

# FLY LINES



May 2018

## The May Auction

The May meeting will be our only auction this year of equipment and books. These are always very popular events, and a great opportunity to pick up a top rod or reel for a pittance. Bargains galore.

Hughie Maltby, who is organising the items for sale, and who will be our auctioneer on the night, has given us this note:

“Our May Auction promises to be a special occasion as we will be selling an excellent range of rods, reels, flies, fly tying equipment and materials, along



Thursday, May 17,  
8:00 pm,  
**at the Kelvin Club**  
(in Melbourne Place,  
off Russell Street)

with some modern and also sought-after books.

This equipment is predominantly from the late Richard Salvado and Tony Brothers collections, along with a few other additions.

In all there will be around 100 items going under the hammer, so come along and don't miss out on this once only opportunity to pick up some fond memories of our great mates.”

The printed catalogue was included with our April issue and is included again in this issue.

All members are welcome to join us at 6:15 pm for dinner in the Kelvin Club prior to the meeting, but PLEASE make a booking by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, May 16, by phoning 0498 254 497 and leaving a message.

# THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

**VOL. 66 NO.7 - May 2018**

Organisation No. A0024750J

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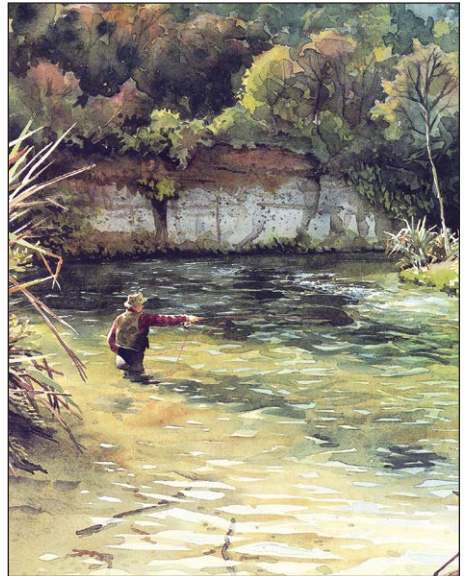
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# Index

The May Auction .....	1	Grayling - An Australian Perspective .....	20
VFFA Office Holders.....	2	Fixing Our Rivers.....	23
New Member.....	3	The April Meeting with Charley May .....	25
President’s Message .....	4	Fly of the Month .....	30
Web Fish.....	5	VFFA Meetings & Activities .....	32
The June Meeting with Terry George from the ATF.....	6		
Chasing Feathered Frogs .....	7		
Vale -Nobuyuki Kawano.....	8		
Fishing the South Island of NZ in February .....	10		
From the Editor’s Desk.....	13		
Secretary.....	16		
Fly Fishing Taranaki, New Zealand .....	17		



*Waitahanui River - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour*

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## A Warm Welcome to a New Member

Again this month we have the great pleasure of welcoming a new member. Brian Rolfe has joined our ranks and is now a member of the VFFA. We trust that his membership brings many years of pleasurable fishing and great memories. Welcome aboard Brian.

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# President's Message

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You know, I've never really thought too much about the relevance of four ounces before, but I have over the last few weeks. Four ounces: that's a quarter of a pound in old avoirdupois or British Imperial terms, or just over 113 grams in today's metric system of weight measurement.

Anyway, whichever system you choose to use, it is not very much. It's about half a cup of sugar or a cup of flour if you are into baking. But if you are into fly fishing four ounces is a very different kettle of, well ... um, fish. It's the difference between winning and losing, particularly if you happen to be trying to defend the Dudley Lee Donger in the annual competition with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club.

And that was the difference between the two teams at the end of the competition recently on the Mitta Mitta River near Omeo. Just four ounces. One-and-a-half pounds to the BFFC versus one-and-a-quarter pounds to the VFFA. Less than a nostril in horse racing parlance.

Try as we might, we just couldn't manage to cross that magical quarter-pound gap and hang on to the Donger for a second year. Who said 'size isn't everything'?

Yet, despite the disappointment of not retaining the Donger and the extremes of weather sent to challenge the competitors, what a great weekend it was. Well, really, it always is. Nine VFFA members made the trek to the BFFC lodge on the Mitta and were not disappointed by the hospitality and friendship of our East Gippsland friends.



Once again, thank-you Bairnsdale for looking after us so well. Under the circumstances, four ounces is nothing ... well, almost nothing. Here's to next year!

Another highlight of my month was the April meeting with guest speaker Charley May. Charley launched her fly fishing guiding business *Charley May Fly Fishing* last August. Just eight months later she came along to the Kelvin Club to tell us all about it.

A mad keen fly fisher, English-born Charley was fishing the Mitta near Omeo a couple of years ago and started to wonder about turning her hobby into a serious guiding business, with a particular emphasis on women. So she sat down and developed a business plan, looked at all the pros and cons, debated the idea with friends, and finally decided to give it a go.

During her presentation, which she appropriately called *Adventure Awaits*, Charley talked about her journey, her guiding experiences, and the challenges and opportunities of getting more women into the sport.

By the time she'd finished I think we'd all made the journey with her, applauding her courage and initiative, and wishing her every success in the future. How refreshing.

The next meeting is always a popular event: the annual auction. Hugh Maltby and Peter Boag have been hard at work co-ordinating the event and have produced a fascinating list of equipment and books for us to bid on. Here's a real chance to snare a bargain rod or reel, or a box of beautifully tied flies, or even to acquire a collectible fly fishing book or two.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Fly Lines* you'll see an advertisement for the position of Secretary of the VFFA. Kevin Finn, our current and very worthy Secretary, is standing down at the end of this VFFA year (the August AGM), so we are urgently seeking someone (or maybe

more than one person) to take over his secretarial duties. The role is not particularly arduous, and it is extremely satisfying to be playing a role such as this and contributing to the smooth operation of our Association.

If you think it might be for you, or you want more information, please contact Kevin and talk it over.

Well I guess that's about it for this month. One good thing is that I actually managed to get out and fish. The Nariel Creek and the Mitta provided me with plenty of sport and some nice fish. If only that one from the Mitta had eaten another four ounces of grasshoppers. Oh well, until next time.



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## Web Fish

Cast regularly at [vffa.org.au](http://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 can be read & saved on iPad / tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities can sync with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos & Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

## The June Meeting with Terry George from the ATF

At the June meeting Terry George will be telling us about the work of the Australian Trout Foundation.

Terry is a VFFA member and has been president of the ATF for some years now. He still runs his own business while at the same time giving hours of his personal free time to the work and projects of the ATF.

He has worked as a part-time fishing guide and knows the trout fishing in the north-east of our state particularly well. He is committed to seeing this north-east fishery, and in fact the trout fishing in all parts of Victoria, flourish and improve.

To give a brief outline of the main topic of his presentation at the June meeting, he says he will be telling us about

“Alleviating the Current Threats to our Victorian Trout Fishery.”

The work of the ATF is not all that well publicised, but Terry’s small ATF team have taken on a surprisingly large number of projects and accomplished quite a bit in the past decade. One especially notable recent ATF project was the purchase of a number of Jordon-Scotty Incubators from Canada. These are a very effective way of stocking streams using fertilised ova. Terry has been installing these in streams in the north-east and Gippsland, and with great success.

So come along on June 21 and support one of our own members who is putting in the hours on our behalf to improve our fishing.



