but the lice fall off in fresh water.

Mark Penny and I were fishing ‘lower tidal’ one day when he yelled across to me that he had connected with a king salmon. It was huge and decided to return to the sea with Mark chasing it downstream. He could not hold it, and with all of his line and backing out it spooled him. Fortunately the tippet point was weaker than the backing and he got his line back.

The trip was a lot of fun with like-minded people, and at the end of the week we departed. The flight out was in sunshine and we were able to get a better perspective of the terrain than on the flight in. However even more spectacular was the flight from Bella Coola to Vancouver through the Canadian Rockies. Then we caught another plane from Vancouver, which passed over Mount Washington covered in snow just out of Seattle.

It seemed I was back in Falls Creek’s snow in no time at all.

Cane Makers Day – Saturday June 18

Master rod maker Peter McKean has become something of a godfather to many new cane rod builders, inspiring and encouraging all comers each year at the Makers’ Day. This year we again have the prelude to the main event in Yarrambat for all those who have an interest in making cane rods. We will also have several new makers arriving from both NSW and Victoria, full of passion and enthusiasm after producing their first rods.

We have had requests for a couple of basic tutorials, and Peter has suggested a spotlight on one or two techniques, such as such as grips, or even the Morgan Hand Mill, should we be able to get one over from Tassie for the event.

Expect a hands-on day with a group of makers passionate about producing cane rods at varying levels, willing to pass on knowledge to the next group of makers. Open for all with an interest in the skills required to produce the works of art we all enjoy fishing with.

The day will start at 10:00 am in Yarrambat at the Northern Suburbs Fly-Fishing Club clubrooms - Yarrambat Park Lake, Yan Yean Road, Yarrambat (Melways 184 F5) and running through till 3pm, with Tea, Coffee and a BBQ provided.



Nick Taransky shows how it's done

NSW Report

Recent rain has seen the fishing explode. As the season draws to a close the fly-fishing is getting more brilliant. Close to 100mm of rain fell late last week at Thredbo station and some further dustings of snow through the course of the week lured many trout into the streams. The spawning action has stepped up a notch and many 5lb plus trout can be spotted. Getting them to hand is another matter!

Again the browns are the better-sized trout, though the rainbows that are sniffing around are in impeccable condition. While Glo bugs will obviously account for the lion's share of the trout, nymphing will still see anglers well rewarded for their efforts. We have also been getting quite a few brook trout of late.



I still prefer to use dropper rigs – a nice BIG dry (such as a Stockdale Wulff) and a wet hanging underneath. Carry a good selection of split shots and massage the sink rate according to flows. Yes, a yarn indicator allows more freedom in adjusting the depth of the wet, but the natural look of the dry and the ease of casting still makes it my preferred way to fish. The water repulsion of the dry is also far superior.

When you come across trout hard against the bank and underneath dead branches, you may have to ditch all and simply flick that wet. Take your time and fish slowly. The trout at these times are less easily spooked and you can get very close to them. You will often catch many in one small area. As I wrote in my last column, open your ears and keep your eyes wide open when fishing – you will hear splashing and see fins popping out all over the place. Then you just have to control yourself.

The forecast looks amazingly good – rain and snow falling over coming days. The last week of the season will be a crackerjack. For the time of a lifetime get in contact with me. A trophy trout is a real chance! Don't forget to bring your polaroids. Thanks for all your support for the 2010/11 season and I look forward to new relationships being formed over the next season.

And just remember - you do not need to go to Tasmania or New Zealand for quality trout fishing.

David Mozina
www.matchthehatch.com.au
(02) 6457 8342

Dobson's Report

(report by Hugh Maltby)

Seventeen hardy men ventured to Geoff and Bronwyn Dobson's beautiful property on the banks of the Goulburn River at Acheron. The weather was wet and cold with little fishing undertaken. However the food and company were great, and the conversation stimulating.

