

FLY LINES



JUNE 2019

The June Meeting with Taylor Hunt

The guest speaker for our June meeting will be Taylor Hunt, a scientist working with the Victorian Fisheries Authority. Taylor is currently completing a Ph.D. which focuses on studying fish stocking programs. He spent eight years as a fisheries scientist working on a variety of recreational fisheries projects. His work included surveys of hundreds of waterways throughout Victoria, leading to an understanding of trout populations in the high country and an assessment of the success of fish stocking.

He has a number of scientific publications to his credit, and has spent the last six years working as a fisheries manager,



Taylor with a fine Murray cod

Thursday, June 20,
8:00 pm,
at the Kelvin Club

helping deliver some great outcomes for Victorian recreational fishers, including establishing the Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program and Talk Wild Trout Conference series, and restoring trophy trout in the Crater Lakes in the state's west.

Taylor lives with his wife Jodie in Queenscliff and is currently spending every spare moment enjoying fishing before his baby girl arrives in July. Whilst he loves all forms of fishing he confesses to being 'a complete hack at fly fishing'. Then again he is a well-informed and passionate supporter of our trout fishery and will no doubt have much to tell us about the future of our trout fishery here in Victoria.

The date and time – Thursday, June 20, 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

We would encourage all members to join us for a meal beforehand, but PLEASE make a booking for dinner by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, June 19, by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message.

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Diamond Lake- a Nancy Tichborne watercolour

President's Message

... from Christopher Gray

I have been contacted in recent months by some members who wished to discuss our VFFA activities and functions, and even some historical events that I had not even been aware of. This has led me to ponder the journey I've taken in becoming president, and to reflect upon our current offering of events, functions and trips.

The journey for me to become a council member was long, and involved a lot of time talking with people I knew in the VFFA in order to understand our history and how the Association might evolve in the future. Our challenge is the same as it is for every club, association and volunteer organisation in that it takes many hands to achieve an inclusive membership. VFFA members encompass a broad group of people, and membership can mean different things to each of us.

Some members have said they are never able to attend our monthly general meetings for a number of reasons. This year our meetings have all been scheduled at night, but in response to requests we intend to include two lunchtime meetings next year, so that more of our country members can attend. We do have and continue to book speakers who will appeal to the broader membership, though we realise not all speakers will appeal to every member.

The Kelvin Club base for the VFFA offers us a dedicated space for our library and it would appear that the majority of our members are happy to be back at the Kelvin. Our 'base' will always remain an issue in regard to its location and



access. There have been suggestions that we change locations for some general meetings, but this is difficult because of the commercial arrangements we have with the Kelvin Club.

We do have an aging membership, and recruiting new members, especially younger members, is an ongoing challenge which we all need to be involved in.

This year has seen a significant number and variety of events offered to members, all of which are organised and managed by a dedicated group of hard working volunteers who give their time and services to make these events successful. These events include, but are not limited to:

- Monthly General Meetings (all through the year)
- Big River trip
- Tasmania trip
- Bairnsdale Donger Challenge on the Mitta River
- October Dam Day as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers

- Snobs Creek hatchery visit (EOI in process)
- Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes challenge
- Ballarat hatchery visit (EOI in process)
- Winter casting days
- President's casting day in August
- Daytime fly tying classes

These events provide members with nearly 40 days of opportunities to participate in some way in fly fishing. We also offer our member services to the Australian Trout Foundation's riparian work, which is key to the survival of our trout and the rivers they are in.

We are a broad-based membership, and all members will have their expectations regarding how they can interact with the Association and its events, given their personal time and geographical limitations. It would certainly be great to see more members participating in the array of activities on offer.

Mike Jarvis and I have taken on the challenge of reviewing our membership

fees and our offerings, and we plan to present our suggestions to the Council in July. I would welcome members contacting me with suggestions for events and activities to include in this review.

Our recent auction proved very successful, and I would like to thank Hughie Maltby, Peter Boag and John Pilkington for their hard work in preparing the lots and catalogue for this event.

Hughie has also completed the arrangements for the Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge for June 29 and 30 with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers, so put this one in your diary and head along for a great weekend at Camperdown.

Tight lines and heavy nets for the month ahead.



The July Meeting with Rene Vaz

The guest speaker at our July meeting will be Rene Vaz.

Some of us will be familiar with Rene through his many articles in New Zealand and Australian fly fishing magazines, and his appearance as a top angler in a number of fly fishing DVDs.

Since the age of 19 Rene has been highly involved (obsessed!) in the fly fishing and tackle industry. He is a past New Zealand Fly Fishing Champion and New Zealand team member, is an FFF and STANIC

Fly Casting Instructor, holds a Masters Degree with Honours in Fisheries Biology and Management, and has worked for and advised a number of tackle companies around the globe.

Rene lives and breathes fly fishing. He started Manic Tackle Project in 2008 in his garage at home, and after some years of hard work, late nights, glasses of wine, and some great customers he has successfully grown the company into

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Australasia's largest and most respected fly fishing distributor.

Rene will speak at the VFFA meeting on Thursday, July 18, about fly selection, and the latest gear from Simms, Scott Fly

Rods, Lamson Waterworks reels, Airflo lines, and more.

Mark it in your diary – Thursday, July 18, at the Kelvin Club.



Rene has a habit of catching some magnificent fish



The August Annual Dinner:



Tamie speaking at a VFFA dinner a few years ago

Still two months to this very significant event in our calendar, but Council has decided that early notice should be given. Our guest speaker for this year's annual dinner will be Tamie Fraser, who was elected as our first lady member a few years ago. Tamie has a well-deserved reputation as a gifted and very entertaining speaker with a wonderful sense of humour. She deserves our full support, and this would be an ideal opportunity for members to bring their partners to our annual dinner.



Tamie is an experienced and capable angler

The date for this event – Friday, August 23, at the Kelvin Club.

An invitation to this year's dinner will be included in our July issue.

The May Auction

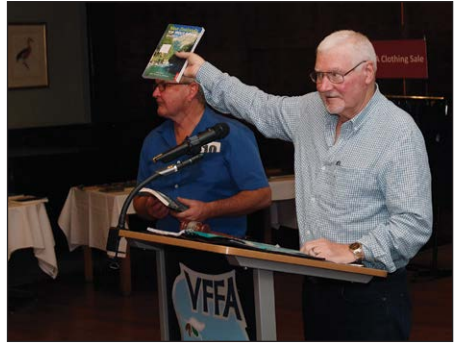
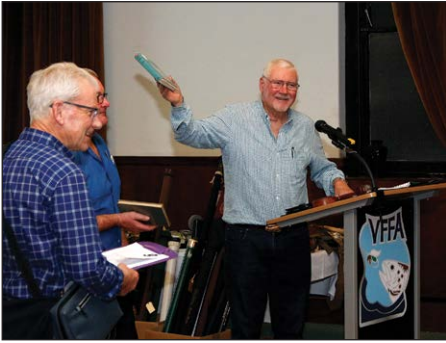
The May general meeting was our annual auction of books and fishing equipment. There were eventually well over a hundred lots to be sold, and auctioneer Hughie Maltby, though ably assisted by his small team of helpers, had to work hard to get through the volume of items to be sold in the time available.

There were only about 25 members present, so this meant that while competition was fierce for some of the

more highly prized books and rods, there were countless bargains. At the end of the night members were walking out with huge smiles, clutching quality books and rods and reels that they had purchased at bargain basement prices.

Our thanks again to Hughie, Peter Boag and John Pilkington who had spent many hours prior to the event preparing the lots and the detailed catalogue.