*Terry is a very capable angler*

# Chasing Feathered Frogs

... Dermot O'Brien

The wind rips across the Monaro high plains in South East New South Wales. These rolling mostly treeless plains are frequently buffeted and to describe the winds as cyclonic is no exaggeration. The iron roof on the old shearers' quarters on the high-country sheep station was lucky to stay in place.

This is thirsty country too, and a night of heavy rain barely discernible on the mostly bare earth the next morning.

In March a party of Victorian fly fishers met on the high plains to fish iconic streams, including the Maclaughlin, Bobundra, Kydra, Kybeyan and others. Three VFFA members, Bob Roles, Andy Zarro, myself and Bendigo Fly Fishers Club stalwart Roger Booth arrived, hoping Black Spinners would be the trout's main fare.

The Monaro region has both historic and legendary status among fly fishers and many books and hand-me-down stories lay testament to that fact. The Monaro is not the home of free flowing freestone streams, but rather deeper almost "static" pools with minimal flow. The pools are difficult to polaroid, except in perfect conditions.

These streams of the Monaro provide great conditions for trout and they can be large and wary. The fact that the Monaro is a good fishery once again is largely due to the work of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society and NSW Fisheries who have stocked and brought this fishery back from the brink after years of drought. The fish were sourced from the Gaden hatchery. The fishery is performing well but is fragile. Catch and release is the responsible policy for fly fishers.

Long term VFFA member Bob Roles has fished the region for decades and knows the streams like few others. He has spoken often about quality trout and excellent opportunities for a fly fisher. He says a fish that makes the 2.7 kilo (6 lbs -- a far more "romantic" description) mark is a worthy trophy and quite rare.

In fact he borrows a line from Banjo Patterson and says; "... as rare a thing as a feathered frog."

Big wets rather than dainty dries turned out to be the order of the day on this trip. More's the pity! The last time I fished these streams was 1992 and an eight hour drive only served to enhance my anticipation for what was to come. Several good fish had been taken prior to my late arrival, so the mood in the shearers' quarters was positive and jovial.



*A big smile, Andy Zarro happily displays another excellent fish*

After one fruitless day Andy Zarro and I started spotting for each other when something moved half way up a long dark pool. A couple of tense seconds passed with eyes on the pool waiting for another sign. "There's one coming down the far side of the pool," Andy yelled from the high bank. "Put your fly to the right of the grassy knoll."

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The Woolley Bugger went in that direction and had just one strip before the pool exploded into action, rod doubled over and knots tested. The tussle lasted quite a while.

Finally a brown came to the net and we had to take a second look at the spring balance. A lovely 2.7 kilo or 6 lbs (in the old). To confirm the weight we tried a second spring balance and confirmation indeed. The tape indicated 64.7 cms (25.5 in) from head to tail.

A feathered frog!

While I think champagne fishing is polaroiding and seeing a fish take the dry, it is exciting to see a bow wave chase your wet down a pool.

The fire in the shearers' quarters was witness that night to the re-telling of the story with a not a detail missed.

The day also saw Bob Roles take a beautiful fish just a shade under. In fact all members of the Monaro-2018 party landed quality fish. While many Victorian fly fishermen know the broader region due to Lake Eucumbene these comeback streams close-by are enticing.

Interestingly none of us spotted any streamside litter during our stay and I feel that demonstrates the respect that trout fishers have for the area.

Local properties are big and well spread, so a little advance research is advisable. Permission to fish is mandatory.



*"After an epic battle the big brown "a feathered frog" finally comes to Dermot's net"*

*Photo: Andy Zarro*



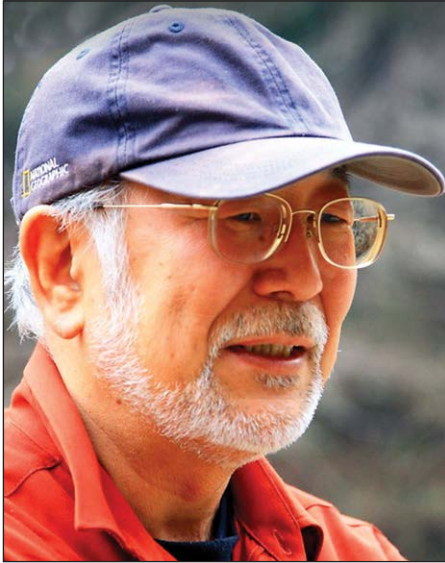
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## Vale Nobuyuki Kawano

A few weeks ago Dr Nobuyuki Kawano, a top Japanese neurosurgeon, died. Nobuyuki Kawano was a Brain Tumor Pathologist, President of Isobe Clinic, and Guest Professor of Neurosurgery at Kitasato University School of Medicine in Japan, though he claimed that his primary occupation was that of a 'fly fisherman'.

"Nobby" as we knew him, came to Australia in 2012 with a friend, Tatsuya, to see Alfred Ronalds' grave in Ballarat. He was keen to see the restored grave as in 2009 he had made a very generous donation towards its restoration. As a very keen fly fisher Nobby had a particular interest in Alfred Ronalds, and had translated the fifth edition of Ronalds' famous book, *The Fly-Fisher's*

*Entomology*, from English to Japanese for publication. Nobby was also the author of a voluminous work entitled “*Fly Fishing Dictionary*” (684 Pages, 208 color pictures, 153 illustrations) - clearly an essential reference for the serious Japanese trout angler.



*Dr Nobuyuki Kawano*

While Nobby and his friend were here in 2012 they were taken by David Featherstone to Ballarat to visit the restored grave and then enjoy some Australian trout fishing. David was quick to report that Nobby and his friend both caught fish, and both demonstrated considerable skill as fly fishers. They were apparently brilliant casters.

At the end of their stay Nobby paid his subscription and joined the VFFA.

Mick Hall enjoyed a warm relationship with Nobby, and wrote this: “We lost Nobuyuki Kawano a couple of days ago. He loved his fly fishing and was known as the Teacher and was much loved and highly respected in his own country. I got to know Nobby through my research into the history of fly fishing, as we shared

this passion. He translated a number of our great classics, these being Halford, Skues and Ronalds into Japanese, and I was fortunate to be able to assist with the translation. For me it was an honour to be able to assist this great man. I will miss his friendship. A sad loss.”

Nobuyuki Kawano was a Doctor of Medicine, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, and Doctor of Philosophy, Kitasato University, Sagamihara. He was a lecturer in neurosurgery at Kitasato University, Sagamihara, Japan, from 1974—1987, and Assistant Professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, 1979—1981. He was Associate Professor of neurosurgery at Kitasato University, Sagamihara, Japan, 1987—2000. He was also President of the Isobe Clinic, Japan, from 2000, and Editor of the *Japanese Association of Brain Tumour Pathology* from 1983.

He is also listed with a number of significant discoveries and medical developments in neurosurgery.

Nobby’s extensive curriculum vitae finishes simply with this:

Other Interests - Fly fishing.



*Nobby fishing in Hokkaido*

# Fishing the South Island of NZ in February

... Jim Blakeslee

My wife, Tricia, and I flew into Queenstown in February this year. We were renting a Britz campervan for a change and touring around, instead of our usual combination of hiking and fishing some of the back country rivers. We were hoping for the cicada hatches and stable weather conditions that we had previously enjoyed at this time of year. But this time it was not to be. Instead, fishing the South Island turned out to be very frustrating and challenging.