In particular, there was considerable discussion relating to when the trout season should close. As a general consensus we all agreed that the season should close at the end of April, thus enabling the brown trout to pair up and spawn without interruption. This would help to ensure a self-sustaining fishery as well as curtailing the activities of the white bucket brigade who gouge our rivers of fish in the last weeks prior to the June closure.

Having said that the members who made a weekend of it had a great opportunity to explore the area and seek out new fishing opportunities for next season.

It was great to see John Philbrick come across and join us for dinner on Saturday night. John is progressing well and will have surgery on his second hip later in June. How will we ever keep up with him then.

Our youngest member, Alex Mitchem, also joined his father for the weekend, and I have a feeling we will see a lot more of him in the future.



Eildon Report

(... from Mick Hall)

As we know, the rivers in the Eildon area close on Queen's Birthday, so the only trout fishing available will be that offered by the Pondage. But there is good news here – whilst the numbers haven't been confirmed, it is planned to stock the Pondage fairly heavily over the month of June, with large numbers of advanced yearling brown trout going in, along with numbers of large rainbows and ex-brood stock. So trout stocks in the Pondage will be plentiful for the winter months, though water levels will be kept a little higher than desirable for good fly-fishing.

Mick's final piece of advice – don't forget to fish Newlyns and Hepburn, as these will provide good fishing over these next few months.

Report From Way Out West

(Report from Jim Blakeslee)

Since the May report we have continued to have periods of heavy rain around the Warrnambool area. As a result, all the rivers are up. The Merri is coloured, so it's dredging for browns with a big wet fly from here on. The Moyne, Mount Emu and Hopkins are a bit clearer. I've checked out some of our spawning redds on the Merri, and the fish have been actively working them, so I've been asking local members of the WFFC to avoid fishing in those areas. The local lakes are still producing a few trout and redfin.

But for something different, eight intrepid fly-fishers from Warrnambool drove up to Lake Fyans for a weekend's fishing. Conditions were cold and overcast, but relatively still. In the early mornings, and again just before dark, browns were rising to midges. But during the day there wasn't much action. Still, most of us caught fish on an assortment of flies, these fish being mainly the 500 – 750 gram browns that were stocked last year. However our club President, Adrian Jacobs, landed one that was about 2.0 kg. So, that was Lake Fyans for this season. Until the close of the season on Queen's Birthday weekend we'll be concentrating on catching a few browns from the local rivers to smoke for the WFFC Annual Game Dinner.

Cheers, JB

This Month's Yarn ...

“Luck!” said McTaggart scornfully, “Luck! I suppose a trout can be caught by luck, but in my experience its know-how and skill that does it.” He put down his glass and reflected for a moment. But then, just as Alf ordered a refill, he said, “Ah, I do remember a trout I caught – a good one too - which I concede could be put down mainly to luck. It was up on the Goanna Creek, a rather overgrown tributary of the Wingiwoba.”

“I had cast upstream towards some overhanging driftwood sticking out from the bank, when a puff of wind blew my leader and fly sideways. To my surprise, the fly suddenly appeared to just stop in mid-air, a couple of inches below the driftwood. I lowered my rod tip, but the fly remained frozen there in space. Then I saw what had happened - the fly had landed in the middle of a large spider web that extended down to a stick that I hadn't noticed before, which poked out below the driftwood.”

“As I realised this, there was a movement in the web and a large black spider came out from its place of concealment and grabbed the fly. That fly was a good one too – one of my own creations - and it obviously made a great appeal to the spider. However in his eagerness to capture his prey, Mr Spider lost his footing on the web, and both fly and spider tumbled down onto the water. Still hanging on to what he thought was a tasty meal, Mr Spider struck out strongly for the bank, so I slackened my line to see what would happen. Before he reached the bank there was a huge swirl, and you've guessed what happened - a sizable trout had taken the lot. Five pounds he weighed; a magnificent brown. Yes, I guess it was luck all right. I would never have got my fly into the right spot for that fish, except for the help of the spider.”