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Books again were popular



Some of the books for sale



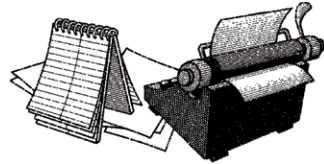
Secretary Kevin Finn was almost buried under the items for sale



A pensive crowd of potential bidders



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"It has always been my private conviction that any man who pits his intelligence against a fish and loses has it coming." (John Steinbeck)

"The water you touch in a river is the last of that which has passed, and the first of that which is coming; so it is with time." (Leonardo Da Vinci)

"Trout aren't naturally as selective as they've become in crowded tailwaters - they've been trained to be like that by too much fishing pressure. I've seen tailwater fish that are so hysterical they'll refuse naturals. You wonder how they get enough to eat." (John Gierach)

"The best fishermen I know try not to make the same mistakes over and over again; instead they strive to make new and interesting mistakes and to remember what they learned from them." (John Gierach)

John Pilkington, now in charge of our VFFA library, has asked me to remind readers that our library is functioning again. Members are free borrow books (at no charge) from this wonderful resource. Our collection is large and has many of the most revered tomes written about fly fishing, and they can be borrowed.

As an enticement to our readers you will find in this month's issue a beautifully written article by John's brother Alan, who has provided us with a list of "some fly fishing books to read before you die". And it's good to report that many of the titles highly recommended by Alan are indeed in our library.

Of course these days we have this proliferation of quality fly fishing magazines (printed and online), YouTube movies and high quality DVDs, so the question remains - is there still a place for printed fly fishing books. I'm absolutely certain there is. Many of us will have old favourites in our personal collections that we keep going back to and re-reading, both for entertainment and information.

I keep buying fly fishing books, and can honestly say I haven't been disappointed with any of my recent purchases.

A few months ago I had yet another birthday, and a friend, pressed for time and not having a clue about what to buy on this auspicious occasion, just sent a card with a \$50 note included – the universal gift voucher.

The arrival of the card coincided with a comment I heard about a book recently written by Devin Olsen, entitled: *Tactical Fly Fishing – lessons learned from competition for all anglers*. And I was even going to get some change from that \$50.

Who is Devin Olsen? Readers may recall articles in our newsletters last year on Euro nymphing by Phil Bailey. In his first article Phil recommended that we buy a couple of fabulous videos on Euro nymphing by Devin Olsen and Lance Egan. I purchased these videos. They were cheap and certainly entertaining and very informative. If you want to see two guys standing in some very attractive water casting nymphs into likely >>>

spots and catching fish after fish whilst talking hard about what they're up to, then these videos are well worth a look. (Their names, by the way – *Modern Nymphing – European Inspired Techniques*, and *Modern Nymphing Elevated – Beyond the Basics*.)

Devin Olsen is a US-based fishing guide with a Master's degree in fisheries science. He has also been a regular member for about 15 years of the USA fly fishing team competing in world championships. In short, he's a highly skilled fly fisher who catches a lot of fish. To quote the advertising blurb on his book: "Devin covers strategies, tactics, and flies for rivers, small streams, and still waters, allowing anyone to fish more successfully by applying the approaches employed by competitive anglers."

So Devin has spent a fair bit of his life fly fishing for trout and is rather good at it. I am certainly enjoying his book, so thought I might offer you just a few heavily summarised quotes to stir your thinking on trouty matters.

"The first action I take when facing clear water is to try to spot fish. Learning to spot fish is an acquired skill that takes patience and practice... The first step to spotting a trout is always believing that one is there to be seen. ... Unless I'm downstream of fish, if I can see a fish it can probably see me. If I can see the bottom clearly, then trout that are there can probably see me as well. If you approach each piece of water carefully with the goal of avoiding spooking fish, I can guarantee that you will catch more fish."

"Most everyday anglers cover a lot of water in three hours of fishing. Typically they fish their favourite runs or pools and skip the water in between. While anglers who fish this way certainly catch fish, I've come to realise that there are often more

fish to be caught in the in-between water, considered inferior to the obvious pools that receive the focus of most anglers. Moreover, because these in-between areas receive less fishing pressure it is often easier to catch fish in them compared with the prime lies, where fish repeatedly see artificial imitations passing their noses."

"After competing for many years and expanding my technical skill set, as well as my ability to read in-between waters, I'm now able to fish a broader spectrum of the holding water available by letting the water type dictate the technique I fish, rather than letting my technique dictate the water I fish. I can cover fish that avoid much of the pressure in the popular locations and have plenty of success even when surrounded by other anglers. I don't worry now about crowded parking lots because I know there will be lots of overlooked open water between the spots where most anglers are concentrating their efforts."

Devin writes about water temperature. He says: "There may not be a single environmental variable that affects trout more than water temperature. I can often predict how successful a day is likely to be and where I will find trout simply by taking the temperature of the water. Trout are cold-blooded and their metabolism is ruled by the temperature of their surroundings. As the temperature rises and falls, enzymes that control the speed of metabolic reactions undergo changes that result in corresponding accelerations and decelerations of the trout's metabolic rate. As their metabolic rate changes, their need for food responds accordingly."

"As part of my Master's thesis I investigated the metabolic rate of Arctic char, and discovered that from their basal metabolic rate to their peak rate their need for food nearly quadrupled. This same metabolic relationship with

temperature exists for other salmonid species as well. For trout their lowest metabolic rate will be at near freezing temperature, and this rate will gradually increase until reaching an inflection point where their metabolic rate rises rapidly to an apex and then rapidly descends as the temperatures reach stress and lethality. Most trout have maximum metabolic rates between 13°C and 18°C. Once the temperature reaches 20°C most trout enter stress mode and their consumptive demand decreases drastically.”

“What does this mean for anglers? First, trout are generally willing to move farther for food when the water is near prime temperatures. Therefore, if the water is cold I plan to fish each likely holding spot with more drifts from various angles. I also seek to ensure that my flies are very near the bottom if I’m nymphing, so the trout have ample chances to take them in close proximity.”

“On the other hand if the temperatures are ideal I can fish quickly through an area and show my flies to most of the willing fish without having to repeatedly drill a small pocket to get fish to take. Trout are also more likely to come up through the column to take a suspended nymph or a dry fly during ideal temperatures. During these times I’m more likely to fish a dry fly or dry and dropper to capitalise on the trout’s willingness to move.”

“I will take readings at multiple times throughout the day as the water temperature will change based on the conditions. Unless you are close to a dam or tail water you can expect the temperature to rise significantly on a sunny day. The amount of variation depends on a lot of factors, such as stream shading, sun angle, volume of the water, and stream width to depth ratio.”

“In my experience the last and most important change to trout behaviour in relation to temperature is the water types where fish hold. It has long been postulated that the ripples and fast water areas of the river are the food production zones within a stream, while the pools and slow water areas are the food sinks. A recent paper by Sean Naman et al (2017) demonstrated this theory definitively. They found that macroinvertebrate drift within riffles was 3½ times higher than within pools. In addition, macroinvertebrate size was higher within riffles as well.”

“So not only is food higher in quantity in riffle habitat, but the prey is higher in quality as well. So why don’t trout inhabit riffles all the time? Remember from our discussion above that trout metabolic rates slow significantly in colder water. At these rates they may not be able to digest food quickly enough to make it energetically profitable to inhabit the riffles and faster currents where they must expend more energy to hold station.”

“During colder times there is enough food in slow, deep currents to supply their energetic needs, and these areas also provide refuge from overhead predators while they are in energy-conservation mode. However, as the water warms, trout will spread out into faster water to take advantage of the increase in food availability.”