*The accommodation – a bit off the beaten track*

Before we got to the South Island there had been a prolonged period of drought and hot weather in early summer, with low water levels in rivers and streams, and even fish kills in some cases. Then, just prior to our arrival there was a lot of rain with rivers flooding and roads washed out in places. The West Coast was particularly hard hit.

This pattern continued during the two weeks we were there, and we experienced heavy rain several times, with just a few days of fine weather in between. The rain and stormy weather was due to the

tail end effects of cyclones moving south before continuing down the length of both islands of New Zealand, with heavy rain falling the length of the country.

I found clear water and had some success fishing the Eglinton River on the way to Milford Sound, as well as a section of the Mararoa River between the Mavora Lakes. But most rivers I was hoping to fish in Southland, including the Oreti, Aparima and Mataura, were running big and brown and unfishable. So I had to look elsewhere if I wanted to cast a fly.

I knew that if we travelled north into the rain-shadow McKenzie Country around Twizel I could still manage some good fish from still water and spring creeks that I hoped would be clear. However a lot of other anglers, visitors as well as locals, that I spoke to at the shopping centre in Twizel were finding it tough going, too, and it seemed many of us had ended up drawing the same conclusion. Some had bailed out of the West Coast, while others, like me, had escaped a soggy Southland. Some had even driven down from the flooded north end of the island in search of fishable water.

One of the notable things, aside from the weather and river conditions, was the lack of insect life this year. There were NO cicadas, and almost no mayflies or caddis on the water. There was no morning or evening rise. I couldn't even find any fish sipping willow grubs falling on the water under the trees. So that meant that any fish that I might find in a river would probably be hugging the bottom behind a "dinner-plate" rock taking nymphs, so my best chance of

catching one of them meant that I had to polaroid them first.

And that's what I did. Once a fish was spotted I would cast a weighted nymph upstream of it and, since I don't usually use a strike indicator, I would watch the behaviour of the fish carefully for any sign that it had taken the fly. Any deviation of the fish to the side or up from its holding position and I would instantly lift my rod tip in the hope of a hook-up.

When I fished a lake or pond there were very few rises to indicate the whereabouts of a fish, so once again, I would put on my trusty polaroids and try to spot a fish on patrol. I would rig a nymph (usually a scud or a small water boatman pattern) suspended below a dry fly and cast it several metres ahead of the fish. I would then watch the behaviour of the fish as well as any sign of movement of the leader indicating a take. It would have been much easier and more interesting if a fish had come up and taken the dry from time to time, but that didn't happen. I had to work hard for all my fish. I had to look for them, then stalk them, then cast carefully, and if I spooked one, then find another fish and try again.

I had hoped to fish the upper reaches of the Ahuriri River, but it was still high and coloured. So, we fished the Ahuriri Tarns instead. One particularly memorable fish was working a beat, back and forth, around the edge of a willow in one of the tarns. I watched, trying to work out what he was taking.



*Conditions were tougher than normal, but Jim still managed to find some top fish*



*A magnificent brown from the Ahuriri Tarns*

From previous experience I had found that fish in still waters around Twizel often feed on small water boatmen. When I looked in the shallows at my feet I saw hoards of them. So I tied on a #16 Tellico nymph (my go-to fly when they are on boatmen), and suspended it a couple feet under a Parachute Adams.

Next time I saw the fish coming my way I cast the brace of flies in its path. A few seconds later the Adams was pulled under and I struck. The fish had taken the nymph and was hooked fast. What turned out to be a hefty >>>

buck brownie cartwheeled through the air and raced off towards the other side of the tarn. It leapt again, then again before trying to dive into a weed bed. I gave the fish plenty of side strain and managed to pull it away from danger. The fish then reversed direction and raced back towards the willow. Again, plenty of stick managed to pull it back into open water and I felt more hopeful of landing it. His runs grew steadily shorter and weaker until, five minutes later, the fish tired and I skidded it up onto the bank. It was beautifully marked and in

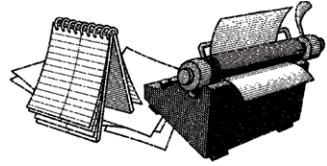
great condition. After a quick snap for memory-sake I slid him back into the tarn, held his tail until he revived, then watched as he slowly swam away.

That one fish made my day. A bunch more would have been good, to be sure. But out of what could have been a disaster of a fishing trip, I still managed to find, fool and catch some nice fish like that one from the Tarns - maybe not as many as in previous years but enough to keep me hooked and forever a passionate fly fisher.



*A nice return considering it was a tough trip*

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



*"The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore." (Vincent Van Gogh)*

*"A ship in the harbour is safe, but that's not what ships are built for." (John A. Shedd)*

*"Safety is a myth. Risk is reality. Fear is the mind killer. Seize the day. Take the road less travelled."*

A few months ago I received an email from John Philbrick, known to many of us as a highly respected past president and long-serving editor of our newsletter. John was trying to track down an article that he wrote some years ago describing an encounter he had with a rather excited tiger snake he met when fishing the North Esk in Tasmania. His note reminded me that even though our fly fishing is mostly a benign and relaxed activity, it does present the odd moment of challenge or even serious danger.

For us Australian fly fishers snakes are the obvious ever present danger. One of the many delights of fishing New Zealand, aside from the wonderful scenery and clear and stunningly attractive rivers filled with trout, is the relaxing opportunity to stroll river banks wearing shorts and runners. Unlike Australia, there is no need for heavy waders over trousers and long socks as protection against the snakes that are found along our rivers. We all have heaps of snake stories to tell, many quite humorous and others that are really scary.

I love the story of the group from the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers who at the start of the trout season many years ago drove up to their lodge on the Mitta. This was the old lodge, later destroyed in a bushfire. It was a long rectangular building with a wall down the middle of the long axis.

On one side was the sleeping quarters with several double bunks, and the other side had the kitchen and bathroom and open fire lounge. The team arrived on the Friday night with the season opening the following morning. After a few sherbets to relax the nerves they headed off to bed.

The next morning they were up bright and early, and the eggs and bacon were cooking nicely when a large brown snake that had taken up residence in the sleeping quarters over the winter months came wandering out to see what all the fuss was about. The immediate reaction was predictably lots of shrieking and shouting, and leaping and square dancing, and then much hacking and chopping with a shovel and an axe. Bits of snake flew in all directions, along with lumps of the floorboards. At least that's story as I heard it.

My most recent horror story happened in February 2011, when I was fishing in Tasmania's highlands with Bob Loch and Jim Blakeslee from Warrnambool. The day was fine and sunny and we fished Botsford first up for a couple of hours and a nil return, so decided to try the nearby Lake Kay. We arrived at the car park, walked down the hill to the lake, and flopped onto some tussocks to demolish lunch. Bob then headed off to the top end to fish, while Jim went the other way to a favourite corner.

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I thought I might have a quick look at a backwater nearby, and took just three steps through the waist high tussocks when suddenly about 4 foot of fairly thick black wriggling hosepipe shot between my feet and raced off into the distance. I must say that my blood pressure and heart rate were both up in the red area, and I spent the rest of the day slowly and loudly stomping around the edge of Lake Kay, banging my wading staff on every tussock ahead of me, and making slow progress as every step was carefully negotiated.

Jim was trying hard to hide the grin on his face whilst telling me about an earlier occasion when a group of fly fishers from Warrnambool were fishing a Highland lake. A snake had swum out behind one of the team and tried to climb up his waders, thinking that this stationary vertical object was a tree. From that day on this particular angler entered all lakes walking backwards, and fished facing the shoreline.

