

FLY LINES



JUNE 2016

The June Meeting – Lunch with Jim Higgs

The June meeting will be another lunchtime meeting with guest speaker Jim Higgs. Jim is a VFFA member, an accomplished fly caster, and a keen saltwater fly fisher. His experiences fishing for pelagics in Sydney Harbour were described in our March issue earlier this year. But many will also be aware that Jim was a top leg spin bowler who represented Australia at the international level. He was in the Australian Ashes squad touring England in 1975 and also toured the West Indies and India as a leg spinner in the Australian team. He later became a Victorian and Australian selector.

What will Jim be talking about at our June meeting? He assures us it will include both cricket and fly fishing. Jim is a popular and very experienced speaker, and doubtless will entertain us with lots of great stories.

THURSDAY, June 16
Note the Time: 12 noon for Lunch
at the
Celtic Club



Mark it in your diary – Thursday, June 16, 12 noon at the Celtic Club.

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Web Fish

Cast regularly at vffa.org.au

About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings , trips, ...updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format that can be read and saved on iPads and tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities that can be synced with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos and Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

President's Message



The future of the VFFA is in your hands.

The summer season is over. It is now time to plan ahead. Your Council has made plans till the end of the VFFA year. We have our own Jim Higgs addressing our June lunchtime meeting, Tasmania's famous guide and Australian international representative Christopher Bassano at our evening meeting in July, and Fisheries Victoria's leaders Travis Dowling and Anthony Forster as guest speakers at our Annual Dinner in August. *Time Flies*, the third book of our trilogy, will be launched beforehand. Upcoming trip plans are underway.

The future starts in September at our AGM. You will elect a new Council. We need more members to stand up and put in. We currently have five Past Presidents on Council. We have eight councillors with over 6 years of service. Understandably some will not be standing again, though their support will be not lost. On September 15 you need to elect a new President, a new Senior Vice President, a new Junior Vice President and a new Secretary. We need to know who is standing. We need new blood to support them and the other Councillors.

For over 12 months your Council, led by Mike Jarvis, has been addressing the critical subject of 'VFFA: 2020 and beyond'. We decided that we must:

1. modernise the VFFA and make it more relevant, more influential, and providing more value for members, and
2. attract new, younger members, both male and female.

We are active and on the front foot with Dermot O'Brien leading the Trout Politics sub-committee.

We believe we should become more active in teaching casting, fly tying, stream craft and saltwater techniques. We need three sub-committees to recommend and implement. A number of members have volunteered to help in their various areas of expertise. We need a Councillor to lead this Tuition project.

We must attract new members to ensure the viability of the VFFA. Again we need a Councillor to champion this with the support of a Membership sub-committee.

Another sub-committee is looking at other Blue Sky projects under the leadership of Terry Rogers. Understandably evaluation of any projects will take some time.

I ask you to consider whether it is your turn to stand for Council. I also ask you to consider who you think would be an ideal candidate and talk to him or her about standing. Please give these requests a lot of thought in the next month or so. The VFFA needs your help.

In closing I appreciate many of you will be travelling and fishing elsewhere. Be safe, have fun, and tight lines,

The July Meeting with Chris Bassano

Many members will be aware that Christopher Bassano is a top Tasmanian guide and member of the Australian Fly Fishing team representing us at World Championships. Many will also own the two superb fly fishing DVDs (*Highland Gold – Tasmanian Fly-Fishing Techniques*) produced by Chris covering aspects of the Tasmanian trout fishery.

Chris has fished extensively throughout the world in both fresh and salt water. A guide with over 20 years' experience, he has guided in the north of Australia chasing sailfish, black marlin, giant trevally, tuna, queenfish and barramundi. The freshwater of Tasmania, however, is his home and he has fished nearly every piece of water that Tasmania has to offer.

He is a Certified Casting Instructor with the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) and is currently the Vice President of the Trout Guides and Lodges Association of Tasmania (TGALT). He has written extensively for many fly fishing publications, both in Australia and internationally, and has been featured on the front cover of the Japanese *"FlyFisher"* magazine.

The Tasmanian *Examiner* newspaper in 2012 wrote this:

"Imagine waking up every morning knowing that you are going to get paid to fish Tasmania's pristine inland waters. For Christopher Bassano it is that reality which makes him the envy of most keen anglers.

The former first-class cricketer turned fly-fishing virtuoso works predominantly throughout the Tasmanian trout fishing season from the first Saturday in August to late April every year - guiding clients on fishing expeditions in the state's Central and Western highland lakes and rivers. Since 1993, the Rainbow Lodge owner, who relishes being outdoors, has



introduced, taught and helped people master the technique of using an artificial fly to land a catch.

Chris was born in South Africa and has been hooking fish since he can remember. During the peak fishing season, Chris lives at Miena near the Great Lake, and for three months of the year, he lives on the banks of the St Patricks River at Nunamara. When he is not fishing, he plays husband to wife Krystal and father to his newborn daughter Sage, who coincidentally is named after his sponsor fishing rod company.

"We tried to make sure it was a winter baby and out of the peak fishing season ... and it was my wife who liked the name Sage," Chris said."

Philip Weigall says this: "Worldwide, a handful of guides have a knowledge of their fishery - and how to fish it - that truly seems to draw on a sixth sense. Christopher Bassano is one of these few."

We are in for a great night at the July meeting at the Celtic Club on Thursday, July 21. Mark it in your diary.

April Vokey at the VFFA on May 19

(April Vokey was the much anticipated guest speaker at our dinner on Thursday, May 19. This event was very well supported by members and guests, with close to 80 in attendance. Prior to the meal April demonstrated her superb fly tying skills by tying a variety of wet flies on short tubes and describing how these patterns were used in the time-honoured technique of swinging wet flies. Later in the evening April gave a very informative and entertaining presentation on the history of fly fishing in Canada and the USA, with a focus particularly on fishing with two-handed rods.

April's presentation included a number of video clips that illustrated the points she was discussing. The following is an abbreviated transcript of her talk.)



Thank you so much. When I originally agreed to come and speak to you (and I was ecstatic when the invitation was extended), I was asked to explain a little bit about myself. I don't think I need to do this now after David's kind introduction.

When I was young I was a bait angler. Mum and dad gave me an allowance, and beside the Mall near where we lived there was a fishing shop where I spent all of this allowance. So when I was 12 or 13 and all my girlfriends were going to the Mall I would head to the tackle shop and would stock up on all sorts of smelly stuff. I vowed that when I was old enough to drive I would get my license, and when I turned 16 we had a deal - if I brought home straight A's from school my parents would allow me to go fishing.

I started out as a bait angler, and from there it was a natural progression. I started in bait, then to fishing centre pin, then turned into a spoon angler. Then when I was 17 I turned to fishing with a single hand fly rod. My first fishing buddy was an old man named Dave Puffer, and for my 18th birthday he and some other old guys got together and bought me a Shakespeare 8-weight rod - an old glass rod. Then when I was 21 I wanted to learn how to cast the double hand rod. It wasn't popular at this stage, though I had seen the occasional guy doing it. My point here is that all this ties in with my presentation tonight because it is about history. I had a couple of options of what I might speak about tonight. I could speak about swinging flies, and we talked briefly about this earlier this evening when I was demonstrating tying flies, but then I thought that this might not be of great interest to you. So we decided when we were corresponding that some history might be more interesting.