This is but a very small selection of what I’ve found to be a very informative book. In the following pages Devin describes his tactics in detail for a variety of stream temperatures and stream conditions. But my space has run out. And I already have names of fishing compatriots who want me to hurry up with my reading so they can borrow the book.

>>>

Am I going to catch more fish next season now that I am so much more educated? Let's not get too carried away. But in the winter months, with the streams closed and the weather bleak outside, this much I know – a good book can fill those

winter evenings and create a host of new fishing hopes and opportunities in our imaginations.

Best wishes,
Lyndon



VFFA Offering Columbia Shirts –



Designed for fishing with vented rear panels for maximum comfort. The PFG signature stands Performance Fishing Gear! Best fabrics and design for most fishing environments.

The VFFA is celebrating this release with a special offer for each shirt purchased – it is offering a free VFFA Cap, normally sold for \$15.

Shirts are in sizes S, M, L, XL & XXL.

A brochure is included in this *Fly Lines* edition explaining the order process for members.

The Columbia PFG shirts are in Blue and Khaki:



FISH EASY

Lightweight and durable, this Relaxed Fit fishing shirt dries fast. Built in UV protection keeps the sun off your back.

COOLING

Mesh-lined back vents let a cooling breeze in and out in the hottest conditions.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Four chest pockets offer plenty of room for small gear. The roll-up sleeves can be secured with tabs. The rod holder frees up your hands.

- Omni-Shade UPF 30 provides maximum protection for long hours in the sun
- Hidden vents at shoulders add bonus breathability
- Quick dry
- Relaxed fit

For ordering by email: merchandise@vffa.org.au with size, colour and payment details as given on the brochure.

This Month's Yarn ...

(... from October, 1961)

"Tell me, have you ever done any serious competition fly casting?" asked Terry of McTaggart, while pushing another \$20 note across the counter to replenish the lunch glasses.

"Not recently," replied McTaggart, "but your question reminds me of some good casting I did some years ago that didn't quite produce the reward it should have done. I was fishing with an old mate of mine, Joe Haslauer, in the Big River near Enoch's Point. We had come to a smooth, shallow stretch of water when Joe pointed to an old submerged truck tyre he had spotted near the far bank. This evidently reminded Joe of the hoops he used to put out for the casting competitions at the President's Casting Days. So he challenged me: "I'll bet you a tenner you can't land your fly in the middle of that tyre first go.

So he challenged me: "I'll bet you a lobster you can't land your fly in the middle of that tyre first go."

Naturally I took him up, and yes, I did land the fly, first cast, right in the centre of the tyre. But we were both quite startled when a trout, racing out from nowhere, took the fly. Instinctively I struck and hooked it. It immediately darted inside the tyre casing and then swam round and round in circles in ever-increasing velocity."

"I didn't know what to do. I couldn't see the trout of course, but kept the line as tight as I could, which was apparently the wrong thing, because after about a minute the line suddenly went slack and I lost the fish. It had worn through the leader by rubbing it against the edge of the tyre casing as it raced round in circles."

"But Joe, being the great guy he is, still handed over the note.

Important notices:

The Bruce Whitehead Challenge

This event is now a fixture in the VFFA calendar, so again this year members from Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club and the VFFA will gather in Camperdown in Western Victoria on the last weekend in June to brave the elements and try to extract some sizeable trout from Lakes Purrumbete or Bullen Merri.

Details of this event and the NOE were given in the April issue. Members interested in participating should phone Hughie Maltby on 0423 283 079 for all the details.

The Revival of Sunday casting

As indicated in our last issue the Sunday Casting program is being reinvigorated. As an initial trial we will hold the first of



Sunday casting was always a very pleasant social occasion

these on Sunday, June 23. Hughie Maltby has very bravely volunteered to organise the event, with Joe Haslauer assisting.

Casting will begin at 10:00 am at the Red Tag pool in Fairfield and finish at >>>



Some serious casting happening here



Hughie, Wayne and Dermot preparing and enjoying lunch



Joe keeping an informed eye on Mike's presentation

about 1:00 pm. Tea and coffee will be available, and a barbecue lunch is being organised. In the past these days have been very pleasant social occasions – an opportunity to gather with friends, enjoy lunch together, and practice some casting - possibly with a fabulous rod that a friend is willing to loan you.

VFFA members and family visit to Snobs Creek Hatchery on September 15

This event is some months away, but early notice is important. The formal NOE for this event will be included in next month's newsletter, but the details are briefly as follows:

The Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snobs Creek Hatchery has produced fish for recreational fisheries and conservation stockings for more than 70 years. The hatchery produces trout, salmon and native fish, and is responsible for their release into Victorian waterways. In 2017-18 the VFA stocked over 1.2 million salmonids of which over 3,000 were brook trout, 630,000 were brown trout, 539,000 were rainbow trout, and the remainder (some 2,900) were Chinook salmon.

VFFA members and family are invited for a private tour of the hatchery with Neil



This confounded motor used to work

Hyatt, Salmonid Supervisor. This very interesting tour will start at 11:00am and take about one to one and a half hours. We will finish with a barbecue lunch at the pond as guests of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

Attendees are limited to about 30 or so, so please register ASAP when the NOE is given in next month's issue of *Fly Lines*. Interested partners, children and grandchildren are all welcome.

Snobs Creek Hatchery is located at 455 Goulburn Valley Highway, Eildon 3713, and the date is Sunday, September 15, meeting at 10:30am.

Note that the drive there is about two and a half hours from Melbourne CBD.



Casting from the dock is an alternative

Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club Centenary Dinner 2019

The Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club is holding its Centenary Dinner on Saturday, August 31. The venue for this significant event is the Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre in Ballarat.

Information can be obtained from Shane Stevens – 0408 179 927.

Or - www.trybooking.com/496586



Trees for Trout on the Macalister

On Saturday, June 1, a keen contingent of concerned trout fishers made the long drive to the Macalister River near Licola. From Melbourne it was a good three hour drive, though in fact eager tree planters came from all over the region. There were members (ladies and gents) from the Bairnsdale, Sale, and Southern Fly Fishing clubs. It's good to report that

the VFFA was also well represented, with one member travelling from Geelong to be part of the team. The final group of habitat restorers numbered about 35.

The tree planting was organized by the Australian Trout Foundation working with West Gippsland CMA, the Arthur Rylah Institute and DELWP. Much of the early preparation had been done >>>



The Macalister is a very attractive trout stream here by Matt Bowler from the West Gippsland CMA assisted by the Sale Fly Fishing Club.

Special thanks are due to the landowners of Glenfalloch station, 3 km south of Licola, where the tree planting was done. Karen, the manager, briefed the group on conservation works that had already been completed.

Glenfalloch has river frontage of some 50 kilometres (including the river banks on both sides). The station owners have generously provided access for conservation-minded anglers, which is greatly appreciated, as they do not normally allow any public access due to issues of OH&S, past littering, disturbance of stock, and animal risks. However, due to a special relationship with fly fishers they have agreed to put a stile over the fence (in an inconspicuous position) that will allow fly fishers access to the river without the need to contact the station. The river has been stocked with rainbow trout for many years, but this year brown trout will also be stocked.



Karen, manager at the station, outlined some of the earlier habitat restoration work

We gathered at 9:30am on a gorgeous stretch of the Macalister. Conditions were ideal, with light cloud dispersing to give us a pleasant sunny day. The task was to plant 500 Australian native trees, shrubs and grasses along a section of the river that had suffered from bushfires and floods.