Bulls can be another source of anxiety. I did all of my early fly fishing in the streams around Warrnambool. The western district is a dairy farming area, so paddocks were invariably filled with herds of cows intermingled with the odd bull. And I must say that most of the bulls I came across raised a half-interested eyebrow as I walked past and quietly resumed their morning tea.

But jersey bulls were another story. My farming contacts assured me that they were cantankerous, moody, foul tempered, untrustworthy and dangerous. To quote one source, "Jersey bulls are known for having the least docile temperament of the common breeds of cattle. It is folly to trust any Jersey bull past eighteen months of age."

There was a favourite pool on the upper Merri River that saw me often.

However the other side of the river fronted a large paddock occupied by a lone, foul-tempered jersey. Whenever he spotted me fishing the pool he would rush down, snorting and yelling, and take up residence on the opposite bank, bellowing and frothing and kicking dirt in the air. Fortunately, he was also dumb – the trickle of water at the bottom end of the pool running into the next pool downstream was only a few inches deep. He could have easily waded across with a view to furthering our flourishing friendship. I suppose I was safe enough, but it was all a bit unsettling.

Magpies can be a pest too. I was told once that there is a gene associated with magpie swooping; some magpies have it, and others don't. There are heaps of magpies in the suburb where I live in Melbourne, and they are universally friendly. None have ever swooped me. But there were plenty of cantankerous swoopers in the Warrnambool area, and their cousins live around Leongatha. Milton Zeuschner and I dropped in to fish a stocked dam near Leongatha some years ago, and encountered this cranky magpie that sat on a fence about 30 metres behind us. If we faced him he stayed perched, but as soon as we turned around to make a cast into the water he rocketed off his perch like an Exocet missile at great velocity, aiming for the backs of our necks. We persisted for about 20 minutes, then finally gave it away. There were other nearby dams.

The fishery itself can offer dangers. Some seasons ago three members of a VFFA trip to New Zealand's South Island were confronted with some quicksand near a river. One member inadvertently stepped in and started disappearing. The other two leapt to his aid and dragged him out. Not a pleasant potential outcome if you were fishing by yourself. I've been told that there are parts of the very popular Lake Ada in Tasmania where the bottom

is very soft and if you step in you can rapidly start sinking.

In rivers wading can provide some excitement, and I must say that I've had more challenge and concern in New Zealand streams than in the Victorian streams I fish. Hubert Reichelt once took me to a favourite South Island river. We had a great time there too, and at the end of a long but quite productive day I think he had caught and released some 25 three to four pound rainbows, and my personal tally was 12 or 13. But the memory that stays with me is of the numerous river crossings we made. To continue making progress upstream we had to cross to the opposite bank every 100 metres or so.

The river was 10 to 15 metres wide in most places, the current was strong, the depth in the middle was mid-thigh deep, and the river bottom was composed of slippery soccer ball size rocks. The passage across constantly threatened to tip me over, and of course I had an expensive camera on board. But we survived all the crossings on the way up, and then repeated them on the way back. A couple of years later Hubert fished this same river section by himself. It had rained, and the water level this time was 30 cm higher, the current significantly stronger, and halfway across his wading staff broke. He was swept downstream some 100 metres before grabbing hold of a rock and hauling himself out. And he lost a very expensive Sage rod in the process.

Fences can be another problem, or at least a real pain. There was an electric fence on the Mount Emu Creek down Warrnambool way, just near where the creek ran into the Hopkins River. The fence was never a problem because it was never on. So I just stepped over it in my thigh boots and continued on up the river. But one day it was on, as I

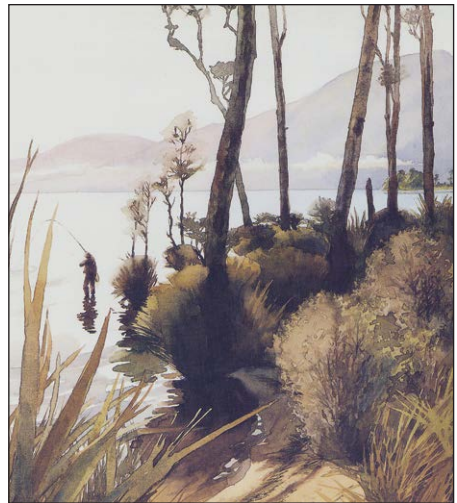
discovered when I had one leg on either side.

Those confounded barbed wire fences can be a pest too, mainly because they can make sizeable tears in new waders and old skin. I once encountered a very high and quite awkward one on a New Zealand North Island river. After considering all of my options I ended up throwing my gear over the fence. Then I took off my body waders and threw them over too. Finally I laid on my back under the bottom strand, pushed it up, and carefully eased myself underneath. What an inconvenient waste of good fishing time, but better than ripping my new waders.

So our wonderful sport is not without its challenges and dangers – a very good reason why fishing with a companion is a wise safety measure.

Best wishes, tight lines and take care

*Lyndon*



*Lake Brunner - a Nancy Tichborne watercolour*





## **Secretary**

### **The Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Incorporated**

## **Job Description**

The Secretary is the chief administration officer of the VFFA. This person provides the coordinating link between members, the management committee and outside agencies.

The roles and responsibilities of the Secretary vary greatly from club to club and experienced secretaries will tell you that their duties often expand beyond what is normally expected of the Secretary.

#### **Responsible To**

The secretary is directly responsible to the President of the VFFA and the members of the VFFA.

#### **Responsibilities and Duties**

The Secretary should:

1. Prepare the agenda for VFFA Council meetings in consultation with the Chairperson
2. Make arrangements including venue, date, times and hospitality for club meetings
3. Send adequate notice of the meetings
4. Collect and collate reports from office bearers
5. Call for and receive nominations for committees and other positions for the VFFA AGM
6. Take the minutes of meetings
7. Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting and distribute to all Council members
8. Read, reply and file correspondence promptly
9. Collate and arrange for the printing of the annual report
10. Maintain registers of members' names and addresses, life members and sponsors
11. Maintain files of legal documents such as constitutions, leases and titles with Treasurer
12. Act as the public officer of your VFFA liaising with members of the public, affiliated bodies and government agencies.
13. With Associations - process transfer applications; enter teams in competitions; represent your club / group at Association meetings; obtain Association sanction for VFFA events; communicate information between Association and VFFA members, such as event deadlines.
14. Other tasks: Welcome letter / kit to new members, clear City PO Box 1-2 times month, check stock of VFFA badges so sufficient stock is on hand for New members, 25 years, 50 years, Past President and Life Member, Cloth badge, digital copies of constitution.

#### **Knowledge and Skills Required**

Ideally the Secretary is someone who:

- Can communicate effectively
- Is well organised and can delegate tasks
- Can maintain confidentiality on relevant matters
- Has a good working knowledge of the constitution
- Be proficient in use of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint

#### **Estimated Time Commitment Required**

The estimated time commitment required as the Secretary of is 1-2 hours per week.

The time commitment required as the Secretary of a club / group varies greatly from club / group to club / group. Smaller clubs may require a Secretary to spend only a half hour to an hour per week or larger clubs two to three hours per week on Secretarial duties.

The Secretary is appointed for at least a 2 year period.