FLY OF THE MONTH

The One Fly Emerger – from Peter Carty

(Peter Carty is a New Zealand fishing guide based in Nelson. He is also recognised now as one of New Zealand's finest and most creative fly tiers. The emerger pattern described here is one that is featured in the book *Masters of Fly Tying*, edited by Bob South, and is reprinted with permission of both Peter and Fish & Game NZ magazine).



For the last 11 years, there has been a 'One Fly' fishing competition held in the Nelson area. Terry Duval, the man behind the competition, refers to it as a 'festival of fly-fishing' and that is what it truly is. A core group of anglers and controllers (guides) attend every year, along with a bunch of new faces. The event is basically four nights of wining and dining, with three days of beating your brains out trying to catch fish with only one fly each day. To many of the people involved it has become the highlight of their year. At the end, no one really cares who wins and all participants end with a prize.

The most serious competitions are the ones within the main competition, not to mention the friendly wagers that eventuate. For about the last 10 years, one of the local wineries has put up a case of its finest as the prize for the contestant that accumulates the most points on a fly that the sponsor provides. That's where I come in. The flies that I have dreamed up for the competition have all been what we refer to as "convertibles". By this, I mean that they can be easily cut down and turned into a passable nymph. Anglers fish in pairs from the same team, so usually they have two different flies - maybe a dry and a nymph. The rules state that you can modify your chosen fly by cutting it down, but you can't add to the fly, though weight can be added to the leader. When you've encountered a mongrel fish that is feeding, but won't eat your offering, what can you do? You could cut the dry down into a nymph, but if the next fish is rising, you're stuffed. You can add or remove weight from the leader, or change the colour and weight of the bead. It pays to carry beads in different sizes, colours, and made of brass, tungsten and glass. I have a

customer who ties all of his flies without beads and just adds them to the leader when he wants a bead head. Another trick is to carry a couple of waterproof felt pens to change the colour of your fly, but remember, this, too, is a one way street.

It was the second year of the event when Tasmanian fly-tier, Laurie Matcham, took the One Fly concept a step further and used one fly for the whole three days - and caught fish each day. Not one pattern, one fly. He fished with an emerger pattern. It looked enough like a nymph to fish sub-surface and when dried out, it sat in, or on the surface. My pattern here is based on Laurie's, with a few modifications.

I was unable to attend last summer's event, but the reports of the success of the One Fly emerger made me think about it a bit more and it proved to be a remarkably successful emerger pattern in the later part of last season. With some floatant applied to the thorax, it sits in the surface film beautifully. If the fly starts to sink, a shake in Shimazaki Dry Shake, a bit more floatant, and you're back in business. Emergers can be difficult to see, so I often fish them with a small floating putty-type indicator about 40cm from the fly.

Materials

HOOK:	TMC 9300, #14-16.
THREAD:	6/0 or 8/0. Colour and size to suit.
TAIL OR TRAILING SHUCK:	Cream or ginger Z-Lon and one strand of Pearl Accent Flash.
RIB:	Fine gold wire.
ABDOMEN AND THORAX:	Fine dubbing. Natural fur is best for these flies.
WING CASE:	Grey closed cell foam.
HACKLE:	Dry fly quality - one size smaller than you'd normally use, so size 16 hackle on a #14 hook

Tying Instructions

1. Put the hook in the vice. Start your thread behind the eye and bind to slightly around the bend.
2. Take a few strands of Z-Lon and one strand of Accent Flash and tie in for the tail. You don't need much Z-Lon. All you are trying to achieve is an impression of the nymph shuck. The tail should point slightly downwards.
3. Tie in the fine gold wire on your side of the hook. You must do this because you are going to wind the rib in the opposite direction to the dubbing.
4. Apply your dubbing tightly to the thread and wind to the half way point on the hook.

I've found that dubbing is the best material to use on these flies because it will absorb floatant and make the fly sit in the surface film where it should be.

5. Wind the gold wire in evenly spaced wraps in the opposite direction to the dubbing. I like the rib to be obvious so it gives the abdomen a segmented effect. Counter-winding the rib creates this effect and also helps make your flies more durable.
6. Cut a strip of foam to use as the wingcase. The foam used for sleeping mats, etc, is best. On Laurie's original pattern, he used foam that was used in the manufacturing of lifejackets and it had been "siliconised". I haven't found a source of this stuff and the sleeping mat material is as close as I can find. Your strip of foam should be about 3mm by 2mm for a #14 and 2mm by 1mm for a #16.
7. Tie the foam in on top of the hook, up against the dubbed abdomen.
8. Select a suitable hackle feather. Remember, dry fly quality and one size smaller than the hook size you are using. Tie this in on top of the foam.
9. Apply more of the same dubbing to the thread and wrap toward the eye, stopping just short of it. Don't make this too bulky. The necessary bulk will come from the wing case.
10. Palmer the hackle feather through the thorax and tie down. Three or four turns is plenty. Take your scissors and cut the hackle fibres off the top of the thorax.
11. Pull the foam over the thorax to form the wingcase. Do not pull the foam tight. We are trying to create the impression of the bulging wing case on an emerging nymph. Also, stretching foam closes the air pockets and reduces the buoyancy.
12. Tie down the foam with two or three wraps, pull the tag back, take another couple of wraps and whip finish.
13. Turn the fly upside down (easily done if you have a rotary vice) and cut the hackle fibres off the underside of the thorax. While the fly is in this position, apply a drop of head cement to the head.
14. Re-position the fly the right way up and cut the foam tag as per the photos. Cut the tail to length. This should be about the length of the hook gap.

Trout feeding on emergers can be a real pain and you often need something close to what they are feeding on to be successful. More importantly, the fly must be in the right part of the water column - in this case, the surface film. These flies sit slightly tail down, which is what you are after. You won't need them in a whole range of different colours, but it's fun to experiment. I find that either a light or dark coloured one will cover most scenarios. If you decide to have a friendly One Fly competition with a mate one day, this bug is also a good choice.





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 9455 9017.

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2010 Annual Dinner:

- Armadale Angler • Aussie Angler • Australian Fishing Network • Bernard Holbery
- Compleat Angler Box Hill • Compleat Fly Fisher Melbourne
- Daniel Hackett, RiverFly, Tasmania • Fly Life Publications • 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

VFFA Meetings & Activities

June 2011

- 5 Sunday Casting – 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 9 Dinner With Partners – 6:30pm at the Kelvin for 7:30pm. (Colin Morrison - 9375 2298)
- 12 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 16 General Meeting – 8pm at the Kelvin: Guest Speaker – Rod Barford (President ATF)**
- 18 Cane Making Day – 10:00am – 3:00pm at Yarrambat Park Lake, Yan Yean Road
- 19 Cane Day - 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (David Grisold - 9459 4401)
- 22 Council Meeting – 7:00pm at the Kelvin Club
- 26 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)

July 2011

- 3 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 10 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 17 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 21 General Meeting - 8pm at the Kelvin: Auction – Marty Rogers (9481 1501)**
- 23 Warrnambool FF Club Game Dinner – contact Jim Blakeslee for details (03 5562 5168)
- 24 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 27 Council Meeting – 7:00pm at the Kelvin Club
- 31 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)

August 2011

- 6/7 Bullen Merri Trip Convenor Richard Goodall (9888 9514)
- 7 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 14 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 17 Council Meeting – 7:00pm at the Kelvin Club
- 21 Sunday Casting - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools (Joe Haslauer 9555 4059)
- 26 Annual Dinner – 6:30pm for 7:00pm at the Kelvin. Guest Speaker: Charles Wooley**
- 27 President's Casting Day - 9:30 am to 2:30 pm at the Red Tag Casting Pools

September 2011

- 7 Council Meeting – 7:00pm at the Kelvin Club
- 15 General Meeting – 8pm at the Kelvin: VFFA AGM**
- 21 First Meeting of the Council Meeting – 7:00pm at the Kelvin Club
- 25 Peter Hayes Casting Day – 10:00am to 4:00 pm, Red Tag Pools (Hugh Maltby – 9459 2241)