It was easy work, as the holes where the trees were to be planted had been dug the previous day, and the eager planters had the 500 trees safely interred in no time at all. Matt Bowler's daughter Rosie planted 21 trees. Well done Rosie. The group then gathered on the banks of the river when Renae Ayres (a scientist from ARI) and Matt Bowler described the benefits to the fishery of installing snags back in the river and planting trees along the banks.

Then the barbecue lunch arrived – towed in behind a large 4WD. Steak and sausages and salad on plates with cutlery and plenty of buttered bread, along with drink and sweets – these CMAs know how to feed their volunteers.

A very keen and motivated group of conservationist anglers had worked together to restore the health of our waterways and fisheries. It doesn't get much better than that. It was a great day, well spent.



Getting through the fence to gain access to the property was a challenge for us all, as Terry George (ATF president) discovered



Hard at work planting trees



David Hooke was one of our VFFA members helping with the planting



Even your editor made an attempt – I hope it survived



Just some of the VFFA members who were there to help. The young lady on the left was Renae Ayres, a scientist with the ARI.

>>>



Nice water – it was very clear and running beautifully



Philip Leslie, a VFFA member, came to help



The tree planters – delighted to be finished



The catering truck with barbecue attached





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P.O. Box 1380 Warrnambool 3280

OFFICIAL INVITATION TO THE 2019
WARRNAMBOOL FLY FISHERS' CLUB INC.
52nd FISH AND GAME DINNER

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 52nd Fish and Game Dinner, to be held on Saturday, July 20, at the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion on Grafton Road, Warrnambool.

This year the cost is again \$80/person.

This event is a BYO wine and beer night. Before dinner drinks with deep-fried crumbed abalone and white bait will begin at 6:00pm, and we will sit for the first course at 7:00pm for the start of what will undoubtedly 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 - jtblakeslee@westvic.com.au, or by calling me at 0437 983 421 before July 15 to book a seat if you/they will be attending.

Since this is our one and only fund raiser for the Club we want to fill every available seat, so trust that people who book a seat and say they are coming will show up on the night. If you need to cancel your booking please let us know ASAP so that your place can be offered to others. There is a capacity limit of 70 persons at the Warrnambool Racing Club Pavilion, and as places will start filling up fast, a prompt response is recommended.

Jim Blakeslee
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Some Fly Fishing Books To Read Before You Die

... Alan Pilkington

“I still don’t know why I fish or why other men fish except that we like it, and that it makes us think and feel.”
(Roderick Haig Brown)

The river of our fly fishing literature runs broad and deep. There are fly fishing books for the head and the heart, some helpful, others thoughtful. Some are ancient, others prosaic; many are exciting and stimulating, while some are maddeningly detailed or complicated. It’s said that more books have been written about fly fishing than any other sport. And on the face of it, that may seem strange as ours is an avocation enjoyed by a relatively small number of people, usually pursued alone, only rarely competitively or as a spectator sport.

So, why? Why is it that this exotic, limited activity, practiced alone and unobserved, in out-of-the-way places, has produced more literature, it is said, than all other sports combined?

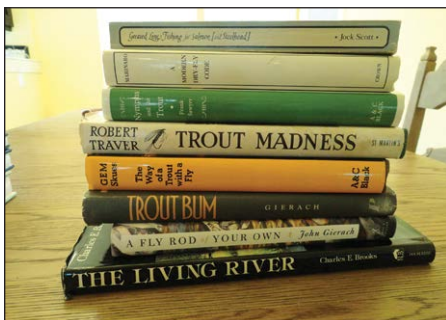
(Exotic, you ask? Well, you have to admit that standing in water, in the rain, casting bits of fur and feathers tied on tiny hooks attached to gossamer, to fish whose brains are the size of a pea, fish you sometimes can’t even see, and, if they do fall for it and you’re not hungry, releasing them



and then trying catch them over again, is a bit on the exotic side of the behavioral ledger.)

I have to admit, I am a collector. I once wrote a story titled *The Collecting Gene*, detailing my malady, and, yes, this condition extends to fly fishing books, as well as books on and by Ernest Hemingway and books in general, to vintage Hardy fly fishing reels, split bamboo fly rods, European shotguns, Winchester and Mauser sporting rifles, custom knives, vintage Plumb axes, recurve bows and arrows, and so on.

In my library of over 1,200 books at least 200 are about fly fishing. Most of these I’ve read, or at least attempted to read; some many times over. In the foreword of one by an American angler from the early 1900s he tells of a New York salmon and trout angler who possessed 10,000 books on the subject! So while my angling



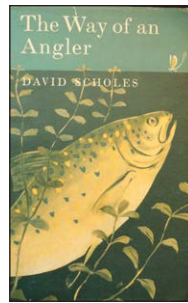
library is modest, it is big enough to give me a seat at the table, a taste, a basis for a point of view. It should be, but is not, catalogued, except in my head where it falls into two broad but invariably overlapping categories: books about fishing lives, feelings and experiences on the one hand, and detailed and more esoteric books on the other.

The second category, the esoterica, is more easily dealt with. It includes the how-to, where-to, what-with category, so I'll tackle that first. This bucket holds thousands of books. My library has dozens of them, mostly fascinating, including some of the bedrock literature of our pursuit. Many were written long ago, but not invariably, as we are still learning. They include Alfred Ronald's *The Fly Fisherman's Entomology* (1836); F.M. Halford's *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice* (1889); G.E.M. Skues' *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream* (1910) and *The Way of a Trout with a Fly* (1921), George M. La Branche *The Dry Fly and Fast Water* (1914), one of the early United States treatises on the floating fly; and *Modern Trout Dressing*, by Roger Wooley (1932).

Writers have addressed whole fly fishing techniques, like A.H.E. Wood in his 1930 landmark, *Greased Line Fishing for Salmon*, detailing a casting and angling method still used for Atlantic and Pacific salmon, and by steelhead anglers in the Pacific Northwest, albeit by a different name, where they now talk of 'fishing on the swing'. And speaking of new techniques, we are seeing a slew of books on Czech nymphing, but I haven't gone there yet. I think I'm too old, am probably unteachable, and have no room left on my bookshelves anyway.

Some writers record their lives on a single stream. In *Where the Bright Waters Meet* (1924), Harry Plunkett Cole romances a charming English stream, the Bourne, as

does Charles Brooks in *The Living River* (1979), his intimate profile of the fabled Madison River which rises in Yellowstone Park in the central Rockies.



Closer to home we have David Scholes' wonderful works, including *Fly Fisher in Tasmania* (1961) and *The Way of an Angler* (1963), and R.H. Wigram's *Tasmania's Fishing Miracle - The Shannon Rise* (1953), without which no history of Australian fly fishing would be complete. Likewise, there is a place for Andrew Mossman's recent *My Fly Fishing Life* (2017), with his engaging account of his lifelong passion for figuring out flies that work and how and where to fish them.

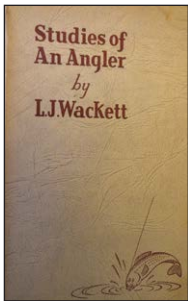
There is a rich literature from across the Tasman. I'm sometimes transported back to the glory days, reading George Ferris's *Fly Fishing in New Zealand* (1954), and reliving my days on the Tongariro via Peter Gould's *The Complete Taupo Fly Fishing Guide* (1981). Zane Grey's *Tales of An Angler's Eldorado - New Zealand* (1926) is worth perusal. I'm fortunate to have a first edition, and while principally about marlin and tuna, he talks (with photos) of his monster trout on the swung fly in North Island rivers. He had cut his teeth on steelhead on the Rogue and North Umpqua Rivers in Oregon and knew what he was doing.