Now of course the irony here is that I am 33 years old and I'm about to try to educate you on some history that some of you may well have had a part in creating. Like you my country of Canada had a lot of people come from England, and they had a big influence. Now the subject can be a bit dry, so I have included some humour. Some of you may have seen



Members and guests were crowded in to hear our international speaker

Hank Patterson on YouTube, the world's most famous fishing guide (self-proclaimed). He is a very funny man, so I have included some of his clips in my presentation. He will grow on you, I promise.

When I started fishing I wanted to catch a lot of fish to take home. That was really exciting. Then I just wanted to catch a lot of fish. And then I got to a point where I wanted to catch the biggest fish. We've all been here – it's a progression. Then I wanted to catch the biggest fish the hardest way. Then I just wanted to catch all fish the hard way. And I got to a point when I was really confused, because I didn't have many friends whose whole life was seven days a week of fishing. I was outgrowing them very rapidly. I got to a point where I was questioning why I wasn't passionate about it anymore. I thought that because I didn't have many women friends who fished then perhaps I was just getting maternal. Maybe I should be having children or something. I was really confused. Then I realised that it had nothing to do with that. It was beyond how many fish I could catch and how big they were. I found my salvation in history. So I started reading a lot of old books.

I started in the mid-1800s and worked my way forward, trying to figure out where the steelhead anglers of North America came from. I became excited again. A lot of them came from the UK. I fished the small rivers that Roderick Haig-Brown had fished, and I put my feet where he had put his feet. I would catch a 6 pound fish that excited me because I had caught it where he used to fish, using a method that he fished. And I took all this new excitement and I started to share it with others who were maybe losing their passion.

A television network had been hounding me to do a TV show. Granted they wanted me in a bikini whooping and hollering, so there was a lot of negotiation and battling. I put together a series called *Shorelines with April Vokey*, which follows my dream of writing a book about the evolution of steelhead and Atlantic salmon fishing in North America.

What I found is this – if I can't make people read I can make them listen. The television series and the podcasts (where I go around the world and I sit down face-to-face with people) are free to you. I'm hoping I can get some of you >>>



April described the essential features of traditional spey flies

in the next couple of days to sit down with me and we can use it as an opportunity to archive the history.

(See <http://www.worldfishingnetwork.com/shows/shorelines> for *Shorelines* and <http://www.aprilvokey.com/podcasts> for the free podcasts)

How many of you have heard of the 'old guard'? Well, the old guard is disappearing. Unfortunately it seems that in the industry nowadays we are how many people follow us on social media. This is insane. People are acknowledged by how many follow them, rather than what they actually contribute to the

sport. So I want to take some time tonight to tell you a bit about the 'who'. But first, I'm an alien here. I don't understand the Australian history yet, but I am trying.

In the 1600s some Scots came over to the east coast of America and to Nova Scotia ('New Scotland'). Some of these guys later made their way over to the west side of Canada, taking with them their methodologies, their techniques, and even their equipment. So they brought with them their two-handed rods and their traditional fly patterns.

Then in the mid 1800s the Californian gold rushes brought flocks and flocks of



Tube flies – this is how you tie them

people, including a man named John S. Benn. When I set out to write my book and the television series I was trying to figure out the parallels. I wanted to show that Roderick Haig-Brown, an Englishman, was the person who brought double-hand fishing and swing fly fishing for steelhead to the east coast of America. But it was actually John S. Benn, who came from Ireland in the late 1800s, who brought with him the double hand fishing and the swung fly.

The Royal Coachman is the most influential steelhead fly today, because in the early days to prove that a fly was going to be successful it had to work

with trout. So trout angling and fishing for steelhead and salmon go hand-in-hand more than we realise.

You've all heard of Haig-Brown. I turned into a bit of a stalker of him. I went to his house on the Campbell River because you can stay in it, but every time I've been there the house was full so I've hidden in the bushes to look inside. He was very influential. If you enjoy reading fly fishing history then he is definitely someone to look into.

Why do I care about this history? Because I just don't want to see it become extinct. Back then they didn't have the Internet, and a lot of the really great >>>



At the end of the evening Secretary David Grisold presented our guest speaker with books and a VFFA membership

anglers didn't write books. So many of the stories are starting to disappear, and they are just too important for that to happen. We just can't lose that because it is very important to our history.

Gear has obviously changed a lot over the years. Is there anyone here tonight who fishes with bamboo? You need to explain to people why you fish with a cane rod. People at home think I'm insane because I do, but there is something special in that while that rod was being built for you the builder was thinking about you with every wrap.

Let's talk about about double handed fly rods for a bit. How many of you have heard of the spey rod? Well, there is no such thing as a spey rod. There are two handed fly rods and a lot of people assume that they were made for spey casting. The truth is that the double handed rod was originally made to do a pickup and laydown cast. Spey casting did not really come into play until the guys in Scotland made it up for fishing the Spey River. Then they came over to

the east coast of Canada and brought with them their two-handed rods.

However in New Brunswick (east Canada) people say to you, "Well we don't fish two-handed rods here because that's not how we do it here." You see, they are from the Lee Wulff era, and Lee Wulff saw these two-handed rods and said, "We don't need to do that. We can do it all with a single-handed rod." So Lee Wulff brought back the single hand rod.

Now there was a guy on the west coast of Canada called Mike Maxwell, who came from the UK. Mike started reading all these old books and subsequently brought back the spey cast. It became a huge deal on the west coast of North America. He travelled around educating people on how to do this two-handed thing. It just so happens that he was a neighbour of mine. Mike unfortunately has gone, but his widow Denise Maxwell is still living, and she says a few words in the next clip.

What are the advantages of doing a spey cast? A lot of people think that you must have a two-handed rod to spey cast, but you can make spey casts with a single-handed rod. How many of you use the roll cast when you have an obstruction behind? When I was being certified as a casting instructor some years ago I had a really hard time wrapping my head around the idea of a static roll cast. I kept making dynamic roll casts and couldn't understand why you'd want to use a static roll cast. The person certifying me kept saying to me: "You keep spey casting, but if you want single-handed certification you must do a static roll cast."

How many of you when you do your roll cast maintain that energy around the circle then follow through. Well, you are making a spey cast. You are using your

holding hand to generate additional line speed to cast further.

Let's talk about reels. Who has a click and pawl reel? Why do they make that fantastic noise? It's not just to let everybody know that you've got a fish on. Historically the reason is that when you are playing an Atlantic salmon you can gauge how fast and how far the fish is running simply by listening to the sound of the reel.

What about fly lines? I am a huge fan of of silk lines. I still use silk lines. Traditionally fly lines were made from hair, and then silk was added to increase the strength. Soon silk lines dominated the market. Italian silk lines, which I use, are fantastic. I think somewhere in the late 1800s or early 1900s it was discovered that grease or animal fat would improve a silk line's performance. So this is now my procedure. I would string the line through the rod and then grease it, and have a cup of tea. Then I'd fish for four hours, then go back and have another cup of tea and grease the line again. This is just so much work, but I like doing it on occasions. A lot of vintage lines do require a lot of work.

When you travel around the world and fish for Atlantic salmon you find that other anglers always fish in the morning, then take an afternoon break, then come back and fish again in the evening. I wondered about this because I have caught fish in the middle of the day. I wondered if they did this to give themselves some time to re-grease their silk lines.