# Fly Fishing Taranaki, New Zealand

... Wayne Sanderson

I've just returned from another fishing trip to Taranaki in the North Island of New Zealand. I grew up in Taranaki, spending my school years in New Plymouth. In those days I knew very little about trout fishing and even less about fly fishing. One of my school mates went fly fishing every year with his dad, and sometimes when I visited them at home in the early spring they would be stretching, what I now know to be, their silk fly lines around the clothes line in preparation for their new season's fishing. It didn't make much sense to me in those days.



*Big rainbows abound in the North*

It's a pity it's taken so long for me to start exploring the trout fishing opportunities of this area. There are literally hundreds of rivers and streams radiating out from the majestic grandeur of Mt Taranaki, sitting in the middle of the province. Almost half of these many rivers and streams carry substantial stocks of wild rainbow and brown trout. This imposing cone-shaped mountain, rising straight out of the sea to more than 2,500 metres, was named Mt Egmont by the pakehas (Europeans), but in recent times it's name has reverted back to the original Maori name of Taranaki.

Douglas Stewart wrote eloquently of his experiences as a young man fishing many

of the streams coming off Mt Taranaki in his book *The Seven Rivers*, and it was this reference that set me exploring some of the places he referred to, along with other rivers and streams around the mountain. Many of the rivers, particularly those on the north and east side of the mountain, are fast flowing and full of rocks and boulders. This makes for some beautiful runs, pools and pocket water, but can be difficult to navigate. Years ago I could skip across the tops of these rocks, but now I make my way slowly, carefully placing my feet in the valleys between them, hoping not to fall and break a leg. So far so good.

The countryside around Mt Taranaki is mostly of a gentle rolling nature, and is one of New Zealand's major dairying areas. Most of it has been farmed over the past century by traditional family units, with very few large corporate farming enterprises moving in. The farming community is very proud of its heritage and the environmental care it takes of the land and waterways. All of the rivers and streams that I have visited



*Another one to the net*

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*A superb photo of Wayne's guide Adam Priest in action*

have been fenced off, and are generally free from any algae or slime. Even during my last visit in March this year, after a particularly warm and dry summer, the water was clear and clean.

During this last visit I fished the Stony River on the north-west side of the mountain, the Patea River just outside of Stratford on the east, and several streams to the south. Numbers of fish up to 5 lb were caught, mostly rainbows but some browns. We had rain, but the rivers remained generally clear. The mountain does tend to attract the weather, but often while on one side it is raining, on the other it is completely clear. One of the advantages of this area is that even if there has been a lot of rain the rivers usually clear within a day or so.

In my experience, seeking access to the rivers over farmland has not been difficult. Most farmers are more than

happy to let you cross their farm, although the issue of occupational health and safety is becoming of concern. Some farmers have cited this as a problem in giving access.

I have also used the services of Taranaki fishing guide Adam Priest. Adam is a local who knows the area well and is a very good fisherman. He is currently the only NZPFGA member guiding in the area. I've had several great days fishing with him. (See [www.guidedflyfishtaranski.com](http://www.guidedflyfishtaranski.com). The photos on his gallery really show the remarkable nature of this wonderful trout fishery.)

While many of the rivers in other parts of New Zealand are becoming overrun by visiting fisherman, Taranaki seems to still remain well off the beaten path, yet offers anglers superb fishing. So far in my travels around this area I have yet to meet another angler.



*Fabulous trout water in New Zealand's North Island, and very productive too*



## Grayling - An Australian Perspective

... from John Philbrick, past VFFA president, editor, life member, and very skilled angler who has experienced fly fishing in many parts of the world.

In 2008 I read an article in the journal of the Flyfishers Club of London about the wonderful grayling fishing that was on offer in the San River in Poland. It's a long way to travel from Melbourne to Poland to go fishing, but didn't I want to visit my daughter Penny, who was completing her studies at Lund University in Sweden? So it came to be that in September 2007 I was on the banks of the "no kill" zone of the San with Penny and her Swedish partner Linus.



*A typical San River Grayling*

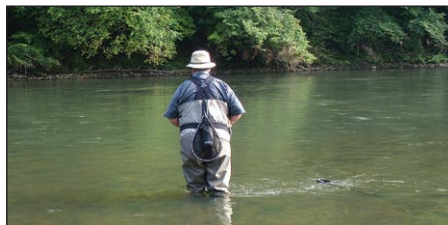
The San rises in the Bieszczady Mountains near the Polish Ukrainian border. It is a major tributary of the mighty Vistula River. Even in its upper reaches it is a broad and majestic stream. Bears, lynxes, European bison, boars and wolves are said to lurk in the forests, and beavers are found in the forests around its headwaters.

I fished the "no kill" zone of the San. This runs for about seven kilometres from the point where water from Lake Myczowce is discharged into the river from the turbines of the power station. The San carries a prolific head of grayling and brown trout. In addition, Danube salmon, also known as huchen (a close

relative of taimen) were successfully acclimatised in the San many years ago. Huchen are much prized but rarely landed. Coarse fish such as chub, carp, dace, pike, perch (known in Australia as redfin), nase and white bream are found in its more sluggish reaches. These fish are the principal diet of the predatory huchen. The San came to international fly fishing prominence in 1985 when it was the venue for the World Fly Fishing Championships. The Championships were held there for second time in 2010.

I had no proper basis for forming a preconceived view about grayling fishing. Although brown trout were successfully introduced into Australia in 1864, no attempt was made to bring grayling to our shores. So, despite having no experience of fishing for "the lady of the stream", I foolishly thought that she would be an easy quarry. I had read that the famed River Avon river keeper Frank Sawyer, who devised Sawyer's Pheasant Tail Nymph, used to methodically deplete schools of grayling on the River Avon, picking them off one by one using his Grayling Bug. And didn't Sawyer's disciple Oliver Kite give demonstrations doing the same thing whilst he was blind-folded fishing with his bare hook nymph?

I was soon brought back to earth with a thud at the San. It's grayling can be



*Casting to rising grayling*

extremely difficult. The hatches of fly in autumn are mainly comprised of Blue Winged Olives and Pale Wateries, with a fall of Sherry Spinners often occurring towards dusk. But these hatches are usually mixed with emergences of other more minute insects. The fish may be selectively feeding on spent Sherry Spinners or taking emerging nymphs. Sometimes they ignore the larger naturals altogether and become fixated on feeding on much smaller mayflies.

And there are micro currents in the San that conspire to make achieving a drag free drift difficult, particularly when casting across stream and in windy conditions. The grayling of the San will not rise to a dragged fly, except at dusk when sedges are on the water. And they definitely do not like being lined. On top of all of these difficulties they rise in a very narrow window. If the fly drifts down a few inches outside their feeding window they will ignore it.

My visions of catching large numbers of grayling vanished and the penny dropped that this was difficult and technical fishing. I came to the realisation that each grayling would be hard-earned . And I started listening very carefully to the expert advice of Richard, my Polish guide, for the Poles had grappled

with these problems and developed sophisticated solutions. I found myself for the first time in my life using a very long leader with a 2.0 to 2.5 pounds breaking strain tippet and extremely sparse, exquisitely tied size 20 - 24 CDC winged dry flies.

Grayling tend to feed in shoals, and one evening I was presenting a size 18 dry to some rising fish. They showed no interest at all in my fly. Richard scaled my tippet down to 2 pounds breaking strain and gave me a size 24 CDC winged fly, and on my first presentation I rose and hooked a grayling. I landed eight others from the same school that evening and didn't need any further convincing about the necessity of long, fine leaders and tiny, sparse flies. Time and time again, after I found that fish which were ignoring my fly, I would get a rise first cast to my fly after I scaled down to a smaller, sparser pattern. I returned to Australia a humbled but better and wiser angler. I had also developed respect for the San River grayling and admiration for the angling and fly tying skills of the Poles.

In June 2009 I renewed my acquaintance with the San and even managed to hook and lose, a huchen on a large streamer pattern. This was definitely a fluke, as the huchen is reputed to be "the fish of 10,000



*The San below the power station*

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*A majestic bend on the San River*

casts". To the astonishment of Richard, I hooked the huchen on my second cast. Not wanting to put in another 19,998 casts before I hooked another, I promptly put my huchen rod back on the rack!

One memorable day I landed six different species - brown trout, grayling, dace, perch (aka redfin), chub and white bream. The trout and the grayling took conventional small dry flies and I hooked the coarse fish on a Sawyer's Grayling Bug. And I had a chance to hook a seventh species. Richard sighted a pike which momentarily appeared from the depths when I was playing the chub. He had the huchen rod handy and knotted on a pike fly. We waited until the pike swam into the shallows and lay stationary quite close the edge of the river. I covered it a couple of times but, alas, it refused the fly and finally cruised disdainfully off into deeper water, never to return.

In September 2010 Lester Walton and I fished for Atlantic salmon in the Ponoj River in Russia, where incidentally, I hooked a number of Arctic grayling on large salmon flies whilst fishing for Atlantic salmon. The Arctic grayling are voracious feeders in comparison to their more timid and selective European cousins. I had planned to go on from Russia to a couple of weeks fishing on

the San, but my arthritic hips broke down completely and I had to abandon my trip and return to Australia. Two total hip replacements, seven weeks in hospital, and two serious infections later I was once again on the banks of the San in September 2011, albeit somewhat unsteadily. With the assistance of the redoubtable Richard I was able to dodder out into the river and wet a line.

One autumnal late afternoon we were fishing the streamy stretch of river below the power station. The river was very low and there were no fish rising. Suddenly we heard a siren sound. The siren signals a warning that extra water will be released through the turbines 30 minutes later. The sudden release of cold water from the power station invariably puts the fish down. Richard persuaded me to put on a tiny size 18 bead head nymph below a dry fly in a last-ditch attempt to get a fish before the water rose. Dreams do occasionally come true, even the dreams of worn out old anglers lying on hospital beds.

After a few casts the dry disappeared I lifted the rod and a grayling was attached to the nymph. As the water started to rise Richard expertly netted a beautifully marked hen fish, measured it against markings on the net handle and then managed to lose the net as he was

releasing the fish into the rapidly rising river.

A legend was almost born that day. A 50 centimetre grayling from the San is regarded as being a trophy fish. Richard thought that the grayling was 50 centimetres long, and that that was good enough for me. Regrettably, an angler found the net the following day and returned it to Richard. We know that the tape measure never lies and when it was

applied to the marking on the net, my 50 centimetre grayling was suddenly 2 centimetres shorter.

If there is a lesson to be learned from my visits to the San it is this. It is easy in the parochial world of fly fishing in Australia to think that you know it all. The skill and finesse of the elite Polish fly fishers demonstrated to me my shortcomings as a fly fisher and how coarse our techniques are.



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## Fixing Our Rivers

... VFFA member Tony Armstrong reports on the stream improvement work he was involved in on the upper Goulburn River as part of the GBCMA 'In Stream Habitat Program'

**H**aving fished the Upper Goulburn for many years and having the privilege of living on it for the past four years, I have seen and experienced a substantial degradation in the quality and quantity of trout fishing since the removal of the willow trees from many kilometres of the river bank. As if someone had flicked a switch, the trout fishing was turned off the day following the willows were removed.

Prior to the removal of the willows I could venture out late afternoon and catch and release 4 - 7 trout most evenings, ranging from 1 to 3 pounds. Morning sessions would generally return 2 - 5 trout around the same size. Following the removal of the willows, an afternoon session might return one fish in the 500 gram range. Morning fishing was a similar experience. Noticeably, not only had the number of trout reduced, so had their size. Obviously the environment was no longer attractive to the larger fish due to the removal of cover and the possibility of a consequent increase in water temperature.

At the 2016 Wild Trout Conference at Mansfield, Andrew Briggs from the GBWMA (Goulburn Broken Water Management Authority) was presenting a paper on the benefits of 'in-water habitat', and a new program providing \$1m funding for partnerships with government and fisherman for local fishing areas was announced.

The following Monday I reached out to Andrew and explained the situation on the upper Goulburn and my experience there, and he promptly arranged an initial site visit. 50 metres of river was identified as a possible sight for 'in-water habitat'. A subsequent site visit was arranged, and Mike Jarvis, VFFA president, advised he was keen to attend.

Following the second site visit, an aerial survey was conducted and preliminary plans were drawn up. Together with a number of other 'in-water habitat' locations, a submission was made by GBWMA for funding, with the endorsement of the VFFA for the Upper Goulburn location.

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*Delivered rocks before placement*



*After Rock seeding*

At the 2017 Wild Trout Conference, we were advised that the submission was successful and that the proposed works would commence in March 2018. As planned, the works commenced and involved the cutting of a ramp into the bank to enable the excavators to access the river, and the delivery of over 80 granite rocks ranging in size from 1.0 to 2.5 tonne. The rock delivery was undertaken over three days using two tip trucks.

Using a site map, each rock was meticulously placed by two excavators over several days to reflect the design, which was intentionally drawn up to create the best water flow, cover and lie creation for trout. The program was underpinned by the appropriate science, with the purpose of providing additional cover and oxygenation, therefore providing a sustainable habitat for trout

in what had been a barren riverbed landscape.

Mike took his visit as an opportunity to stay overnight and dangle a fly the following morning, complete with just a touch of hangover – courtesy of Wayne Poole, the Kevington Hilton publican.

Has it made a difference? I witnessed a two pound rainbow move into the area within 24 hours, though we will need to wait until this coming spring when the winter flow has worked its magic by creating lies at the front and back of each rock to see the extent of the improvement. Watch this space.

From a project perspective it was very professional and extremely well managed. The engagement process provided by Corey Wilson (GBWMA) was excellent, as was all the works undertaken. Corey, Jim Castles and their team are to be congratulated.



*Placement of rocks*



*Before rock seeding*



## The April Meeting with Charley May

Charley May proved a popular guest, with just over 40 members and guests coming to hear her speak. Here is the next of her presentation.

Thank you Mike for the lovely introduction. I am delighted to be here this evening to speak to you guys. When I saw the line-up of speakers who have presented here before me I was very impressed, so it really is an honour to be among those people and to be here tonight telling my story. I'm going to talk to you about my journey becoming a fishing guide. Then I'm going to talk about the challenges and opportunities of getting more women into fly fishing. It's been really busy since starting my guiding business in August 2017, so preparing for this presentation has given me a chance to take a breath and really celebrate the last nine months. But before I begin my presentation I would like to tell you a bit about myself.



*Charley's guiding career is off and running*

I'm originally from England. I grew up on a farm on the edge of the National Peak District Park and got my first fly rod when I was nine years old. My dad taught me how to throw a few decent casts and I was instantly hooked. I then spent my youth chasing trout in rivers and reservoirs across the north-west of England with other fly fishing tragics. That filled a couple of decades, and then I moved to Australia in 2010 to look at snake venom. I continued to fly fish here, learning about many of your rivers alongside guide, and now great friend, Scott McPherson.

As a kid I painted a lot, and then gave it up. But when I came to Australia I thought I should take it up again. So when the VFFA ran their Art Show last year I thought it was the perfect opportunity to enter the competition and thus combine my two passions - fly fishing and art.

I didn't win a prize, but I did sell a piece and was really chuffed about that. And I met many of the VFFA team, who were incredibly welcoming and very supportive of my endeavours, so thank you. And that's why I am here this evening.

What motivated me to become a guide? Basically my career took a turn I wasn't happy with, and this caused me to rethink my future at the end of 2016. So I headed off to the Mitta Mitta to heal a professional broken heart. During this trip my mind and heart opened up to new opportunities, and I thought why not turn my passion into a profession? I felt I had a lot of the ingredients needed to make it work. I had 25 years of fly fishing experience, I'm a friendly and personable person, I'm a good communicator, and I've got a huge reservoir of patience. So I

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mentioned the idea to a few mates and mentors, and they said: "Go for it!"

So I did. But how do you go about building a brand and guiding business? First of all I did in an audit of the fly guiding sector here in Australia, just to see who my competition was, and who I hoped would be my collaborators in the future. I then worked out the regulatory requirements required to be a guide here. Finally, I then decided to write a business plan that incorporated my strengths and weaknesses – a unique selling point, brand values, brand identity, my marketing strategy, my promotional plan, and my financial goals. I wasn't super enthusiastic about writing this, as all I really wanted to do was get on and design a cool logo and start marketing myself. But, to be honest, working through the business plan was essential. It gave me a clear vision of my business goals and how I was going to go about achieving them.



... In teaching mode

It took me about a month to complete, and then I was free to get on with the fun stuff. I teamed up with a couple of designers and photographers, and they helped me create the Charley May fly fishing brand. Then I had to do more homework and spend a month defining my brand and its target market. After this exercise my brand's voice and logo were born. Now I could start telling the world about Charley May fly fishing.

I went about building a website and started writing a blog to improve my search engine optimization so that people could find me. I created dedicated Facebook and Instagram accounts and invited everyone I knew to sign up to my social media and subscribe to my newsletter and start spreading the word. I also sent my flyers to some hospitality and winery contacts I knew. Then I managed to get some coverage in Gram magazine, and that was great.

I got recommended to take part in a fly fishing video for 'Bright and Surrounds Tourism', which was wonderful because I got lots of leads from it. I sent my flyers to local wineries and started signing up to adventure and accommodation sites. And after all this work I just hoped I would land a client. And it finally happened. In December 2017 I got my first client, and that was awesome.

She was a 24 year old woman and a complete novice who was inspired to give fly fishing a go after reading my story in Gram magazine. So I was pretty chuffed. My aim of hitting out at a younger audience was working. I took my first client out on a stretch of water near Melbourne that I had recently gained private access to and taught her the fundamentals of casting. After an hour of running through practice drills we hit the water and she managed to get three strikes. She didn't get any fish, but was absolutely delighted that she got some strikes and had a ball.

Since then I've taken out 13 more clients, including a couple of international guests. My target in the first year of operation was to take out 10 people, so I was pretty chuffed to take out 14. While I have taken a few women out fishing most of my clients have been older guys, and really lovely guys at that. And I have been very encouraged by their feedback on my instruction and the guiding experience that I had given them.

I've also learned a lot about how different people learn, and how to keep them motivated on tough days when the fish are playing hard to get. And as I continue to talk with other guides and tap into their experience I am really excited about learning a lot more and becoming a much better guide.

So where to from here? I want to continue to reach out to young people, and it's kind of cool because research indicates that millennials value experiences much more than just owning things. This is really great news for fly fishing because it's such a niche activity, and it encompasses the artisanship that many Gen Ys find really cool. They love old school retrograde arts and crafts stuff that fly fishing is really all about. So pardon the pun, but you've got to 'fish where the fish are' to catch these young people. And that means for me registering on a whole bunch of online adventure tourism and travel and accommodation websites.

I also want to become a better teacher, so I've just committed to studying for my Certified Casting Instructor qualification

through the Fly Fishers International, and I've been fortunate to find a mentor in Bob Young. Bob is a Master Casting Instructor who was willing to take me on as a student and take me through this learning experience. I'm hoping to take a test next year and am quite daunted by it, but know that by stepping through the process it will elevate me and turn me into a better guide, which in turn means that I will give clients and people interested in fly fishing a much better experience when they come on the water with me.

I also want to encourage more women into fly fishing. I can do this on an individual level as one of the few female fly fishing instructors or guides here in Australia. But if we are to achieve 50-50 parity on the water then it's a task that will require me to collaborate, and for the industry to unite around this goal as well. In talking to active female fly fishers it would appear some good steps are being taken, but there's lots more to do. So what more can we do to get women hooked on fly fishing?



*Celebrating success after a big day on the river*

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Let me give you my initial impression of women in fly fishing in Australia – where are they? Women are kicking goals on the footy field and are scoring centuries on the wicket, but in my experience I rarely see them fly fishing on the rivers. I've been fishing here in Victoria now for eight years and am yet to bump into another female fly fisher. After dozens of trips I've not met a single woman apart from the women I've taken out as clients. But I've seen plenty of raised eyebrows as I go about my business as a lone female fly fisher, and while most of the comments have been positive, I've had the occasional condescending or hostile one. And this is sad and it's something that has to change.



*Searching for a fish*

Let's have a look at some of the numbers for rates of female participation in fishing. In the US it's about 30% and in the UK it's 7%. The Sydney Morning Herald gave the only figure I could find, suggesting about 35% for the involvement by women in fishing in Australia. It's my bet that the number would be even smaller if we start drilling down into fly fishing and female fly fishers.

So what's holding them back? The Victorian Fisheries Authority recently conducted a survey on female fishing participation in 2017, and found a number of challenges. Reasons that emerged for women not getting involved in fishing included not having the right

equipment or experience, being time poor, a perceived gender bias, parenting responsibilities, personal safety concerns, and hygiene issues including toileting. And I can really sympathise with that last one because I can tell you that as a lady it's very difficult to take a pee by the side of a river. However an exciting part of the survey was that nearly 70% of women said that they would like to take part in female-focused fishing events. And this is awesome.

So how can we start making it happen? I think that there are three things that we can do to kick this off. The first is to make female fly fishers more visible. If you look at the mainstream fishing media it's pretty light on women fishers. You can scan the pages of the mainstream press or hit play on YouTube, and you see mainly guys fishing. Read pretty much anything on fly fishing and the author is usually a man and the assumption is that the readers are male.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that it gets a bit frustrating to continually read the word fly fisherman. I'm into fly fishing, and I'm a woman. The small change in the language would make a huge difference if we start using the word fly fisher or fly angler. It works as well, and it doesn't alienate half the population.

It's a small point but language and visibility can make a big difference, because the budding female fly fishers can't be what they can't see. So my suggestion is that Australia's mainstream fly fishing press should start featuring more women in their pages. And I've a the feeling that they want to actually do this, because I was recently contacted by *FlyLife* magazine to write for them, and the chat that I had with them made me feel that this is something that they want to do. They want to start featuring more passionate and competent female anglers. This is a great step towards achieving

more gender balance, and I think that this is vital if we are to show that fly fishing and fishing in general is an activity open to everyone.

The second suggestion is we should get more clubs and peak representative groups and retailers in the media to host more female-focused events. I've been told by a couple of women who are active fly fishers that most clubs now have at least one female member on their books. That's a lonely figure, and to be honest it's not a result I would want to write home about. But of course a waterfall start with just a single drop, so we've got to start somewhere.

From a purely economic perspective it makes sense to target more women as club members and customers, and importantly from a conservation and advocacy point of view we need as many people as possible fighting to protect fisheries and trout habitat.

While many clubs and other groups run female-focused events the current female membership and fly only participation figures indicate that we need to do more. And it's clear that the Victorian government wants to get more people into fishing with their 'target 1 million' campaign. It's also clear that they want to get more women and children into fishing as part of this campaign, and there is money available to do this through the Recreational Grants Program.

So it looks to me like there is some political will there and cash available to run more female-focused events. This means that clubs have an opportunity to get their collective heads together and create an action plan to apply for these grants to run more events for women. Even if the clubs don't want to apply for government money (because I gather that sometimes the application processes are onerous), running women's events is very good for the coffers because if it's done well more women are likely to join

as club members. So there's not much to lose by running events for women.

My last point is to engage existing female fly fishers to help with these events. I've been fishing here for nearly eight years and I only recently discovered that there is a small but active group of keen female fly fishers, and it's clear that there are some movers and shakers among their ranks who have already started some great initiatives to get more women interested in fly fishing. And what's clear is that there is an appetite to do even more.

So tomorrow I'm actually going to Tasmania to take part in one of these initiatives called Girls Gone Fly Fishing which is being hosted at Peter Hayes' place at Cressy, and I'm really excited about meeting these women and hearing what they think we could do to encourage more female participation. There are also some great initiatives from overseas that can inspire us. I'm receiving messages already from the women who are going to Tassie about making participation a significant focus for the event, so it's going to be quite exciting.

While I'm here I would love to hear your ideas on what we can do, and I can take these to the conversation that we are going to have in Cressy. There's going to be some great women there, so I'm excited to see what ideas come out of the discussions that we have.

So at this point in time I would say 'watch this space', because I certainly don't have all the answers about how we can ramp up and get more women involved in fly fishing. But it's something that I'm passionate about and want to work with others on.

That brings me to the end of my talk. I would thank you all for listening, and I'm happy to take any questions that you have.



# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *Mrs Simpson*



Here's an oldie but a goody. The Mrs Simpson has already been written up as our Fly of the Month, but that was in the July 2001 newsletter. So it's certainly worth another look. We are coming into the winter months, so a good wet fly for fishing our lakes and reservoirs is certainly an appropriate choice.

I first came across this fly in the late 1970s when I was living in Warrnambool. The pattern was very effective on the sea runners moving up the lower Merri River in late winter and was also used by some of the Warrnambool members as a potent mud-eye pattern and some Tassie Lakes.

The Mrs Simpson is a New Zealand pattern and was originally tied to represent the common cockabullies (bait fish) that are numerous in New Zealand waterways. Allan Burgess, writing on the [Fishingmag.co.nz](http://Fishingmag.co.nz) website says this: "The Mrs Simpson would be the most popular of the Killer patterns after the Hamill's Killer. This fly has so many different originators linked with it that it is impossible to say who first tied it. It came into use around the time of the abdication of Edward VIII, who stepped down from the throne to marry Mrs Simpson. Hence the idea that if a Mrs Simpson could lure a king then why not a trout!"

This lure was probably first used in the central North Island trout fisheries around Taupo and Rotorua. It is an excellent cockabully, crayfish, and perhaps even a passable dragon fly imitation. It should be fished on either a sinking line or floating line with a sinking tip, and should be stripped to produce a jerky stop-start lure action. A Mrs Simpson also makes an excellent night fly."

**The Materials:**

**Hook:** Heavy wet fly, sizes 4 – 12, typically 6 or 8.

**Thread:** Black 6/0.

**Tail:** A bunch of black squirrel tail fibres.

**Body:** Red or yellow chenille (or wool). Some sources suggest yellow for flies used during the day and red for flies used at night.

As the fly is often intended for fishing in deep water, lead wire can be tied along the hook shank to add weight before the chenille is tied in.

**Wing:** Cock ring-necked pheasant rump feathers. Both the green feathers and the brown “church window” feathers from higher up on the back of the pheasant can be used, as both colours work equally well. Depending on the size of fly being tied, either one, or two, or three pairs of closely matching rump feathers need to be selected and prepared by stripping away the fluff at the base.

**Tying Notes:**

1. Run some thread along the hook shank to just before the bend, then tie in the tail. Also, if weight is needed, tie close turns of fine lead wire along most of the shank.
2. Let’s assume that a medium-sized fly on a size 8 hook is being tied, in which case two pairs of matching rump feathers will be needed.
3. Take some medium or fine red or yellow chenille and strip some of the material away (fingernails will do this) so that the core is exposed. Tie the end of the core in at the end of the shank and then wind the thread back until it is about one-third of the shank length from the eye. Leave it hanging there.
4. Now wind turns of the chenille along the shank toward the eye to make the body. Stop winding and tie off the chenille when you reach the thread. About two-thirds of the hook shank should now be covered by the chenille.
5. Take two carefully matched rump feathers (same width and length) and tie them in at this point, one on each side of the hook, so they sit vertically.
6. Leave a short bit of the stalks of these feathers pointing along the shank towards the eye of the hook and tie thread over these stalk bits to make the wings secure.
7. Tie in some more chenille at this point and continue winding it along the shank toward the eye. Tie it off about 2 millimetres short of the eye.
8. Select another pair of matching rump feathers and tie these in, one on each side immediately behind the eye. These feathers should be the same size as the pair tied in earlier.
9. Finish the fly by building up a small head behind the eye in front of the two feathers just added. Whip finish and add a drop of head cement to complete the fly.

## VFFA 2018 meetings & other activities

### May 2018

- 7 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30pm  
17 Thursday VFFA Auction – 8:00pm at the Kelvin Club  
Hugh Maltby and Peter Boag are co-ordinating this event

### June 2018

- 4 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30pm  
11 Monday Trout streams in Victoria close at midnight  
21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00pm at the Kelvin Club  
Guest Speaker: Terry George, ATF president  
29 – July 1 Weekend trip to Lakes Purrumbete and Bullen Merri, where a VFFA team will compete with a team from the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers for the Bruce Whitehead Western Lakes Challenge

### July 2018

- 2 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30pm  
19 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00pm at the Kelvin Club  
Guest Speaker: TBC  
28 Saturday Warrnambool Annual Dinner

### August 2018

- 6 Monday Council Meeting – 6:30pm  
24 Friday Annual Dinner, with Guest Speaker Peter Morse  
(Well known Australian writer on fresh and saltwater fly fishing)  
25 Saturday President's Casting Day at the Red Tag Pool – 10:00am

### September 2018

- 1 Saturday Rivers open again to trout fishing  
3 Monday Council Meeting - 6:30pm  
20 Thursday 2018 Annual General Meeting – 8:00pm

#### VALUED DONORS

#### The following made donations for the raffle at the 2017 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Tackle Outfitters • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Essential Fly Fisher Launceston • *FlyLife* Publishing • FlyFinz Fishing Tackle and Books • Gavin Hurley's Fly Fishing & Pro-Angler • J.M. Gillies Pty Ltd
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