In writing this essay I found a letter buried in Gould's book from Ed Heaney, a guide I fished the Tongariro with in the early 1980s. Ed was a Scotsman, then in his mid-sixties, who had once tied flies for Orvis in Vermont, but was drawn to waters Down Under. He introduced me to a killer caddis pattern at a >>>

time when the changeover from 'lures' (streamers) was just starting, and later to a simple claret seal's fur nymph with a thicker lump for a thorax, a long pheasant's tail tail, tied on a #12 long-shanked hook and ribbed with copper wire, and which, with some variations, I have fished ever since on four continents.

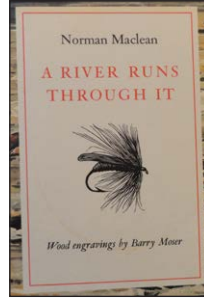
There have been hundreds of books following in these footsteps; books about specific insects, where Gary La Fontaine's *Caddis Flies* (1981) is a fine example, or classes of flies, where *The Dry Fly* (1990), also by La Fontaine, is as good an American example of its kind as there is, along with Vince Marinaro's *A Modern Dry Fly Code* (1950), as is Frank Sawyer's English classic, *Nymphs and The Trout* (1958).

Vince Marinaro's 1976 book, *In The Ring Of The Rise*, dealing with trout behavior has had many relatives before and since, including one of my favourites, Datus Proper's *What the Trout Said* (1987). I suppose into this general bucket we'd put Fadge Griffith's *The Lure of Fly Tying* (1978), along with the various early Veniard volumes on fly tying, from which many anglers (including my brother John) taught themselves to tie, before the days of YouTube, or of fathers, uncles or brothers who knew enough to teach them.



And that little Australian classic, *Studies of An Angler* (1950), by L.J. Wackett, which opened my eyes to the question of the effects of barometric pressure on fishing success, and still makes me wonder how far we've come in the nearly seventy

years since it was written. Not far, I sometimes think.



We now come to my second big bucket of fly fishing books and stories, those with a more literary inclination. Some of this literature is the finest written about any sport, even transcending sport as a subject, like *A River Runs Through*

It (1976), Norman Maclean's haunting tale of a father and his sons, of brotherhood and the outdoors, held together by a river and the purity of fishing it with the dry fly.

It opens with these words, no doubt familiar to many of you, "In our family there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing. We lived at the junction of great trout rivers in western Montana, and our father was a Presbyterian minister and a fly fisherman who tied his own flies and taught others. He told us about Christ's disciples being fishermen, and we were left to assume, as my brother and I did, that all first-class fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were fly fishermen, and that John, the favourite, was a dry fly fisherman."

McLean's novella's moving final paragraph is probably the fly fishing reading I return to most often: "Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by rivers."

Some of the stories I love about fly fishing are not really about fly fishing at all. When Ernest Hemingway was a young man, having returned home injured in battle as an ambulance driver in Italy in WW1, he spent time recovering on a trek to Michigan's Upper-Peninsular, and fished the Fox River with grasshoppers on a fly rod. This story is told in *The Big Two Hearted River* in the semi-autobiographical Nick Adams Stories (1925). It is less about fishing than it is about solitude, self-reliance, independence and physical and emotional recovery.

Or, if in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), you follow Jake Barnes and his friend Bill's hot summer journey from Pamplona to the Spanish Pyrenees to fish for trout on the Irati River, you discover a story of the rejuvenating quality of nature, mountains and rivers, as well as mateship (my word), contrasting them with the mania of the running of the bulls or the café society of Paris in the 1920s. And, as a trout fisherman, you are with Ernie all the way, even though he fishes with worms while Bill, his friend, fishes a wet McGinty, we assume, but are not told, across and down.

One's own past experiences and memories can be easily rekindled by a great writer walking a similar path. I had one long hike with my brother John to Enoch's Point to fish the Big River in Victoria in a 100 degree plus January day in the late 1950s - ten miles along a mountain track then unsealed, rough, rocky, dusty and dry.

From here I move to perhaps my favorite writer, Roderick Haig Brown. An Englishman by birth, he spent most of his life in British Columbia as a fly fishing and children's book writer, as well as a naturalist, a conservationist, a jurist, an early and eloquent advocate of protecting

salmon and wild fisheries, and for a period, Chancellor of the University of British Columbia. He lived on the Fraser River on Vancouver Island in his home, Above Tide.

A prolific writer, his *Return to the River* (1941), and *A River Never Sleeps* (1946) are classics, as are his four-volume seasonal collection, *A Fisherman's Spring (...and, Summer, Winter and Fall, 1951-1964)*. These latter four tell intimate stories of the seasons with which we are so familiar and into which we can transpose our own seasonal fly fishing experiences, as in a different way, does the gifted Australian writer Philip Weigall, in *Fishing Season* (2009).

Among the many Haig Brown quotes, this is among the ones I like best: "A river is water in its loveliest form; rivers have life and sound and movement and infinity of variation, rivers are veins of the earth through which the lifeblood returns to the heart."

If Haig Brown appeals to the serious side of my heart, John Gierach, appeals to my lighter side. A nearish neighbor of mine for many years in Colorado we would sometimes cross paths on the Frying Pan River in the Roaring Fork Valley where his best mate, A.K. Best, lives. Also prolific, Geirach entered most of our lives in 1986 with *Trout Bum*, a contemporary look at fly fishing and what it's like to be an addicted fly fisherman. Thirty plus years and seventeen books later, he's still at it. His 2017, *A Fly Rod of Your Own*, is as readable, entertaining and knowledge-filled as his first. As with Roderick Haig Brown, your fly fishing reading is not complete without at least one Gierach book, and as with Haig Brown, there are plenty to choose from.

Of the fly fishing quotes I like, the following one from Robert Traver's >>>

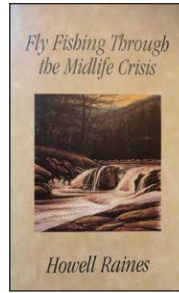
Trout Madness (1960), is one of the most insightful and memorable, for me at least. Talking of why he likes fly fishing, he writes: “..because trout do not lie or cheat and cannot be bought or bribed or impressed with power, but respond only to quietude and patience and endless humility..”

It is no surprise then, to learn that these words come from a writer who became a Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. Robert Traver was the pseudonym of John D. Voelker, whose experience as a criminal prosecutor obviously informed him as the author of the acclaimed novel, *Anatomy of a Murder* (1958). His second fly fishing book, *Trout Magic* (1974), is told with the same wry humour as the first. I can see Traver sitting around the evening fire of an Australian fly fisherman’s cabin, bourbon glass in hand, trading semi-truths and joking with his buddies, who he’d be calling his “mates” after the first five minutes.

A few more worth mentioning; the Frenchman Charles Ritz’s *A Fly Fisher’s Life* (1959) should be required reading for all in the craft. Acclaimed as one of the most important fly fishing books, of which the accomplished English fly fishing writer Bernard Venables said, “Once in a very long while ... comes a book on angling ... that takes its place among the few, truly outstanding books of all ... filled with splendid stuff. A great book by a great angler.” Hemingway described the work as “... a mine of true information for anyone with the desire and intelligence to work it.” Enough said.

Arnold Gingrich wrote the introduction to Ritz’s *A Fly Fisher’s Life*. Gingrich, an American editor, writer and publisher, founded *Esquire* magazine in 1932, and published the works, among others, of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Scott Fitzgerald, Truman

Capote and Norman Mailer. He was also a dedicated fly fisherman and has graced its literature with *The Well-Tempered Angler* (1965), and *The Joys of Trout* (1973), both of which engagingly describe the lifestyle and language of the American gentleman angler of the mid-20th century.