And what about flies? Earlier in the evening a lot of you saw me tying tube flies. I would never fish those flies for summer run fish; but only for winter run fish. The summer run steelhead are so aggressive I don't need to fish those flies.



April described the many virtues of flies tied on tubes

I can fish dry flies, or fish the beautiful more traditional flies.

Once upon a time everybody fished for steelhead using single-handed rods. But then the two-handed rods came out and this turned everything over. Suddenly we could use lines that would turn over lead core shooting heads, and then the Skagit lines appeared – short shooting heads which could turn over lead core with tungsten.

Everybody assumed that because you were fishing a two-handed rod you were fishing spey flies. But a true spey fly has a certain set of characteristics. The fly on the screen now is a Lady Caroline, which is a true spey fly. A true spey fly must have been designed in the 19th century by Scottish ghillies. It must have the hackle tied in by the butt, it must be counter ribbed, it must be tied sparse, and it must be drab. A lot of these flies were tied out of competition, and were worn in women's hats for decor.

I was also curious as to why salmon flies were tied on hooks with upturned eyes. Yes, there is some technical material

describing the directions of pull for upturned and down-turned hooks. But here is the question – why did the Brits decide to tie their salmon flies on hooks with upturned eyes? Historians suggest that it had a lot to do with upper class snobbery.

Where I live there is a major division happening. When we first started fishing we used those traditional flies. But then we started using these big rods and started to think that bigger was better. So large flies started coming into use. They got to be quite huge and some of the flies are so big that they are dangerous. The biologists tell us that a lot of fish take a

fly broadside, and in particular will often line up the eye of the fly. This means that on these very large flies the hook often comes around and hooks the fish in the gill or in the eye or the tongue. In response to this a lot of us went back to fishing small flies, so now there is a lot of arguing and debate. But we all make our own progression in the sport and thus it's important not to judge others.

(There was a lot of information that April wanted share that unfortunately didn't come through in the recording. She has asked that the following links be included for people to follow up:

This is in reference to her tube fly demonstration -

<http://www.aprilvokey.com/blog/2015/06/04/step-up-and-surf-the-tube/>

This site shows the rhea steps -

<http://www.aprilvokey.com/blog/2015/05/24/how-to-tie-flies-with-rhea/>

This is something she wanted to explore, but the video didn't work so she moved on:

<http://www.aprilvokey.com/blog/2015/05/11/food-for-thought-mr-waddington/>

Probably the most important of the links to go to -

<http://www.aprilvokey.com/blog/2015/01/29/getting-greasy/>

And a recap on April and the series -

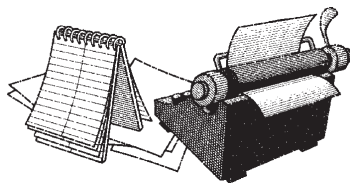
<http://www.aprilvokey.com/blog/2015/01/05/shorelines-bc-extras/>



New Members

It's great to report that in the past month we have welcomed six new members. – April Vokey, Kristina Royter, Neil Vincett, Brian Chambers, David Usher and Tony Mockunas. We trust that their membership of the VFFA brings to them many pleasant and fulfilling times, and lots of happy memories.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"The man who coined the phrase 'Money can't buy happiness' never bought himself a good fly rod!" (Reg Baird, from his video 'Labrador Trout')

"The great charm of fly fishing is that we are always learning." (Theodore Gordon)

I confess again to owning way too many fly rods. But after watching April Vokey's casting demonstration at the Red Tag Pool on Saturday, May 21, I'm itching to invest in yet another. Her virtuoso performance with a 13 foot two-hand rod was incredible to behold. And it looked a heap of fun.

We have just completed a week with two delightful guests – April Vokey and Kristina Royter. April came with a well-publicised reputation as a high profile fly fishing writer and TV presenter, with years of experience as a guide in British Columbia, professional fly tier and casting instructor. What the advertising staff didn't tell us was that she was also a very warm, friendly and engaging personality who won a pile of fans in the four days she was here.

Her visit to Melbourne began on Wednesday, May 18, with a two-hour presentation at the Hookup tackle store in Ferntree Gully. She gave a very polished presentation on swinging wet flies down and across in rivers; then after the mandatory pizzas arrived and were demolished she showed us how to tie large wet flies on tubes.

Swinging wet flies in rivers is a time-honoured traditional method that remains a very effective way of catching trout. When we Victorian anglers arrive at a river and find nothing visible or rising the common ploy is to fish a nymph upstream. However, as lots of scribes tell

us, trout sitting in a comfortable spot in a river and feeding on a steady supply of bugs washing down in the current are disinclined to move far to the left or right to intercept small items drifting past a bit further away. This means that to search an area comprehensively with a nymph you need to comb the water with a succession of fairly closely spaced casts.

On the other hand, if you cast a wet fly across the stream and allow it to swing back in the current it may race past the noses of lots of fish. And you no longer need to worry about the demon drag – because drag on the fly is what is sweeping it back across the river and causing all that fluffy soft marabou to flutter and wave seductively in the current. Then instead of moving upstream as you do when fishing a nymph, you progress downstream after each cast, thus fishing progressively new water. This is a crass, short and simplistic summary of the technique. It was clear from April's presentation that there's a lot of skill and know-how associated with this method, as there is in any of our popular trout fishing techniques.

April related an incident that occurred recently when she was fishing a river in New Zealand's North Island. The assembled collection of locals were quite dismissive of her intention to swing wets. This, after all, was nymphing water, and nymphing was the proper way to go, if you don't mind Miss. She subsequently fished the water the nymphers had >>>

fished and caught a truckload of trout that they had missed.

April's companion, Kristina Royter, was also there on the Wednesday night. Kristina is married to Adam Royter, known to many of us, and they have lived in the South Island of New Zealand now for some years. Kristina told how many of those wonderful South Island rivers are being adversely affected by the wholesale transition from sheep farming to dairy farming. The dairy farmers use huge amounts of fertilizer, which of course runs off into the rivers, fouling things up. They also pump a lot of water out of the rivers to irrigate pastures, and this has reduced levels in some spawning streams to a point where they've become a succession of shallow separated pools. Kristina described how she and friends had rescued large trout trapped in small puddles in some rivers and returned them to the main stream. She hastened to add that the South Island still offers fabulous fishing, but in many places it is no longer as good as it was even just a few years ago.

Thursday night was of course the VFFA dinner with April and Kristina as our special guests. They were clearly a popular attraction, with nearly 80 in attendance. It was pleasing to note, too, that a number of wives of members had come to hear our international speaker. Prior to the dinner April again demonstrated her fly tying skills, and following the main course began her presentation, the text of which is given in this issue. She had included a number of short video clips to illustrate points she was making, but tragically the sound system refused to co-operate - a great frustration for our guest and the audience. Despite the difficulties she valiantly persevered.

During the evening April mingled with members and guests and was a very

gracious and obliging visitor. Never before have we seen so many members lining up to have a photo taken with the guest speaker. Consequently she was among the very last to leave.

Friday evening was the International Film Festival at Cinema Nova in Carlton, organized by Kristina. The theatre holds about 140 and was close to full. Among the attendees were a number of VFFA members, there to enjoy eight short fly fishing films in a two-hour program. It was total fly fishing indulgence - lots of noise and rapid scene changes, incredible exotic locations, rafts crashing over hair-raising rapids, some fabulous casting, and of course a succession of monster fish hooked and netted to the accompaniment of endless high-fives and hugs. It was all quite mind blowing and immensely entertaining. For those of us who hadn't caught huge numbers of large fish in the past season, it was a glorious bit of fly fishing escapism. The event was sponsored by Rick Dobson, VFFA member and owner of the Aussie Angler store. Many thanks Kristina and Rick.

The final call was Saturday morning at the Red Tag Casting Pool in Fairfield, where members and others gathered to see April wading around in ankle-deep water wielding a 13 foot two-hand rod. This was all about spey casting, and April was clearly on home territory here as she effortlessly and elegantly sent line in all directions whilst giving a well-honed description of how it ought to be done. It looked so easy, so when the invitation was given to give it a try, your editor, fascinated with this spey casting and two-hand stuff, foolishly stepped forward. No, it wasn't easy, despite the expert advice steadily being fed into his ear. But it's a fabulous skill to watch, and the question I was itching to ask was how useful would it be in our Victorian trout fishery.

Apparently two-hand rods are catching on. Peter Hayes has written a great article on their use in Philip Weigall's latest issue of *FlyStream*, the online magazine. Rick Dobson, from *Aussie Angler*, indicated that he now stocks a range of two-hand rods, and these are selling as fast as they arrive.



Spey casting with class and style

These two-handers match up with single handed rods this way – a 5-weight two-hand rod is about equivalent to a 7 or 8-weight single hand rod (depending on which website you read). But once you've purchased your two-hander you are then confronted with a host of new options - traditional or long belly lines, Scandi lines and Skagit lines – all with their associated uses. A whole new world of fly casting opens up. Yes, we never stop learning.

Where might we use them here in Victoria (or Tassie)? Two-hand rods are mainly used overseas in big rivers for large species such as salmon and steelhead trout. Bintoro, a VFFA member and highly qualified two-hand casting instructor, suggests that the Goulburn running at 2,000 to 4,000 Megalitres per day could be fished with these rods. But smaller rivers can be fished with them too. One of the anglers there on Saturday described how he now uses a two-hand rod almost exclusively on both lakes and rivers.

I had wondered how useful they might be on lakes. There was some debate about this. Most lake trout are caught close to the edges anyway, so a single-handed rod is more than adequate. There was also a

suggestion that when casting with two-hand rods the heavier lines used make boisterous fish-scaring landings. But wind is a very common accompaniment to lake fishing, so landing a fly in all those waves and froth might not be much of an issue. The longer two-hand rods give good distance easily without a lot of vigorous double hauling and grunting, and (is this true?) casts are less effected by the wind because spey casting is essentially roll casting. It was also suggested that for those with shoulder problems casting with a two-hander is more comfortable and a lot less tiring. Okay, so you don't really need a two-hand rod to fish lakes or rivers. But they are fun to use and have some advantages, so why not?

Thank you April and Kristina. Your Melbourne visit has been very entertaining, informative, and enjoyable.

Oh, I almost forgot. At the end of Thursday night's dinner secretary David Grisold presented both of our guests with VFFA memberships. So two more very accomplished fly fishers are now members of this great Association.

Tight lines, and good winter fishing,

Lyndon Webb



Anyone for fly tying?

The VFFA is considering reintroducing fly tying lessons as part of its ongoing development program. At this stage we are trying to determine how much interest there might be among members to attend fly tying instruction, either as beginners or current fly tiers looking to improve their skills.

As a first step could members interested in participating please contact Richard Kos (Kossy) at kossy1@bigpond.com or on mobile 0430 091 300 so we can determine whether there is enough interest to proceed.

Lake Fyans Match with Bairnsdale Fly Fishers

A winter "friendly" match with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers (BFF) is being planned for Lake Fyans and other western lakes from July 28 until July 31. While still in the early stages of organisation, the event will be based at the Lake Fyans caravan park with anglers either camping or staying in on-site cabins, and is scheduled to tie in with the BFF annual winter trip to the area.

VFFA members Trevor Hawkins (0409 195 507) and Mike Jarvis (0418 265 390) are looking after arrangements for the weekend, which should provide an opportunity for the VFFA to continue its long standing relationship with the BFF, and hopefully repay some of the generous hospitality we have enjoyed during Donger weekends at the BFF lodge on the Mitta Mitta River near Omeo.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Trevor or Mike.



Newlyn Reservoir produces some big trout. Richard Kos caught this seven pounder a few weeks ago

Warrnambool Fly Fishers Club Inc.

2016 Annual Game Dinner Invitation

Dear Fellow Fly Fishers and Guests,

It's that time of year again! Here is the official invitation to you and your guests to join us at our Annual Game Dinner to be held on Saturday, July 23, at the "Matilda Room" in the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion, on Grafton Road, Warrnambool.

This year, THE COST for WFFC members is set at \$60, and we urge you to pay your WFFC Membership on the night, as well. For any other person who wishes to join us on the night as a paying guest the cost will be \$75.

I confirm that it will be a BYO wine and beer night. Before dinner drinks with deep-fried crumbed abalone will begin at 6:00 pm. We will sit down for the first course at approximately 7:00 pm for the start of what should be another night of fine food and company.

I urge you and others who you invite as your guests to contact me at my e-mail address before July 14 to book a seat if you/they will be attending. Between July 14 and no later than July 20, please contact our WFFC President, Adrian Jacobs, by calling 0437 620 972.

Since this is our one and only fund raiser for the Club, we want to fill every available seat and trust that people who



E-mail: jtblakeslee@westvic.com.au

Phone: 0355 625168

P.O. Box 1380 Warrnambool 3280

book a seat and say they are coming will show up on the night. There is a capacity limit of 65 persons who can fit into the Venue at the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion and places are filling up fast, so a prompt response is recommended.

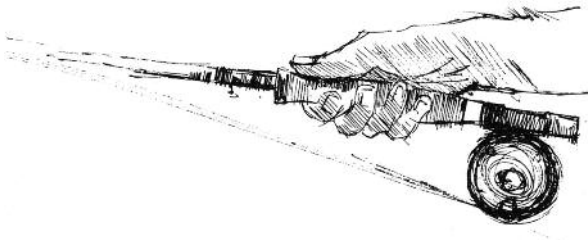
Sincerely,

Jim Blakeslee, Social Committee Member
Warrnambool Fly Fishers Club Inc.

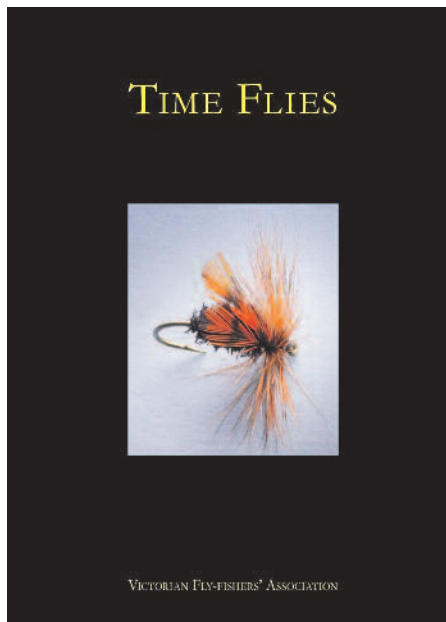
112 Bridge Road

Woodford, Victoria 3281

Ph – 03 55625168 & Mob – 0437 983 421



'Time Flies' – the third in the trilogy of VFFA recent publications



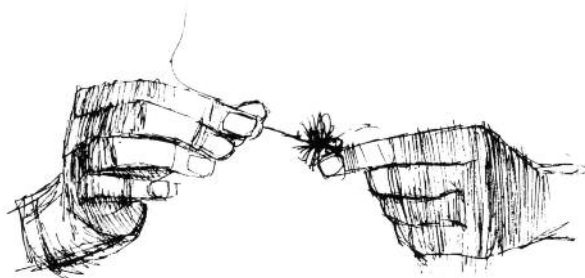
In 2007, to celebrate the 75th year of the VFFA, the Association published *Geehi to Great Lake*, an anthology of articles from VFFA Newsletters. It was followed three years later by Tony Brothers' history of the VFFA, *The Country For An Angler*. Rick Keam served as editor of both books.

From the beginning it was intended that these two publications should be followed by a third, detailing fly patterns created by or associated with VFFA members over the years. Now Rick has researched, compiled and written that book.

Time Flies: A Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Fly Box 1932–2015, again published for the Association by Michael Stevens, is an elegant production of 179 pages. There are 37 chapters describing over 60 flies. However, the style of presentation is very different from the routine fly-pattern recipe books of old, with their unimaginative side-profile photographs and basic text. Instead the flies, beautifully photographed by top Melbourne cameraman Vlad Bunyevich, are presented at angles that capture their individual distinctiveness. Wherever possible, the accompanying descriptions supply information and stories about their creators. These are supplemented by some wonderful black and white photos from the 1930s and 40s, and decorative cameo sketches from the same period.

The Introduction presents an historical background to the development of Australian fly tying, including some surprises, and the final chapter documents even more surprising research into the evolution of that iconic fly the Brown Nymph. These sections alone make the book a major contribution to Australian fly fishing history.

Even for those members who don't tie their own flies, *Time Flies* will be a beautiful book to have and to hold, and a treasured memento of our own rich fly fishing tradition.



A Report on the recent Tassie Fishing Season

(... by Josh Bradshaw)

Personally, the 2015/16 trout season has been one of the better ones in recent years. I had the luxury of a few months off, so used the time to spend extended periods fishing and camping across Tasmania. The season started with a bang in October, with 15 days camping at Laughing Jack Lagoon. We enjoyed morning tailers, wind lanes, and daytime beetle falls (yes, in October!). We also enjoyed blue skies for most of the time, which heralded the start of Tassie's endless summer. One of the more memorable days was spent polaroiding beetle feeders with Hairy Castles using his recently constructed 4-weight split cane rod – more like a piece of art than a fly rod.

From October on the weather just got better and better, and we made the most of it – fishing the Bronte system flat out for dun feeders in the southern bays, and chasing a few bigger fish on the eastern side of Lake Echo. Up top, the Pine started to fire, although it was sporadic at times, with some good fish falling to duns. The early morning slicks on Great Lake made up for the fact that the shark fishing during daylight hours was pretty slow this year – the fish caught were (and still are) in fantastic condition, with the low lake level certainly not having a negative impact on the fishery at this stage. As late as last weekend we were catching superb fish from Great Lake while walking the shore between Boundary Bay and Canal Bay – a mixture of rainbows and browns, strong fighters with heaps of go.

Penstock fished well all year, particularly towards the tail of the season, with some better-than-average fish coming in in the



Josh with a handsome brown trout

later months. I broke a 5-weight Loomis on a BIG rainbow when it went under a log and I tried (unsuccessfully) to skull-drag him out. You live and learn. I only fished Woods once, and picked up a baker's dozen fishing the shore under Alma tier in a severe SW wind – tough fishing, but the fish were there (feeding on stick caddis) and, amazingly, taking a few duns.

I didn't fish the rivers a great deal due to low levels but know that the North Esk still has got fish in it that frighten people. It's definitely worth a look when the hoppers come on. We didn't put the drift boats on the Macquarie much at all due to poor flows down Poatina.

In summary, the lakes I had fished hard, particularly Great Lake, fished very well, while the rivers have had better years. The fish quality was excellent across a range of lakes and good fish can still be caught in Great Lake, as it's open 12 months of the year. So, for those who still want to scratch the itch over winter and can brave the cold (it's snowing at Great Lake as we speak), book a Christmas in July at Miena - you might just catch more than the flu!

Return to The Deschutes River

(... A very welcome report from Alan Pilkington, who now lives in Seattle, America)

I first fished the Deschutes, a magnificent river in central Oregon, in the early 1980s when I lived in Sydney, before I located permanently to the United States. I was travelling frequently to New York and decided I needed a break from all the pressure and hassle, and I landed on this wonderful river principally because of Randall Kauffman. He did much to popularise nymph fishing on Western rivers in the 1970s when he published *American Nymph Fly Tying Manual*, which I'd obtained in a fly shop in San Francisco and which included the recipe for Kauffman's Stonefly, still a staple in American fly boxes.

Randall owned a fly shop in Portland and a fishing lodge at Maupin, a town on the Deschutes, and ran a fly fishing school there and a guiding business on the river. I signed on and enjoyed one of the best week's fishing of my life - not measured by fish caught, but by the experience of floating on and camping by this amazing river with its spectacular canyon, my introduction to steelhead and to its famous 'redside' trout, learning about the river and its fish from Kauffman (one of its masters), and sleeping under a bright starry Western sky. Quite a break from the hustle of the Sydney advertising business!

The Deschutes is a principal tributary of the mighty Columbia River. An important Native American thoroughfare to the Columbia for millennia, it was floated by Lewis and Clark in 1805. It rises on the east of the Cascade Mountains and flows for 300 miles through a high desert in a steep canyon reminiscent of the Grand Canyon, though smaller. Named by French Hudson Bay fur trappers, the voyageurs, as 'the river of falls' it has, via the Columbia, historic runs of steelhead



Alan fishing the Deschutes in 1982

and Pacific salmon, which are now much diminished. Signs of Native American fish traps are still evident at Shearers Falls, and many miles of its left bank have prohibited access along the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

Its native rainbow trout is a variety which has evolved with exceptionally bright colouring, known as 'redsides'. The river's riparian zone is green and lush, and because of a dam well upstream it has a relatively even flow and acts like a giant tail-water with abundant insect life. It is strewn with rocks and rapids with romantic names like 'Buckskin Mary' and 'Whitehorse', and giant midstream rocks like 'Oh, Shit!' Some are dangerous and require portage, and fatal rafting accidents periodically occur.

Most of the 'redsides' I caught were taken on a weighted #12 Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear nymph, and the steelhead on the Freight Train and Coal Car, hair wing flies created by Kauffman. I fished with an early Orvis graphite rod, the 8'3" All Rounder with a Hardy Marquis reel and a #6 floating line. Later that rod found its way into my brother John's collection and spent the rest of its life on the Big River in Victoria.



Deschutes redband rainbow

All fishing was from the bank or gravel bars in mid-stream, fishing from water craft being prohibited, and studded wading boots and a sturdy wading staff were essential. I returned several times in the years that followed, made easier by my move to the United States in 1983, and my last trip there was in 1986. They were all much the same as the first - strong, wild native fish in a beautiful, uncrowded and wild setting with blazing night time northern hemisphere constellations I was learning.

In the years that followed most of my fly fishing in the United States was in Montana, Alaska and Florida, and I was lucky enough to wet a line in Patagonia and Iceland, as well as reconnecting with one of brother John's old friends from the early Big River days, Rod Foale, on his beat on the Test.

But I never made it back to the Deschutes. I followed the river's progress as it became more nationally known and more popular, especially during its famed salmon fly hatch in May. This is a giant stonefly (pteronymys californicus), two inches long, with an orange underbody which gives it its common name. Such a

large morsel brings big trout to the surface with splashy, aggressive rises; no sippers here, and before the hatch the nymph can be confidently fished.

The river is also host to many other flies for the fisherman: caddis, mayflies and other stoneflies of different sizes, colours and emergence times throughout the year, which was just as well for me, as the predicted salmon fly hatch of early May this year was running a few days late. A few giant adults buzzed me as they drifted over the water from the bushes where they'd crawled to hatch, but try as I could I could not persuade a fish to come up for the various floating imitations I offered. And the nymph did no better, a seal's fur pattern I tied which had worked well on big stoneflies elsewhere. But I'm a bit ahead of myself.

I eventually retired to Seattle, no big surprise given its proximity to many of the best Western waters in the United States and Canada, and joined a local fly fishing club, The Northwest Fly Anglers, which is not unlike the VFFA in many respects, with a history and a membership of dedicated and experienced anglers. A great place

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Early morning in the Deschutes Canyon

to learn about the local waters. One of my first club outings was to fish the salmon fly on the Deschutes with a dozen or so other members this May. We made a comfortable camp in a Forest Service campground by the river in the shadow of a giant canyon, after a five hour drive from my Seattle home, bringing our own tents and sleeping gear. The rest of the camp gear and food was provided by the club. The whole set-up was well organized with various tasks allotted to each member. Several had their own boats and rafts, while the rest of us moved up or down the gravel road, which paralleled the river, looking for wadable water. After breakfast on the first morning I struggled down a steep bank about a half mile below our camp, picked my way through thick bushes, vines and scrub, and found a perfect small run between the bank and a partly submerged gravel bar midstream with water spilling towards me. Just the spot for the salmon flies I thought, but to no avail, no lookers at either the adult on top or the nymph fished below.

Timing is everything as we all know, in fly fishing as in life, and as I realised the stonefly were not ready, a hatch of small light brown bodied mayflies started rising from the water ahead of me. I later identified these as Western March

Browns, known locally as April Tans, and I cast a #14 Ausable Wulff upstream onto a likely riffle and was immediately attached to a strong, acrobatic 'redside'. It was a 14" fish but felt much bigger, and in a moment all those memories of more than thirty years ago were back with me. While my body was dealing with the march of time, lacking the nimbleness I once had on this rock strewn, swift river, the fish had not changed a bit! As it came to the net and I was treated to its vibrant energy and the brilliant red bands on its sides I received in that moment what some of us are lucky to experience, the gift of a wild native fish in a wild place. As gently as I could I removed the fly and set the fish in a calmer pool by the lee of a rock, then watched it revive and slowly swim off into the deeper, strong green water.



A Redside comes to hand

How fly fishers read rivers: Interpreting running water in the Peak District

The following article was published online in the British INDEPENDENT Newspaper, and was passed on to us by VFFA member David Wakefield.

Natural navigator Tristan Gooley joins old hand Stuart Crofts in the Peak District and learns to interpret the river's subtle language. The full article can be found at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/how-fly-fishers-read-rivers-interpreting-running-water-in-the-peak-district-a6944631.html>

Dr Johnson once said: "Angling is an amusement with a stick and string: a worm at one end and a fool at the other." Sir Humphry Davy countered that it was more a case of "a fly at one end and a philosopher at the other". I travelled to the Peak District already confident who was right, but with a plan to make some enquiries of my own.

Stuart Crofts shook my hand when we met in the village of Castleton in the Peak District and assured me in a thick Yorkshire accent that we would soon be discussing with the river the things it would be happy to tell us. I am no fisherman or hunter, but I have long respected the deep wisdom that both hunters and anglers develop. It is a wisdom that allows a little self-deprecation, too. Stuart laughed, recounting the ribbing that his young daughter had given him when he had tried to impress her with a catch: "Congratulations, you've just fooled a creature with a brain the size of a pea."

It is only possible to grasp the artistry and passion of fly fishermen when we appreciate that the catching of the fish is a very minor part of the appeal. Dry fly fishing may date back to the Macedonians at around the time of Christ, but it was the Victorians who embraced it as a pastime and this was the moment it began the leap from food for the stomach to nectar for the mind. Fly fishing is about understanding the water, the fish and the

insects they eat, and recognising how the slightest breeze or even the movement of a cloud across the sun changes everything.

In fly fishing you see it actually happen. Flying insects live on the edge of death every second of their short lives. The very fact they are flying at all is a precarious balance, dependent on how hydrated they are and factors such as how warm they are. When the sun slips behind a cloud, insects will cool slightly, and some lose the ability to fly and drop out of the air onto the river, where a trout will be expecting them. It is this sensitivity that makes the angler.

"Very little in fishing is down to luck," Stuart told me. I laughed because I thought he was joking, but he meant it. We would be travelling downstream over the course of the day to ensure biosecurity, so that any organisms that we inadvertently gave a lift to would be taken in a harmless direction. In sensitive ecosystems, which of course is all of them, walking upstream and getting in and out of the water runs the risk of allowing hostile infestations to piggyback into previously unsullied waters.

Like any art, fly fishing is not immune to passionate debate about the finer points. But the beauty for me is that there is an art in fishing without fishing. Let us call it "rise-watching". Fly fishers love to see fish rise, even if they end up not catching any.

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The rises are what demonstrate the activity to the rise-watcher and the potential to the fly fisher, and are equally exciting to each.

The trout come to the surface to take an insect, and when any fish takes an insect in their mouth, they disturb the water's surface. This creates the rise that we can spot. But what exactly will this rise look like and why? And what can we deduce from the subtly different rise patterns that we see? These are the questions at the heart of fly-fishing and rise-watching.

The trout's food, the insects, are varied in form and behaviour. There are small ones and large ones, ones that fall dead from the sky, ones that are trapped and wriggling, and ones on the surface that are ready to fly away an instant later. Imagine a trout spotting a very small, motionless, probably dead insect on the water's surface. It is neither much of a meal nor likely to escape in a hurry and so the trout will approach leisurely and eat gently – why waste lots of energy on a surging dart and energetic snap? But a much larger insect that is very much alive and poised to escape: that is a different challenge for the trout – a proper meal, but one intent on not becoming one. So the trout will approach this more like a smash-and-grab raid.

The various strategies employed by fish to take their meal at the surface lead to the wide variety of rises that anglers subscribe to and look for. Depending on the authority you refer to, there may be kissing, sucking, sipping, slashing, flushing, kidney-shaped or bulging rises. The debate and disagreement, even between long-hallowed experts, about the exact form that these rises take is bewildering. But with Stuart's help I will try to simplify this area.

Below the trout's rises, even the subtlest kind, there is still plenty of spotting to be done. Sometimes a fish that is swimming just below the surface will disturb the

water in a way that is so subtle that it wouldn't qualify as a rise, all but invisible as it is to most observers. But it will be noticeable if you are looking at the right sort of reflections. The straight, clear edge of a tree trunk may become blurred or may flex slightly, perhaps even twisting in a full 'S' shape.

Trout will change colour rapidly to suit their environment, and they are masters at being inconspicuous to birds' eyes, let alone our own weaker instruments. But we are not powerless and when hunting for nymphs, trout will betray their whereabouts. They face upstream, occasionally shifting their position to the left or right, before returning to their original position, all of which might be hard to spot at first until the tell-tale sign reveals itself: the chink of light, the small patch of white that appears against a dark background each time the fish opens its mouth.

You're unlikely to spot the fish's tail straight away, but it's worth being alert for the rhythmic movement of the shadow of the tail. The best general rule is this: search for any anomalous movement, because even though camouflaged animals can make themselves almost invisible, one weakness of camouflage is that it can't disguise movement very well.

Unsurprisingly, when looking for the fish themselves, it helps to give some thought to the sun and wind. Calm days when the sun is high and behind the shoulders make looking into water easiest, but bear in mind that the fish will be sensitive to any breaking of their horizon by you. You can improve your odds by screening out the sky with a wide-brimmed hat.

Stuart and I had been watching the rises from the same spot when he ran me through the combination of factors. The insect behaviour, the wind direction, the slow pool next to the faster water, the

sunlight and shade on the water, the fact that we had a line of dark trees behind us so were not breaking the fishes' horizon. We watched a sequence of three rises. By watching the sequence of these rises, you can work out if it is several different fish in the same pool, or the same fish on a circuit. If it is on a circuit, predicting the exact spot of the next rise gets easier.

"One, two, three... there! Same fish," he whispered and we watched until the pattern was repeated. Then we edged uphill to gain a different perspective and the rises stopped. We had passed the edge of the trees and were now breaking the horizon. The trout were sensitive to our every movement now and had darted for shelter.

"There, look at that scum lane where the bubbles flow in a line down the river. It shows us where the forces of the water and wind are collecting things at the surface. That's where the insects will

congregate. We'll see a fish there if we're patient." We didn't have to wait a minute before a set of concentric rings spread out and then another and another. "The bubbles come from the white water, the riffle up there."

I watched for the next rise and spotted it easily, but then my mind drifted to all the different types. Stuart seemed to suggest that there was a subjectivity to the perception of the rise forms, so I asked him which rise forms he personally identified and used. He explained that after 40 years of passionate fishing, he grouped the rises into three categories.

"There's the kissing or sipping rise." It was the rise we had seen earlier. "Then there's the splash: when the fish is moving at pace and its head often emerges, sometimes you can see its eye!"

"Finally, subtlest of the lot, there's the subsurface. Very hard to spot, I >>>



A box of flies with the River Usk in the background



Stewart Crofts – a passionate fly fisher

sometimes call it 'nervous water'." This was a rise I had heard referred to as "the bulge" by others. "When the fish takes something below the water without breaking the surface, although its tail sometimes tips up. No use fishing with a dry fly for a subsurface rise – you're wasting your time!"

We moved away from the river's edge. "It's a game of chess. But you might only get one move," Stuart said, as he unpacked a gas burner, kettle and mugs from a wooden cube. We enjoyed a cup of tea. Over tea, the conversation became yet more philosophical, as Stuart talked about his approach more broadly: his desire to blend in so that the river doesn't know he's there. I was struck by the way he liked to use the word "river" as a

shorthand to describe not just the water, as many might, but the intricate network and ecosystem of which the river is but one artery.

There is no harm in any of us pausing at a bridge and looking down for clues as to where the fish will prefer and then watching for a rise. If I was offered the choice of a freshly caught trout and the sight of a rise exactly where I have worked out one is likely, personally I'd go for the rise. It tastes less good, but serves up better memories.

How to Read Water: clues, signs and patterns from puddles to the sea' by Tristan Gooley is published on 7 April and available to pre-order now (Hodder & Stoughton, Hardback, £20)



Autumn Fishing Around Warrnambool

(... from Jim Blakeslee)

It was 1:30pm at Dennington and Paul Petraitis had just arrived from Snobs Creek Hatchery. He had driven six hours with a truck-load of 6,000 yearling brown trout to be released into the lower Merri River. Two local Fisheries Officers, as well as several members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers Club – Adrian Jacobs, Peter Hussey and Bob Loch - were already waiting at the boat ramp with their boats launched and ready to take on a load of the baby browns to be spread upstream and downstream from there.

I had launched my boat an hour earlier and did a bit of drift fishing downstream from Dennington while waiting for the others to get there. I knew that 1:30pm was designated for the liberation truck to arrive. So I motored back to the boat ramp just in time to see the others having a chat with Paul before the fish were transferred to boats and released.

I pulled in, tied up to the side of Bob's boat, and said my hellos. Noticing that I had my fly rod in the boat, Paul asked if I had been fishing and if I'd had any luck. I answered in the affirmative and pulled a couple of fat 3½ lb browns from the Esky to show off, and to thank Paul for liberating them a few years earlier.

If you want to make a Fisheries man from Snobs Creek happy, then the answer is simple - just show him some decent fish that an angler has been able to catch as a result of his efforts, and that of the rest of the staff, at the hatchery. Proof that all their efforts had been worthwhile. Paul was smiling from ear to ear. I think he was happier to see those trout than I was, and asked to take a few photos with the Fisheries truck in the background.

After that we got busy and started the process of loading plastic bins on our boats, half-filling them with water and a net full of yearling browns, then off at top speed to somewhere on the river. There, we would slowly tip them over the side as the boat idled along, in an effort to spread them out and make it harder for the shags to get them.

Aside from helping to liberate hatchery-reared browns from Snobs Creek, autumn is the time of the year when members of the WFFC are busy hunting, fishing and collecting for our Annual Fly Fishers' Dinner (This year scheduled for Saturday, July 23, with guests from the VFFA always welcome to join us). Peter Hussey, our bream guru, has single-handedly taken care of a bream fillet entrée. Daryl Richardson, Glen Fary and Adrian Jacobs are doing their best to cover courses requiring ducks, rabbits and hares. I'm doing what I can to ensure we have decent-sized trout to put in the smoker for the Dinner. At this stage, things are looking good for another great night with friends who enjoy fish and game.

The fishing around Warrnambool improved markedly about a month ago, when temperatures cooled down a bit and we started getting some decent rain to improve the flow in the rivers. When the tides have been right, bream have been smashing a #6 olive green BMS, and the trout have been taking a #12 green "shrimp" fly, or a #6 black bead-head Woolly Bugger, in the Merri and Hopkins.

For now, members of the WFFC are enjoying the last of autumn and having a go at the fish before we get too much run-off and the water dirties- >>>

up and the rivers begin to flood, which looks like happening soon. Then the trout WILL lose interest in the fly and begin to focus on spawning activities in the lead-up to the close of the trout season in Victoria.

While the good time last, feel free to join us if you can. Until we see you again, "tight lines."



This Month's Yarn

(... from August 1965)

Alf opined, as he ordered two more glasses of lunch, "You know, some of those fellows who tow big heavy motor boats behind their cars must get into trouble at times. Especially when they head into places where there are no proper tracks."

"That's certainly right. Some of them don't show much judgment," nodded McTaggart, after a generous mouthful. "But then," he reflected, "I know of one case where a driver was fortunate that he had a big motor boat on a trailer behind him. He was also lucky that he had my nephew, young Clarence, with him — I think I've mentioned Clarence to you before."

"You have indeed," agreed Alf, "but this sounds like an occasion you haven't mentioned before."

"Well, I'll mention it now. It seems that this motor boat addict, a wealthy cocky from the Western District, decided to take his outfit to a very isolated inlet on Lake Eppaldon. When they got there they found the road in was a rough dirt track down a fairly steep hill. They got

down all right, but it rained while they were there, so the trouble started on the return trip. The track was slippery, and the car just refused to take it. The two passengers, Clarence and Mike Crewes (a friend of the cocky), got out and pushed, but it was hopeless. Then Clarence - as I've told you before, an ingenious young lad - had an idea."

"Not far from the water there was a large old windmill. So Clarence got a few tools from the car, climbed up the structure, detached the wind-vane wheel, then lowered it to the ground. It was about five feet in diameter. He then replaced the propeller on the back of the motor boat with the wind-vane wheel, which fortunately just cleared the ground. The cocky and Mick got back into the car and Clarence got into the boat. Then he started up the motor on the boat. His idea work perfectly. The wind-vane wheel, acting like a propeller on an aircraft, took over, and the boat pushed the car up the half-mile of slippery slope on to the bitumen road at the top. Then, of course, their troubles were over."

FLY OF THE MONTH

Rick Innes' Stick Caddis (or Hughie's Fly)



For some years now Hughie Maltby has been tying this fly and distributing it to his multitude of friends in the VFFA. It became known by many as Hughie's Fly. But in recent weeks your editor has been made aware that the fly was originally designed and created by Rick Innes, another well-known VFFA member. Rick's fly was subsequently tied by Ray Brown in Tasmania. Ray's construction of Rick's fly is given on Mick Hall's site and can be seen at <http://www.kossiedun.com.au/Rays%20First%20Season%20in%20Cressy.htm>

In describing the tying of Rick's pattern Ray uses bright yellow tying thread and suggests that the body should be 'equal parts of chocolate brown, black, olive, yellow and orange BMS dubbing blended and tied in tightly along the hook shank'.

The May 2016 issue of the South Australian Fly Fishers' Association's newsletter carries a detailed description of the tying of this fly by Gordon Brooks, who provides superb fly tying notes in each of the SA Association's monthly issues. The following notes are from Gordon, and are used with his permission:

This pattern has but a vague semblance to the natural (a stick caddis), but it has proven effective in Victorian impoundments and also in South Australia's northern rivers.

The pattern, created by Rick Innes, is constructed in a similar manner to the Bullen Merri Special. Because of the tail and the fuzzy body the pattern tends to sink more slowly than some of the other stick caddis patterns, allowing a more natural presentation. The BMS Blend Dubbing is ideal for size 10 or 12 hooks, but for smaller patterns you can use any synthetic dubbing which will brush out to give a similar profile to the finished fly. For the smaller hooks the fibres need to be shorter and also a bit finer to get the same effect.

Due to its bulk and fairly low weight this pattern sinks slowly and performs well when presented inert to a sighted fish. It is best suited to streams or dams which have plenty of rushes growing in the margins, as this is the environment where the larger species of caddis larvae live which inhabit 50 to 75 mm long hollow stems. The pattern performs better than most stick caddis patterns when retrieved, possibly because of its more lure like construction.

Materials needed:

- Hook:** 2X long nymph or wet fly, sizes 10 - 14
- Thread:** 6/0 Olive or black thread
- Tail & Body:** BMS Blend dubbing – mixed to produce a sooty olive colour.
(Example: 9 parts black, 1 part olive, 1 part chartreuse,
1 part golden olive)
- Grub:** Fluorescent yellow thread or floss
- Head:** Black tying thread

Tying Procedure:

1. Begin the thread 2 or 3 millimetres behind the eye and make about 5 turns of the thread to secure it. Pull a bunch of fibres from the ball of mixed dubbing and remove any long fibres which will project too far beyond the main bunch. Catch in the bunch of fibres so the tail is about one shank length long and then bind them down to just above the barb. You can let the fibres move down to the sides of the shank a bit.
2. Twist a thicker than usual layer of dubbing onto the thread. The dubbing needs to surround the thread but can be left somewhat looser than usual. Wind the dubbed thread to form a level body to about 3 mm from the eye and tie off the thread.
3. Use a bobbin to wind the floss on as this avoids discoloration and fraying of the floss. Catch in the yellow floss and wind a small grub shape hard against the body, finishing a little behind the eye of the hook. Tie off the floss with a whip finish.
4. This next step probably caters more for aesthetics than for the benefit of the trout, but it represents the head of the grub. Catch in some black tying thread and wind a small head and then finish with a whip finish. (The photo of the fly above doesn't have this.)
5. For the final stage of the process you will need the 'hook' side of some Velcro. (You can make yourself a useful tool for this fly and other flies using BMS material by gluing a short length of Velcro to a popsicle stick.) Scrub the body of the fly to pull out some fibres, then, using the Velcro, brush the fibres towards the rear to create a fuzzy stick shape. Be careful to avoid catching the floss grub as the Velcro sometimes unties the whip finish 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 or one of his assistants will be available prior to each general meeting to assist members wishing to borrow books or videos.

The library is divided into three parts.

- Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.
- Part 2 Books available for reference only and not to be taken from the library.
- Part 3 Books bequeathed to the Association and not to be taken from the cabinet.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA)	\$70.00 each
Book "Geehi to Great Lake"	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts.....	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon)	\$35.00 each
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges.....	\$7.00 each
<i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie	\$20.00
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 2015 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Andrew Braithwaite Fishing Gear • Armadale Angling •
- Australian Fishing Network • Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Publishing •
- FlyFinz Fishing Tackle and Books • Gavin Hurley's Fly Fishing Pro-Angler •
- Hayes On Brumbys • J.M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Mountain Stream Company • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies •
- Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Compleat Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne • Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle •

VFFA Meetings at the Celtic Club & other activities.

June

- 5 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM – Noon at Red Tag Pool
12 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM – Noon at Red Tag Pool
13 Monday Midnight – rivers close to trout fishing
16 Thursday General Meeting @ Lunchtime – Noon – 2:00 PM
Speaker Jim Higgs – Fly Fisher and past test cricketer
19 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM – Noon at Red Tag Pool
20 Monday Council Meeting - 7:30 PM
26 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool

July

- 3 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
10 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
17 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm
Speaker: Christopher Bassano – Tasmanian guide
23 Saturday Warrnambool FFC Annual Dinner
24 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
25 Monday Council Meeting - 7:30 PM
28 - 31 VFFA trip to Lake Fyans with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club
31 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool for those not at Lake Fyans

August

- 7 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
14 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
15 Monday Council Meeting - 7:30 PM
21 Sunday Casting – 10:00 AM - Noon at Red Tag Pool
26 Friday Annual Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 PM
'Time Flies' book launch – Rick Keam
Guest speakers: Travis Dowling, Anthony Forster, Fisheries Victoria
27 Saturday President's Casting Day – 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM at Red Tag Pool

September

- 3 Saturday 12 midnight – rivers again open to trout fishing
5 Monday Council Meeting - 7:30 PM
21 Thursday Annual General Meeting – 8:00 PM