A book I encourage you to read, and if you have, to read again, is Howell Raines’ *Fly Fishing Through the Midlife Crisis* (1993). It is as much a collection of essays, and Raines, editor of the editorial page of *The New York Times* when he

published it, talks of his experiences and among other things about what he sees as the central question in fly fishing – “what do we seek when we fish with the most fragile of rods in the most difficult waters we can find.” In his opening chapter he observes, “Since the birth of Christianity, fish have symbolized immortality,” and he goes on from there.

If the editor allowed me more space I could go on, and I’d talk about Theodore Gordon, Dana Lamb, Sparse Grey Hackle (Alfred W. Miller), Eugene V. Connett, Lee Wulff, Steve Raymond, Trey Coombes, Thomas McGuane, Edward Hewitt and others, not to mention books of the world’s trout and salmon from Robert Behnke, brilliantly illustrated by Joseph Tomelleri and James Proseck. Perhaps another time. My thirty five years living in the United States has biased my selection towards fly fishing books that originated here, which in no way suggests any superiority of them over others of a different origin, especially from England, Scotland, France, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But I find it a happy inclination

to be nearer the source of their rivers and their writing.

And finally, kept deliberately till last, is our lodestar, Izaak Walton's and Thomas Cotton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653). I am blessed to have three middle-aged editions, dated between 1836 and 1856. Izaak got it right when he wrote its subtitle – *The Contemplative Man's Recreation*.

Ours is an avocation, a recreation, less of a sport; we pursue it to enrich our minds and our souls, to challenge ourselves, to be closer to water and clouds, to trees and the grasses at streamside, closer to them sometimes than to the fish we pursue, but really, above all, to be closer to ourselves.



The Huge Uncatchable Bonefish Of Aitutaki

... John Philbrick



A solid Aitutaki bonefish

This is not a story about the bonefish that I caught on my recent trip to Aitutaki. It is a story about a bonefish that I did not catch, and which almost certainly will never be caught. It came briefly into my life on the large flat near the motu

(Island) of Rapota in Aitutaki Lagoon. I was in a boat being guided by Tia Davey who laconically said "Bonefish at 9 o'clock 10 metres".

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... and another heavy Aitutaki bone

And there it was - the bonefish of fishermen's dreams. I had just made a cast of sixty feet at a bonefish that drifted away out of sight. It is impossible to pick up sixty feet of intermediate sink-tip line. I frantically tried to retrieve enough line so that I could lift it off the water and take a shot at the bonefish, but in my haste the fly became hopelessly tangled around the rod. I looked on helplessly at this fish as it slowly moved away. I have never seen a bonefish with sharper definition. It was huge. I have caught many large bonefish in Aitutaki, but this fish dwarfed all of them.

How big was this bonefish. Tia said that it was as long as from the butt of my Sage #9 rod to the second runner. This is a distance of nearly four feet. If this estimate is correct, the bonefish would have weighed more than 20 pounds. The current world record bonefish was caught off Bimini in 1971 and weighed 16 pounds.

At first sight this makes Tia's estimate highly improbable. But is it? Itu Davy, his twin brothers Tia and Rua, and his father Richard netted bonefish for decades

before Itu converted and started a highly successful bonefish guiding operation. Itu and Richard maintain that they have netted bonefish weighing over 20 pounds. How could this claim be reconciled with the world record being a relatively modest 16 pounds?

I believe Itu and Richard. I saw this fish very clearly and I believe my eyes. But if such leviathans live in the Aitutaki Lagoon, why aren't they caught? Over the next five weeks I had plenty of time to mull over this question as tropical storm after tropical storm lashed the island, making fishing impossible. I think that the answer is that the bigger bonefish live in the deeper water and rarely move onto the flats. And if perchance they do, the chances of seeing one, let alone hooking and landing it, are very slim.

The flats of the lagoon are studded with coral heads. A bonefish of this size would take out 150 metres or more of line, making it almost inevitable that the line would be cut on a coral head. Thus fish of this size are rarely, if at all, hooked and are inevitably lost. There is no point in using heavy leaders as the larger bonefish

are spooky and difficult to deceive. It is difficult enough to induce a bonefish in Aitutaki to take your fly when you're using a 15 or 20 pounds breaking strain tippet, let alone much stronger nylon.

But perhaps, sooner or later, some angler might get lucky. In 2012 on an earlier visit to Aitutaki I was staying at Ranginuis Retreat. A Canadian, Brad Kukkow, was also staying there. Day after day, Brad fished the edge of the drop off from the flat near the Aitutaki Lagoon Resort. He rarely caught a bonefish.

However one momentous day a large bonefish moved out of the deeper water on to the edge of the flat. Brad was in the right spot at the right time and cast a Yellow Clouser at this fish, and it took the fly. Somehow he managed to land it. The occupant of a passing boat took a photo of the fish with Brad's camera. Brad estimated it weighed 17 pounds.

I had a copy of that photo but have misplaced it. My estimate is that the fish would have weighed no more than 12-15 pounds. This is a very heavy bonefish, but it is problematic whether he would have landed that fish had it weighed 20 pounds.

Aitutaki is a beautiful place. Tony Wheeler, who founded Lonely Planet with his wife, rates Aitutaki as "the most beautiful island in the world". The local Polynesian people are friendly, happy, fun loving and contented. There seems to be an almost total absence of the rules and regulations that have increasingly strangled western society over the past five decades. Yet everyone gets on well and life runs smoothly. The Aitutaki bonefish are large but difficult to catch. And there is a chance that you could prove me wrong and land the world record bonefish.



Our beautiful lunch spot on One Foot Island



Barbel On The Dry In Spain

... from John Philbrick. Recent issues of our newsletter have discussed the merits of fishing for carp with flies. We have also frequently reported on saltwater fly fishing adventures by some of our members. Well, here is another species that can be taken on a fly. In this fine article by John Philbrick, an acknowledged master of polaroiding Tasmania's highland lakes, he describes his adventures catching barbel on dry flies in Spain.

The polaroider's curse is clouds. So, it was a joy to fish for barbel in La Serena in the Extremadura region of Spain. La Serena is located about 350 kilometres south west of Madrid in the Extremadura region. In late May the atmosphere is very clear and the summer weather is stable with day after day of warm, sunny days. Over the course of 50 years of polaroiding for trout I have never enjoyed this luxury. La Serena is a polaroider's paradise.

La Serena is a large artificial lake which is not dissimilar in both size and configuration to Victoria's Eildon Weir. In the warmer months of the year the Spanish barbel cruise around the rocky edges of the lake surface feeding on terrestrials. This feeding behaviour is markedly different from that of their cousins, the British barbel, which live in rivers and are bottom feeders.

For eight days in the blazing sun I fished perched in a swivel chair at the front of a small boat. My guide Carlos used an electric motor to skilfully move



Carlos holding a barbel from La Serena

the boat along slowly about 40 feet from the edge while we both looked for cruising fish. Having never seen a barbel before I didn't know what to expect. It was soon apparent that the barbel of La Serena behaved like trout and when polaroided looked like trout. Indeed, I couldn't see any difference until I got the fish close to the boat.

Carlos was a congenial companion and a highly skilled guide, although his English vocabulary was extremely limited. When I rose my first barbel he loudly shouted "Clap". This was very confusing, but I soon worked out that this meant "Strike". He also introduced me to the concept of "the sinking fish", whatever that is.

The barbel were prolific. The two constants were the blazing sun and the cruising barbel. If I botched a fish there would always be another appearing a minute or so later. And I botched plenty.



A smaller darker barbel from Lake Zujar

The problem was that I missed three out of every four barbel that rose to my fly.

After a day or so it all came together. I landed 44 fish in a day, including 24 in the morning session, all on the one fly. I used a foam grasshopper pattern tied by Carlos. It appeared to be indestructible and unsinkable. I followed this up the following day with 41 fish, including 29 in the morning session. These catches astounded Luis, the operator of the guiding enterprise, who at the beginning of my first day had given me a beginner's lecture on how to polaroid barbel, including an instruction to "cast the fly in front of the fish"! I rose so many fish over the course of those two days that Carlos did a lot of clapping!

I also spent a day fishing Zújar Lake. This is a much smaller impoundment than La Serena and contains two different sub-species of barbel along with black bass and pike. To my surprise there were gum trees on the shores of Zújar. I caught a darker sub-species of barbel on the dry fly. These

fish were smaller and less voracious than their cousins in La Serena. We also tried for Black Bass with a size #10 rod and a small popper, but did not get any takes. Apparently the other sub-species of barbel in La Serena are very aggressive and will occasionally take a popper.

The barbel in La Serena weighed between 1 - 2 kilograms and were hard fighters. There were the occasional partially submerged skeletal remains of small trees studded around the edges of the lake and the barbel were fond of entwining themselves and my line in them. This invariably led to the loss of the barbel and the fly.

Early on Carlos asked me what the English word for them was and I told him "snags". He couldn't pronounce snags - it always came out as "snakes". On one particular snake I almost lost half of my Sage #5 rod in addition to the barbel. Carlos was keen to retrieve the fly and manipulated the rod vertically to try to free it. Unfortunately he only succeeded in separating the



Another barbel from La Serena

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last two sections of my rod which were submerged three feet down the trunk of the “snake”. This was followed by a lot of panic, but after 30 minutes Carlos eventually recovered the missing joints and we resumed fishing.

The fishing was relentless and exhausting, not the least due to the strange and unusual eating habits of the Spaniards. Each day we returned to the shore at about 2pm for a hearty three-course lunch. There were even hammocks for a post prandial siesta. I would have preferred a half-hour break for a sandwich and a cool drink in the boat and resuming fishing while the sun was high in the sky, and then a shower and dinner at 8pm at my lodgings, but it was not to be.

We generally returned from the afternoon session at about 7:30 – 8:00 pm and had pre-dinner drinks in the form of cold beer served in frozen mugs and jumbo-sized gin and tonics presented in large red wine glasses. Our thirst was well and truly slaked by the time the three course dinner was served at 9:30 pm. By the time I was finally

taken to my lodgings at about 11:00 pm I was a tired, bloated and sweaty mess.

I ended up with 184 fish. As I averaged a hook up about every three rises this means I rose over 550 barbel during my eight days of fishing. I’ll never see fishing like it again. A churlish critic could observe that this was over the top. I disagree. I spent decades being thwarted by cloud when polaroiding in the lakes and lagoons of Tasmania. For example, I often started fishing at about 10:00 am at the northern end of Penstock Lagoon in cloudless conditions. At around 10:30 am a tiny wisp of cloud would appear in the south-western end of the lagoon. This would progressively increase and by midday there would be close to total cloud cover. This drove me mad for over a decade. The fishing at La Serena gave me something I have never had before and will probably never experience again - the indulgence of perfect polaroiding conditions and a constant parade of fish to cast at for eight consecutive days.



Typical rocky edges of La Serena

Mr Findlay's Water Race

... Bill Jeans

David Scholes' *The Way of an Angler: An appreciation of fly-fishing on many waters* (1963) is a book of reminiscence rather than instruction, although the reader will be educated as much as entertained by his stories of fishing in Victoria, Tasmania, the Monaro, America and Britain. The chapter entitled 'Mr. Findlay's Water-race' was selected for the excellent anthologies by Eric Rolls (*An Anthology of Australian Fishing*) and Jack Pollard (*The Scream of the Reel*).

David prefaces the story with this quote from Eric Taverner's *Salmon Fishing*: 'Man, the Poacher, is an ancient institution and the natural consequence of the establishment of property laws. Let us be fair and admit there is something to be said for the man who goes angling in secret where the law forbids.'

David himself writes, 'Thankful indeed am I that I have tasted the cup of the poacher in such a way, and learnt so greatly from it.'



The young Scholes in action

On the Rubicon at that time there was a grazier named Findlay (they're everywhere), whose property fronted

a lovely stretch of this grand little river, terminated at the lower end by the road to Thornton and extending upstream for several miles. Mr Findlay was an enterprising man and had cut a diversionary channel from the river across the paddocks to his house, where the flow was sufficient to drive a generator supplying the farm with electric power. Thence it ran back to the main stream.

In all, there was a good half-mile of it, perhaps a little more, varying in width from some four feet up to six or eight. Over the years this channel had become a glorious side-water, with undercut banks, overhanging tussocks and a weedy bottom. Some magnificent trout lived in the water-race, a fact which Mr Findlay himself often divulged to the locals. Mr Findlay was a pleasant gentleman, and he liked to do a little fly fishing himself. Provided you were a fly fisher he did not object to you spending the day on his water, but no matter who you might be, he objected most strongly if you went near his water-race, even to look.

David, a teenager at the time, and his friend Fred Stewart had had a poor February on the Rubicon that year, so the dreadful idea of fishing the water-race had some appeal. A quick reconnaissance established that from the house Mr Findlay had practically an uninterrupted view of the surrounds. However they learned from a local that Mr Findlay usually attended church on Sunday, and that gave them enough courage to attempt a foray. To avoid being seen by the trout on that treeless channel, or Mr Findlay, they decided to proceed on all fours.

The first trip was a huge success and resulted in eleven fish of about two pounds each, all of which went into

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the bag. The second trip was equally successful and exciting.

On their third visit they became more brazen in their approach and managed to disturb Mr Findlay, who for some reason had not attended church that day. The game was up. Mr Findlay insisted they leave immediately, never to fish the race again. They apologised profusely and made a bee-line for the river.



The water-race today

Over and above the momentary pleasure of the fishing, and the inevitable outcome of being caught red-handed, the water-race episode had a useful outcome. In David's words:

"This short but spirited burst of fishing might normally have ended here and been nothing else, but for me it was far more—indeed it remains one of the major milestones of all my fishing days. You see, as I crept so awkwardly along the bank on the day of our first attempt, I found myself soundlessly and unconsciously repeating the words, 'Mr. Findlay's water race.' It was something like humming a tune continuously, and then suddenly realising what you are doing. Everyone does this kind of thing, as far as I know,

so I am reasonably sure it is harmless and has no serious implications!

After becoming aware of my little habit, I found that I only lapsed into it again each time I made a cast into the race, perhaps to steady the nervous tension. Then, whenever the fly was taken, I repeated the words once more under my breath before striking, and not a single rise did I miss!"



Inside the wheel shed

Writing in the chapter, David accepts that his mantra is not the be-all and end-all of correctly timing the strike. ('No, not at all, but the results were extremely encouraging.') But he offers it as a mechanism to aid the uncertain angler. 'The worst thing in the world for it is worry,' he writes, 'and the best treatment is a definite procedure. Therefore, for want of something better, I offer "Mr Findlay's water-race" as a likely remedy.'

What became of the old water-race and wheel? Well, it is still there, in a dilapidated state. The channel has long ago silted up and formed side branches, diminishing the main flow. The large wooden wheel, housed in a shed, is falling apart. What a restoration project it would be! It's just waiting to happen, to brighten up the ghost of David Scholes.



FLY OF THE MONTH

... from Ed Herbst - *the Wolf Spider*



Ed, who lives in Cape Town, South Africa, is a well-known and highly respected fly fisher in South Africa. He is also a keen reader of our monthly newsletter, and has provided us with a few Fly of the Month patterns over recent years.

Here are his notes on this pattern.

For many 'Twig Water' anglers in South Africa an imitation of the Wolf Spider, which is common in our streams, is a favoured dry fly.

On the right is a photo of this spider – photo by Charles Griffiths



(Readers can Google Leonard Flemming + Wolf Spider and Peter Brigg + Wolf Spider for more information on the evolution of this pattern.)



There is a chapter on the evolution of the Wolf Spider imitations in the book *South African Fishing Flies*, a copy of which Ed very kindly donated to the VFFA library.

Leonard Flemming's Wolf Spider imitation is shown here on the right:



Peter Briggs' Spider imitation is shown here:

These are complex ties and pheasant tail legs are not durable. I wanted a simpler foam pattern with rubber legs.

Now trout locate their prey by contrast and movement, and Wolf Spiders have more movement than any other insect that is a potential food source because they can run on the water surface.

There is a second reason, founded in trout biology, which explains why this has become a favourite terrestrial.

Gary LaFontaine's book, *The Dry Fly – New Angles*, is full of wisdom based on his scuba and radio tagging studies of trout behaviour.

He makes the point that in fast water, trout are more likely to rise to a wide fly than a narrow one such as a traditional Catskill mayfly imitation:

“In rough water it isn't merely size that controls the trout's acceptance or refusal. A fish here wants a “wide” fly. The lateral dimensions of the body, the flared hair of a downwing, or even the spread of a palmered hackle along the hook shank of a flush-floating pattern, attracts this fish better than a normal upwing fly with a simple, elongated body.” (Page 197)

“A wide fly is, if nothing else, worth the risk of rising. For a trout, curiosity about an uneaten item is reinforced by the value of that helpless, meaty chunk of food.” (Page 255)

This is a wide fly but it is hardly an original concept – *Modern Terrestrials* by Rick Takahashi and Jerry Hubka (Stackpole, 2014) contains 26 arachnid imitations - mostly tied with foam rubber on #10 – 12 hooks.

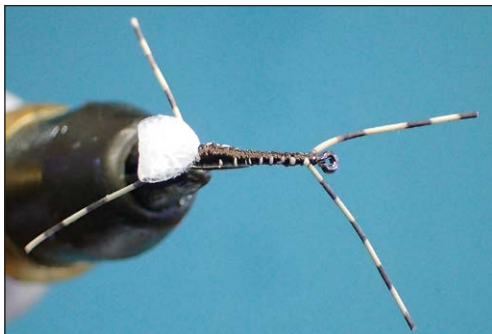
My favourite foam rubber, by far, is Larva Lace. Its greatest advantage is that it is softer and more elastic than other brands, and it also has an attractive sheen.

For the egg sac, which is often a striking characteristic of Wolf Spiders, I prefer ethafoam packing material, which LaFontaine chooses for his Airhead caddis pattern because it contains air bubbles which disperse light.

The key, for me, in designing this pattern was turning the foam rubber strip on its side to form an oval abdomen rather than folding it double with one layer on top of the other.

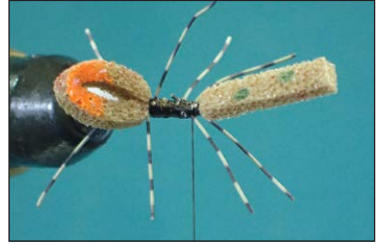
(Stage 1 of the author's foam rubber Wolf Spider imitation:)

To make the fly more visible I coated the top of the abdomen with orange fabric paint and then covered it with a thin layer of UV light-cured resin. For future flies I will add red pearlescent Loon fly tying powder to provide light- reflecting sparkle. Another alternative would be Deer Creek resin in red.



(Stage 2 of the author's Wolf Spider imitation.)

If this sort of fly is tied on a light wire hook, it tends to land on its side.



Dressing:

Hook: #14 TMC 113BLH or Hanak H230 BL

Thread: Brown UTC 70 or Veevus 16/0

Egg sac: Ethafoam or white Larva Lace foam rubber or equivalent

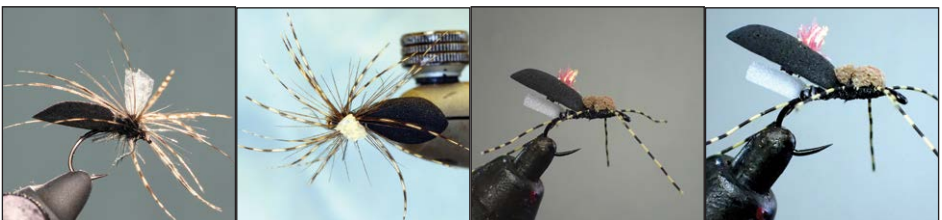
Body: Light brown Larva Lace foam rubber or equivalent.

Legs: Veniard or MFC Centipede legs, small, speckled tan

Tying Steps:

1. Tie in a piece of ethafoam or white Larva Lace foam at the bend of the hook to represent the egg sac.
2. Tie a rubber leg on either side of the hook shank leaving about 1.5 cm to project back from the bend and forward of the hook eye to represent the front and hind legs.
3. Fold the foam rubber strip into a U shape and tie it down just forward of the hook bend to represent the abdomen.
4. Tie a strip of foam rubber projecting forward over the hook eye
5. Tie in two rubber legs at right angles to the hook shank.
6. Fold the rubber strip back to the start of the abdomen to represent the head of the insect, tie down and whip finish.

The trout in the streams near Cape Town probably average 10 inches and this fly was a bit big for them so I changed to the Larva Lace option.



VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2018 Annual Dinner:

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VFFA 2019 meetings & other activities

June

- 1 Saturday ATF Tree Planting Day – “Trees for Trout” - Macalister River
- 10 Monday Last day of river fishing for trout in Victoria. The season closes at midnight.
- 20 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club:
Speaker – Taylor Hunt, VFA Manager of Freshwater Fisheries in Victoria
- 23 Sunday Sunday Casting recommences – 10:00 am at the Red Tag Casting Pool
- 24 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 29 & 30 Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge – VFFA vs Bairnsdale, with accommodation at Camperdown

July

- 18 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club:
Speaker – Rene Vaz from Manic Tackle (New Zealand)
- 20 Saturday Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club Dinner
- 21 Sunday Sunday Casting – 10:00 am at the Red Tag Casting Pool
- 29 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

August

- 23 Friday Annual Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Guest Speaker – Tamie Fraser
- 25 Sunday President’s Casting Day at the Red Tag Casting Pool, commencing at 10:00 am
- 26 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm
- 31 Saturday Ballarat Fly Fishing Club Centenary Dinner

September

- 7 Saturday Opening of the new trout season for rivers in Victoria
- 15 Sunday Visit to Snobs Creek Hatchery
- 19 Thursday VFFA Annual General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club
- 22 Sunday Sunday Casting – 10:00 am at the Red Tag Casting Pool
- 30 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm

October

- 6 Saturday VFFA annual visit to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley Club’s stocked dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers
- 17 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 PM at the Kelvin Club:
Speaker – Chris Wisniewski, from Tasmania’s Inland Fisheries Service
- 28 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm