

FLY LINES



MAY 2026

May Meeting with Will Minson

Thursday, May 21, 6:30
at the Kelvin Club

Will is a former AFL footballer who played 191 games for the Western Bulldogs. Off the field he is known for his multi-faceted abilities - he plays the saxophone, speaks fluent German, studied civil engineering at Melbourne University, and is heavily involved with the charity *Red Dust*, which operates sporting and lifestyle clinics in remote aboriginal communities and, more recently, in poor areas of India.

Will is a very keen fly fisher who has fished overseas and has a rich history in fly fishing experiences. At our May General Meeting, which promises to be an occasion very well worth attending, he will consider exploring the lessons us fly fishers can learn from elite sport, ... and vice versa.

Will has enjoyed a lifetime of fishing experiences, and will speak about where it has taken him, the people he has met in his travels, and places he still hopes to get to one of these days.



Will caught this superb trout in Slovenia

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Vice President's Message

A Message from Our Senior Vice President – John Spragg

Lots of good news this issue. The VFFA through Peter Clayton won the famous “Donger” on the Donger Weekend recently, which is held on the streams around Omeo. Almost a dozen VFFA members fished on the weekend and enjoyed the superb hospitality provided by the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers.

However, the fishing was pretty tough and the Bairnsdale boys are ‘almost locals’ as they have their Mitta Mitta Lodge located in the centre of all the activity. But Peter was able to show them up with a couple of nice fish.

We thank the Bairnsdale Club for their superb organisation and hospitality. All members, and especially newer members, should keep an eye out next year for the Donger Weekend Competition, and give it a go.

A group of six VFFA anglers have put their hands up to rough camp on the Loombah Reservoir just out of Benalla. The Australian Trout Foundation in conjunction with the Victorian Fisheries Authority have arranged in this sealed off area to lower the trout population in the Reservoir so that juvenile Macquarie Perch fingerlings can be released and not end up as trout feed. The plan is to install a fish trap in the reservoir feeder stream to catch trout in their breeding run.

The trapped trout will then be released via the VFA tank truck into other nearby reservoirs and lakes. Onsite anglers are allowed to fish for the two months the trap will be in place and then should put trout they catch into the holding tanks for relocation. The reservoir will then be



John Spragg

closed off to everyone once the “Mackas” (Macquarie Perch) are released. The reservoir will then be a safe future habitat for Mackas in case of disease or black water kills in other Macquarie Perch habitats.

Scott Raggatt and Andrew Fuller have done a lot of work on our What’s App facility. It is now the “VFFA Community”, and there will be several groups gathered under that heading. We have a “Chat and Update Group” for all of your stories, upcoming events, and anything else related to fly fishing.

We have a group specifically for those willing to invite others or anglers who want others to join them fly fishing, called: “Let’s hit the Water Group”. Scott and Andrew plan on adding one or maybe two more groups to the “VFFA” Community, so stay tuned. A big thank-you to Andrew and Scott.

Red Tag Sunday morning casting will be held on the last Sundays in June, July and August, and one of these Sundays will be a “cane and other rods” casting day, so dust off and termite spray your cane rods. Keep an eye on *Fly Lines* for which Sunday will be our ‘Cane and other Rods (any material) Casting Day’.

Fly Tying is also on again in the next few months, with our thanks to Jenny and David Hooke for opening up to us the Botanic Art School at 1A Shipley Street, South Yarra. Watch *Fly Lines* for details, and then come and watch Kossie and possibly others weaving their magic.

A couple more positives for the VFFA: Rodger Muir, our joint Vice President, has through dogged and sustained efforts recovered the \$6,000 that the VFFA gave to The National Trust of Tasmania for a casting pool that was never built at the Fly Museum near Launceston. The VFFA also

received \$10,000 via the ‘Stronger Fishing Clubs’ Grants’. This is the first real grant the Association has ever received. It has to be spent by June 2027, and could be spent on a number of things, including *Fly Lines* and equipment and upgrades to our website. Some of these costs have already been incurred, so can now become part of the grant.

We are still looking for an editor, or sub-editor, or other interested party to take over the editing of *Fly Lines*.

John Spragg (Senior Vice-President)



New Members

Again this month it is our great pleasure we welcome three new members.

We are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to:

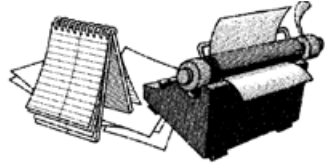
- Christy Taylor
- Peter Panopoulos
- Michael Delmau

It’s great to have you on board, and we trust that you find your membership enjoyable and immensely rewarding.



Superb trout water!

From the EDITOR'S DESK



... from Lyndon Webb

For a variety of reasons it's been a while since I last headed off for some serious fishing. This is not good, and I must head out and wet a line sometime soon before the season closes and the winter months set in.

It did strike me (again) that as a keen fly fisher, living in a country town with nearby fishing opportunities (both in rivers and lakes) is clearly a whole lot better than being buried in the suburbs of a large city like Melbourne. As I've mentioned so often in my previous scribbles, my ten years living in Warrnambool provided heaps of fabulous fishing opportunities within a short drive from where I lived.

Mind you, I must confess that there are three ornamental lakes at Rowville, just 10 km down the road from where I now live in Knox, and two of these lakes are regularly stocked by the VFA. You can usually tell when a recent stocking has occurred – finding a car park near the place can be a challenge.

I often drive there and have a fish – though rarely seriously. I'm usually there to try out a new line I've just purchased or to do some other experimenting, and I rarely stay long. However, I did discover one evening some years ago at the end of a warm day that when I arrived just on dusk some fish there were actually rising. And I did manage to deceive a couple! But often there is not much obvious evidence of fish there.

I must confess to being an addict when it comes to gathering gimmicks and novelties, and recently purchased one of those small oval-shaped sonar devices that you can cast out into the water and it will tell you helpful things. I attached the one that I had acquired to an old spinning rod and hurled it out into the main Rowville lake. The screen on my iPhone then lit up and informed me that the water temperature was about 18°C, the depth of the water was about three metres, and there were some fish cruising around down near the bottom – a long way below the wet flies I was casting and retrieving up near the surface. No wonder I wasn't catching much.

Would a fast-sinking fly line get me down to the fish? Rick Dobson suggested that I try three or four metres of fluorocarbon leader. I haven't tried either yet.

But getting back to the significance of my comment about where we live as fly fishers, VFFA member Brian Eddy has recently moved, but for years he lived at Harrietville on the Ovens River up near Bright. I visited Brian on a few occasions when he lived at Harrietville, and can recall standing at the bottom end of his backyard lawn viewing the upper reaches of the wonderful Ovens flowing past. Brian could tie on a dry fly pattern on a warm evening and stand on his back lawn and cast to rising fish. It doesn't get any better than that! Just downstream from Brian's house there was a largish pool on the Ovens that housed some huge browns.

Which gets me back to deciding when I should head off for some fishing, and where I should go. An obvious response is if you feel the urge to go fishing, then throw some gear in your car and just head off. But as we know there are a number of factors affecting our likelihood of success, and it's probably smarter to choose a time when catching a few is a bit more probable. In terms of seasons and months, spring and autumn I think are generally better times to fish than winter (cold, rivers closed and many flowing fast and dirty), and hot summer days can be unpleasant too. High summer water temperatures are not so good for trout, though in past years I've had some great evenings in January fishing the Acheron just north of Taggerty. You need to choose your day though, with some cooler weather prior to the outing being preferable.

And yes, water temperature is a critical factor. Trout are a cold-water fish with optimal growth and activity around water temperatures of 12°C - 15°C. At water temperatures lower than 10°C they are a tad sluggish, and with water at 20°C they are not too comfortable either. Water temperatures above 24°C are lethal. So, as I suggested, spring and autumn are generally better times to head out.

If I head off to fish rivers that are reasonably accessible (i.e. no more than a couple of hours' drive from home) then for me Wednesdays and Thursdays are the better days in the week (given prior reasonable weather conditions), as the rivers have then had a few days to recover from the weekend angling pressure.

When is best – morning, afternoon or evening? Evenings are often good, especially if you encounter an evening rise after a warm pleasant day.

But then we get to those tables telling which days and times are best. Years ago I became quite fascinated with those 'Solunar Tables', which purported to tell us which days in each month would provide the best fishing, and what times during those days when the fish would be feeding hardest. Like many of us I subscribe to Bill Classon's *Freshwater Fishing Australia* magazine, and the early pages of each issue have tables of 'Tim Smith's Solunar & Lunar Best Fishing Times'. Choose a date and the table will tell you the best major and minor feeding times.

A quick Google search tells us this:

Solunar Theory

Originally developed by John Alden Knight in 1962, the theory suggests that the sun and moon influence fish behaviour, creating peak feeding times that can improve your chances of a good catch. But does it really work?

The theory is based on the idea that fish are more active during certain periods of the day, depending on the position of the moon and sun. Knight was able to identify major and minor feeding periods. Major periods are when 'the moon is directly overhead or directly underfoot. These last about two hours and are considered to be the best times for fishing'.

Minor periods are when the moon is rising or setting. These last around an hour and offer another period of increased activity.

Does it really work?

"Many experienced anglers swear by Solunar Tables to predict the best fishing times. While not a guaranteed formula, there is logic behind the theory. The moon affects tides so it's easy to believe the moon affects sea fish and their feeding habits.

However while it can be a useful tool, it's not the only thing that affects fish activity. Weather conditions, temperature, seasonal patterns, and bait all play a part in our fishing success.

So - how to use the Solunar Theory: check a solunar calendar online, plan to fish during the major and minor periods, and track and record your successes in your fishing diary."

So there you go. I just need to pick my day and time when I finally head off for some successful late autumn fishing. Actually, these Solunar Table predictions might have one strong virtue – if I'm fishing at a time when the tables predict good fishing I'm consequently likely to be fishing with heaps more enthusiasm and higher hopes, and this will probably increase my chances anyway!

Enjoy your late autumn fishing.



A superb brown taken from one of our north-eastern streams

The Flyfisher's Report

... from Andrew Fuller



A nice fish, but not a trout!

It's that funny time of year again. The trout season is winding down, the weather is getting colder, and half the fly fishers we know are already staring at maps, tying flies, and pondering what comes next.

But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, there's still plenty happening.

The big one this week is Eucumbene. With a good dump of rain over the weekend, the spawn runs should really kick into gear. That fresh push of water is often the trigger that gets fish moving properly, and after a slightly stop-start lead-up, there's every chance that things could go nuts. If you've been waiting for the right moment to head up there, now should be perfect!

Closer to home, the end of the Victorian stream season has been a beauty in parts. The North-East has had some lovely autumn fishing, with the Howqua, Rubicon and Goulburn all offering those classic late-season moments: clear water, autumn colours, rising fish, and just enough frustration to keep you honest.

There have been good numbers of fish in some sections, particularly once the day warms and the light improves. Bubble lines have held multiple feeding trout at times, while other seemingly perfect bits of water have been oddly quiet. That's autumn stream fishing for you. One bend feels empty, the next looks like a postcard and has browns swaying about under every foam line.

Small dries, nymphs under dries, and the usual late-season terrestrials and caddis-style patterns have all had their moments. The Rubicon and Howqua in particular have reminded a few of us why we love this part of the season so much. When it all lines up, it's hard to beat.

Tasmania also finished strongly, especially across the lowland lakes and rivers. There were a few less obvious options that quietly produced excellent results. The midge fishing at Pedder was a real highlight, and Lake Burbury also fished very well. It's always intriguing how Tasmania can keep throwing up options right to the end, if you're willing to move around and fish what's in front of you.

For the latest local reports it really does pay to check out *FlyStream*. There's so much great content there by the oracle Philip Weigall (and many other authorities too).



A very pretty small brown. There are lots of these in our Victorian streams

With the local trout season winding down, attention now starts to change. For many of us, that means winter trips.

New Zealand's North Island is one of the best options at this time of year. The fishing can be genuinely exciting, the scenery is brilliant, and it's a great way to keep the trout brain ticking over while our streams are closed. Rodger Muir has a trip happening at the end of July that really shouldn't be missed. He's done all the hard work organising it, so the fishing should be terrific and the price is frankly dirt cheap for what's on offer.

Then of course, winter is when a lot of us start thinking properly about saltwater.

Cocos. The Whitsundays. Weipa. Exmouth. They're all spectacular fisheries, and they all scratch a very different itch to fishing for trout. Permit on the flats, queenfish charging bait, GTs, tuskies, blue bastards, tuna, trevally, barra, sailfish - you can disappear down that rabbit hole very quickly.

We're incredibly lucky to have access to these places. But we also need to be honest about the threats they face. The proposed use of tunnel nets in Queensland's inshore flats fisheries is very real, and if it goes ahead the damage will be devastating. These are exactly the sort of places that make Australian saltwater fly fishing

special, and we'd all like to think they'll still be around for future generations.

If you want to learn more, look up the Inshore Flats Project. We covered this issue in detail on *The Flyfisher's Podcast* with Chris Burgess, and it's well worth a listen if you care about the future of flats fishing in this country.

So yes, the trout season might be nearly done, but the fishing calendar is far from empty. Eucumbene is about to fire, New Zealand is calling, and the saltwater season is starting to look very tempting.

As always, if you want a steer in the right direction, drop into the South Melbourne or Yea stores. Whether it's spawn-run gear, winter trout options, or planning a proper saltwater trip, we're always happy to help point you towards some quality fishing.



Interesting trout water

The Lower Mataura River New Zealand - April 2026

... from Andrew Mossman



Andrew fishing the Mataura. It is a very large river

Many years ago I was amazed when reading one of my G.E.M. Skues' books where he was discussing his need to retire from fishing. Being a teenager, I of course had no understanding of how age rather spoils all things physical, and ultimately everything. Well sadly these days I am not very far behind where Skues was then, and that due to my age, I myself am approaching retirement from fly fishing.

I first went to New Zealand with Margot, my fishing mate, in 1973, and since retiring from work in 1993 I have fished New Zealand frequently, and since 2007 at least a couple times each year until covid stopped me.

My fishing in New Zealand over this period was just wonderful. I fished all over the South Island, but mostly in the south-east corner, often staying at Gore. Here most of the rivers are wild, meaning without dams or controls. More

importantly, they are mostly not cascading mountain streams, being quieter and more easily wadable. They flow through rich agricultural country and therefore are fertile with high populations of fish and huge populations of insects.

In a good season the hatches were often immense and the rises spectacular. The Mataura and the Aparima are the best known of these rivers, but there are many other rivers and smaller streams also in this area that produce similar fishing.

After covid I returned to New Zealand a couple of times in 2023, and again in 2025. Sadly, the fishing on these three trips was very disappointing. There had been several massive and destructive floods in the Mataura in the previous few years, which dramatically changed the river, and I think seriously damaged the insect populations. Many of my favourite runs had been destroyed.

Because the bed of this river is mostly gravel, these floods washed huge amounts of it downstream. Some stable beaches where I had loved fishing were washed away, and some of my favourite runs were filled with gravel and had become unfishable. I am also sure that the violent movement of all this gravel would have killed much of the insect life that lived in it. During these three trips I did not see one good hatch of mayfly or caddis, nor one good general rise. Also, because my wading was becoming a little more difficult and sometimes perhaps even a little more dangerous, I decided I probably would not go to New Zealand again.

However as there had not been a destructive flood in the last couple of years, Andrew Hood, a friend of mine, and I decided to try one last time. So off we went to New Zealand on the 5th of April this year. I fished alone for the first week and we fished together for the second.

I normally stay at Gore and mostly fish the Maitara, but also fish other rivers that are nearby. On this last trip I only fished the Maitara, and my first day's fishing was just terrible. A strong north-easterly wind was tearing down the river with periods of light rain. It was cold and uncomfortable, and there was no hatch and no rising fish. By swinging a nymph I fluked a brown of 3 lb late in the day. Just another example of the bad effect of an Easterly.

The next day I went above Gore and fished one of my favourite reaches, but sadly it had been completely spoiled by the floods. A couple of lovely riffles of several hundred metres were both gone. They had been filled with gravel and were now shallow and swift, and not really fishable. I caught only two fish in the evening that were rising in a small corner

eddy at the bottom of the run on a size 17 Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear (GRHE).

Then the weather improved and I returned to where I had fished on the previous Monday, arriving at about 11:30 am. I normally fish till dark, and therefore don't fish in the early morning. I parked my car beside the river and entered the water where odd fish were rising below me in the calm gliding water close to the bank. I quietly waded well downstream and fished back up, catching five fish - all on my version of Hubert Reichelt's Maitara Spinner from the gliding glassy water.

Several fish rejected the fly or humped under it, and a couple "boofed" it. The fish, including those that rejected it, only came to the fly if it was perfectly presented - that is, cast from the side and where the fly preceded the tippet to the fish. So the fly was not quite right. You may remember my belief, or obsession if you prefer: "You should catch every rising fish that you cast to adequately, or there is always a better fly".

I also tried an Upright Possum Emerger and a Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear, but both were rejected. I was fishing very quietly and slowly when, as often happens, a fish rose right under my rod. He was so close to me I was unable to present a fly to him. I could see fish in the water, and many of them were not holding on station but just swimming slowly around looking for food and rising. If you lost sight of them then predicting the location of their next rise was rather like lake fishing.

This fish behaviour is common in this slow shallow gliding water of the Maitara. The fish were from 1½ to 3 lbs, mostly about 2 lbs. There were no flies on or in the water that I could see, despite looking very carefully. Also there were

no flies in the air. I then fished on up to a corner riffle without an offer.

There were no fish rising in the corner run either, so I put on a size 15 Adams with a Red Banded nymph size 17 under it, and on my first, second and fifth casts caught a fish, and four or five casts later caught another. "Ah", I thought, "Here we go!" with four fish in six or seven minutes. But no, not another take, despite fishing on through almost perfect riffling nymph water. Most of the fish I was catching were from 1¾ to 2½ lb.

Because the river was low I was able to wade further upstream beside overhanging willow trees. It's easy wading, but only possible when the river is moderately low. And in this riffling water I got another nine fish.

Odd fish were rising along a seam, so I tried my Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear and a No Hackle Possum Dun in sizes 15 and 17, but without luck, so I put Hubert's spinner back on and some of the rising fish took that fly. However, the fish often rejected it or only took it after several casts, and only if perfectly presented and usually from the side.

I always try to present my fly from beside a rising fish if I can without frightening it. The rises to my fly were either slow 'Head and Tail' or sipping rises with an audible slurp, and often I could see the fish. My strike had to be very slow and controlled, and often only when I saw the tippet being drawn under did I tighten firmly. All 18 rises were hooked and landed without a miss. Almost a record for me.

The next day, Thursday, there was a cool south-westerly breeze blowing with some light rain. I started at 11:30 am and got a couple of fish on the Red Banded nymph suspended under my Adams, but the few that were rising just before

lunch rejected the nymph and Hubert's spinner. During the afternoon there was a moderate rise, especially in the shallow riffling water further upstream. Fewer rises than yesterday and the fish were more selective. Only three accepted the Spinner and were landed. While fishing downstream with a Claret Spider and my bead-head size 15 Hares Ear nymph I caught another four, three of these on the nymph. Fish were rising and again I could not see what they were taking. So I killed a fish of 1½ lbs and discovered its stomach was full of tiny almost black nymphs and flies, possibly tiny Stone Flies. Further down, the stomach was crammed with tiny Horn Caddis. My neighbour at the motel was delighted to have fresh trout for dinner.

The next morning I tied some small black flies, trying to imitate the black stomach contents. Using size 17 hooks I tied some parachute and standard hackled spinners that were clipped underneath, along with a couple of tiny black nymphs. I arrived at my beat at 2pm, by which time the Easterly breeze had returned and only very odd fish rose. Halfway up the first section a fish of about 2 lb rose and took my new black standard clipped hackled spinner. Another breakthrough maybe? But no - no more offers, so I put the Red Banded nymph back on and fished on up to the Top Willow without any luck.

While having lunch at the Top Willow a fish rose, so I put on the new parachute hackled size 17 Black Spinner and caught him - 1½ lbs.

A few other fish were rising but they all rejected this fly.

After lunch I fished up into excellent riffling water, where the few fish that were rising refused the Black Parachute Spinner.



Andrew with a typical brown caught from the Mataura around Gore

There was a moderate hatch of the three species of Deleatidium duns: Venale, Myzobranchia and Lillii. The fish all refused my Possum Emerger and my No Hackle Possum Dun, so I put back the new Parachute size 17 Black Spinner and immediately caught a fish of 1½ lbs. By now there was a good rise happening in the very shallow riffling ankle deep water. But they continued to reject everything, so I put on a new No Hackle Possum Dun size 17 and caught one of about 1 lb and then another on my UPE. It was getting dark, so I changed to my nymph and a Claret Spider and quickly fished back down to the car. To the odd rises I managed two more, one a very plump 2 pounder. "That's it!" I said, and finished the day having caught the bigger fish on my last cast.

And so ended another wonderful day, though despite good conditions and seeing, for the first time, odd fish taking hatching duns, they remained extremely difficult. I came off the water, despite catching eight fish, thinking that the fish had beaten me again, like on all the other days. Why were they not taking my flies that were usually quite successful in these conditions? And especially - why were they not taking my spinners when they were rising to spinners that were occasionally on the water. And of course,

why were they not taking my series of possum flies or a Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear when I saw them taking hatching duns?

The next day was another enjoyable nine fish day, but again with a sense of defeat.

The following day was Sunday, and as arranged I drove to Lumsden to pick up my friend Andrew Hood to spend the second week together.

The second week was very similar to the first, and apart from some rough weather my bags remained similar though the fish were if anything even more selective, rejecting most offerings.

Our last fishing day, the Friday, was a little different and therefore worth describing. It was a calm sunny day but with showers predicted. We went to our favourite reach. There had been some rain, and the river had risen a few centimetres but was now clear and falling to its nice low level.

We arrived at 11:30am and conditions were good, though there was a north easterly breeze blowing down the river. Andrew chose to go down where the water was protected from the breeze, and I went up into the breeze. There were almost no rises and perhaps I covered just two fish. I changed to the Red-banded Nymph under an Adams and fished through some beautiful water to the top lunch spot without an offer.

At 2:00pm I put on my Hares Ear Nymph with a Claret Spider on the dropper, and in the corner riffle I had a strong take and landed a fat fish a little over 3 lbs. I fished back to the car in steady rain, getting very cold and wet and only catching one plump little fish. We ate lunch in the car, were cold and still a bit wet, while waiting for the storm to clear, which luckily it did at 3:30pm.

The fish were now rising, and we fished up to the corner pool where despite a good dun hatch only odd fish were rising in the knee-deep eddy beside the seam. I cast a size 17 Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear right onto the nose of one of the fish, and she took it on the first chuck, slowly but confidently. 2½ lbs.

This fish was bleeding, so I killed her and also checked what she had been eating. She was full of very small dark nymphs. Another fish rose a little further up and he also took my Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear on the first offer and was subsequently landed: 2lbs.

A fish had been rising just below me, and as Andrew had just arrived I put him on to it. He caught it on a tiny brown nymph size 19 or 20. As odd fish were still rising here I left the rest of this excellent water to Andrew and walked up into the top water. Only odd fish were rising here and the two I covered both took my fly confidently. The first was 2 lbs, and the second came off after a few tugs and runs. That's better I thought - four presentations and four hookups. The fish stopped rising at about 5pm, so with nothing to cast to I put on my nymph and a claret Spider, and fished back to the car, catching two more fish in the process - 1½ and 2 lbs.

Andrew had hooked two other rising fish, landing one of 1½ lbs, and both on his tiny nymph. His nymph, which was just a standard brown nymph, was being very slowly worked and was just below the surface so that he did not see the take. Over the fortnight I had presented my new small black and other dark nymphs of size 17 to rising fish, and by using some floatant on them they floated in the surface film, but without an offers. Maybe Andrew's technique of letting his nymph sink, and then moving it very slowly might be an answer for next time.



... and another! Andrew has fished the Mataura for many years, and is now on very good terms with the local trout

If we survive another year, and get back to Gore (and we hope to achieve both of these objectives), I think some tiny nymphs might be on the menu.

Strangely I did try a couple of size 19 Tasmanian PE's, tied with a looped thorax and floating in the surface film on a couple of occasions, but they were also rejected. They had often worked before when the fish were almost impossible while sipping hatching duns, so who knows? I doubt if we will ever fully understand, and I guess we probably don't really want to know it all anyway. Wouldn't fishing be boring if we caught every fish we cast to. However sometimes it happens, and when it does it is very exciting. But a wonderful trip, with all of its problems like I have just described, does keep one a little grounded.

VFFA vs Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club “Donger” Competition

Friday April 17 to Sunday April 19

A great turnout of thirteen VFFA members participated in the annual Dudley Lee “Donger” Competition, with most staying at the Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club “Mitta Lodge” at Omeo Valley.

The Bairnsdale Club had five or six members participating – down a little on their usual numbers. Perhaps they were scared off by the calibre of fishermen representing the VFFA this year.

Friday night dinner was held at a hotel in Omeo which offered a typical country pub meal - good quality and plenty of it. Just ask the Senior Vice-President about his mixed grill.

After the meal we returned to the Lodge to partake further refreshments whilst discussing fishing locations and tactics for the following day.

As usual the competition was held from 7am on the Saturday until weigh-in and trophy presentation at 1pm on the Sunday. In glorious autumn weather the fishing took place on various rivers and creeks in the area, with the Big/ Mitta, the Cobungra, the Victoria and the Bundara all receiving lots of attention. A lack of recent rainfall meant that all were relatively low and clear - not necessarily good conditions for catching trout.

At the BBQ provided by the Bairnsdale Club on the Saturday night there were quite a few members of both teams who had failed to trouble the scorers, and those who had caught fish reported catching nothing of any size – except for the trip convenor who had extracted a competition leading brown of 1.5 lb from a not-so-secret spot.

On Sunday morning participants again headed off to their favourite locations, eventually arriving back for the BBQ lunch, weigh-in and trophy presentation. Again the story was of no fish, or only a couple of small ones, so the convenor’s fish from the previous day meant that for the first time in a number of years the VFFA had wrested the Donger from the Bairnsdale Club.

Our thanks go to the Bairnsdale members, especially President Ingomar Mathes, for organising the weekend and supplying the food for Saturday dinner and Sunday lunch, and for leaving the beds in the Lodge available for us Melbourne anglers. It was another extremely enjoyable weekend, made even better by the VFFA team taking the Donger Trophy away from the locals.

... Peter Clayton



Purdon Dinghy For Sale



Items for sale with the Purdon Dinghy



Members are likely to be aware that the VFFA owns a Purdon dinghy, which is currently located at Hayes on Brumby's, at Cressy in Tasmania. In light of a number of factors, your Council has decided that the dinghy and associated items should be sold on an as is, where is, basis.

As an initial step, we are offering these items as a package for sale to any member interested in purchasing it.

The specific items on offer are as follows:

- 12-foot Purdon Dinghy, glass over ply
- Home built tipping trailer and spare wheel, not registered for road use
- 2 life jackets
- 2 oars in poor condition
- Anchor (folding) and warp
- Drogue



Here it is – all ready to go

- Seat cushion
- Boat cover in poor condition
- MotorGuide brand 12 Volt electric trolling motor – 55 lb thrust
- Fullriver brand deep cycle 12 Volt battery

See also the gallery of recent photos below.

As set out above, the dinghy and associated items are offered on an ‘as is, where is’ basis. That means the buyer will be required to travel to Hayes on Brumby’s, Cressy, Tasmania to collect the boat and will be responsible for transport from Cressy.

The items listed above are for sale by way of tender, to be submitted to the VFFA Honorary Secretary by email to ‘info@vffa.com.au’ on or before 5:00pm, June 30, 2026. Please note, acceptance of any

tender will be entirely at the discretion of the Council.

Caveat emptor: In offering these items for sale, the sale is a private, consumer-to-consumer sale, and the VFFA provides no warranty in respect of the condition of the items, or the suitability of the items for any particular use.

Please contact Rodger Muir, VFFA Honorary Secretary at the above email or on 0414 253 890 with any questions.

This Month's Yarn



McTaggart and Alf – inseparable fishing companions!

Thanks to Bill Jeans for providing me with copies of the newsletter all the way back to the first edition in October 1955. The title 'Fly Lines' doesn't appear to arrive until the 1990s. This month's yarn is from No.1 edition however the names McTaggart and Alf are yet to emerge but we deduce it must have been them. Of course they would have been about 10 years old in 1955, but I have opted to depict them at their current age. We all know that VFFA members don't get older, they just get better. Peter Whitelaw

fishing companion, who had packed up to go home, came upon the first-mentioned angler "into" a big fish. At last he netted it, a brown about four pounds.

When the fish was being unhooked, angler No. 2 noticed that it disgorged a frog, and he looked at angler No. 1 suspiciously. "Don't blame me" explained the latter, "I cast a dry red tag over by those reeds. A frog took the fly, and the fish took the frog!"

The yarn: During a recent weekend a certain angler - we won't mention if he were a member of the V.F.F.A. or not - had thrashed a section of the Yea River for some hours without result. He used dry flies, wet flies, long tails and nymphs, with equal success - nothing. Towards dusk his



Millbrook Lakes – Visits this year

One of the very popular features of our VFFA program in recent years has been our visits to the fabulous Millbrook Lakes near Ballarat. Unfortunately, low rainfall in the area last year meant that the lakes we usually visited had become too low to be fished.

However, Mark Weigall, the owner of the Millbrook Lakes complex, recently contacted your editor to confirm that visits to Millbrook Lakes this year will again be possible. Mark has given us two possible dates for VFFA member visits – Wednesday July 8 and Thursday October 8.

In previous years our visits were limited to the four lakes in the Hillies area, but in his recent phone call Mark suggested that many more of Millbrook's lakes could be accessed in our future visits.

In fact with lower levels at the Hillies lakes ten people would be too much pressure. So instead Mark has suggested a day based from Hillies with three guides utilising a number of other Millbrook lakes. Each guide would take three people, so the group is limited to nine VFFA members altogether.

Interested members should contact your editor 0488 555 724 or lgwebb@bigpond.net.au for further information.



This is a photo of VFFA stalwart and past VFFA Secretary Rick Dugina fishing a New Zealand South Island river (from a great height!) many years ago. Our guide for the day had to scramble down to the river's edge to net then release the trout

Lake Techniques for the New Season

This article was written a few years ago by Casey Pfeiffer and is used with permission



A fine capture – out of the water for a quick photo, then back into the stream

As the winter approaches us Victorian anglers are fishing stillwaters rather than rivers. Here is a short but very informative article on how we might fish stillwaters in the months ahead. The author is Casey Pfeiffer, who writes here about fishing Tasmanian stillwaters, but her advice fits our Victorian stillwater fishing too.

Where

On the lowlands visit Four Springs, Lake Huntsman and Lake Leake. In the Highlands try Penstock and Arthurs. (In Victoria – lots of choices)

Rod and Reel Selection

A 10 foot 5-weight or 6-weight rod.

Reels – use a reel with interchangeable spools so that lines can be quickly changed. You need a Floating Line, an Intermediate Line, and a Medium Sinker.

Best Fly

Pulling Woolly Buggers on a sinking line is an incredibly effective trout fishing technique. It is easy to cover large areas of water in a short period of time and particularly good when fishing a new body of water.

When pulling Woolly Buggers you can fish one, two or three flies at a time. In reasonable conditions fish three flies, but in windy conditions drop down to two or one.

Fly selection is less important than your retrieve. Always have in your fly box some damsel patterns, small and large black Woolly Buggers, Blobs and a range of flashing options. Most of my pulling patterns are sizes 14 and 16, but occasionally a larger or smaller pattern may be required.

To cover the water effectively it is important to fan your casts and change your retrieve regularly until you find what is working on that day.

Nymphing

Nymphing on floating or slow sinking lines has been a favourite technique in the UK as it is very effective. Flies used for nymphing are often unweighted or very lightly weighted, and tend to be smaller than your traditional lake wets.

Stick Caddis, dabblers, blobs and Diawl Bachs are a must for Tasmanian lakes. Always have at least one pattern in claret, which is a colour trout can't resist.

The standard set up is a top and middle dropper with two small nymphs and either a Claret Dabbler or a Blob on the point when fishing static, but when I use faster retrieves I often move either of these flies to the top. Tippet should be 15 feet long or longer.

Contact is the most important aspect of fishing nymphs, so as soon as your line hits the water make a couple of quick strips to get in contact with your flies as soon as possible. Fish often hit the flies just as soon as they start to sink, so if you are slow you will miss the strike.

The most common retrieve is a figure of eight pattern - this method is very smooth and consistent. Keep a slight curve in the line between your rod tip and the water. Changing the retrieve can also pay off.

Plonking

Using a floating line you can hang either one or two small nymphs under an indicator dry fly. Occasionally fish will be drawn to such a large offering on the surface and attempt to eat the dry, so be prepared.

You want the dry fly to be easy to see because this will act as your strike indicator, so patterns with a highly visible fluorocarbon posts are ideal.

Use small tungsten beads on your nymphs (usually 2.5 mm). Tungsten make your flies sink to depth quicker than brass, so your nymphs are reaching depths faster and thus you are fishing for longer.

Using weighted nymphs gives better contact between the nymphs and the dry fly, making takes easier to see. This is a great technique on extremely windy days when casting is difficult, as you don't need to cast long and you won't need to cast anywhere near as often as you would when using other techniques.



A Trip to the Land of the Long White Sheep

...by David (Choco) Grisold

It's been years since I've been to the South Island of New Zealand to fish, and this was Rhonda's first trip there to fish. We booked a week with Gavin and Deborah Hurley at Lumsden, and what a fantastic trip it turned out to be.

I used a 9'6" five weight Sage rod and VFFA Hardy reel with a six-weight line and a 10 foot leader.

Rhonda used a 9 foot 6 weight Sage rod and a Hardy reel with a seven-weight line and a 10 foot leader.



David and Rhonda and a superb South Island brown

heck was that for?" I hollered! The reply: "Just look where we are ... and how beautiful this is."

We were lucky with the weather, with only one day of rain. And to fish dry flies in the rain to rising fish was great fun! In fact, that day proved to be my best with thirteen trout to the net.

Hurley's provided a great week. The accommodation is very comfortable and



Both of these outfits worked fine.

Gavin and his team work tirelessly to make sure you have a great week. Tippet and fly changes were constant. They were always looking for the correct combination in changing conditions.

On our second day there we were standing in a river watching a trout rise when Rhonda pinched me. "What the



Rhonda and Gary Rapley with Rhonda's biggest fish for the trip - a 5lb brown.

Deborah's food is delicious.

We have already booked again for next year.



David and Gavin with a smaller model.



Hubert's Spent Spinner did it's thing!

So, in Molly's words:

"Do yourself a favour - go and catch a trout with Hurleys. You won't be disappointed!"

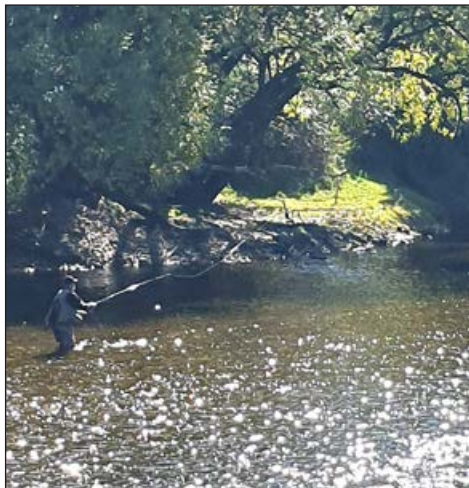
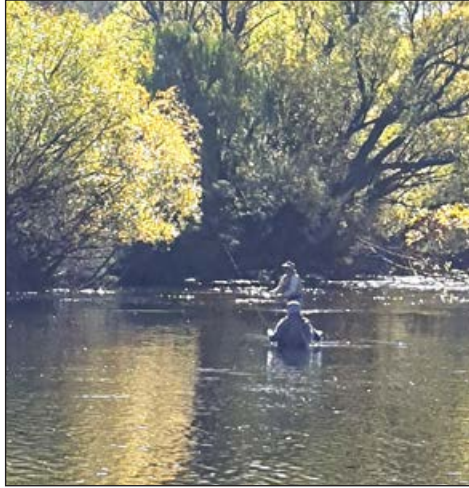


David does it again -another magnificent brown!

Report from Brian Eddy

Our autumn weather here has been exceptional. Here are a couple of photos from the Donger Weekend. (We already have a report on this VFFA trip from Peter Clayton). One photo shows VFFA Senior Vice President John Spragg really

checking the Plimsoll Line in the Mitta near the Bairnsdale Lodge, with Peter Clayton in the background. The other photo has Bill Jeans throwing a nice loop a little further downstream.





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VFFA MID-YEAR TAUPO TRIP 2026

A WINTER WEEK CHASING HARD-FIGHTING RAINBOW TROUT IN NEW ZEALAND

Fish the famous Taupo region at the height of the winter rainbow run, then swap stories each night over a hearty dinner in the Boiler Room at Waitahanui Lodge.



DATES

Sunday 21 June to
Sunday 28 June 2026



BASE

Waitahanui Lodge,
Lake Taupo, New Zealand



THE FISHING

Expect winter rainbow trout in top condition, fishing rivers flowing into Lake Taupo and nearby waters around Taupo and Rotorua.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Share accommodation
- Linen, towel and face washer
- Continental breakfast
- Two-course catered dinners
- One day guided fishing with a local guide (in pairs)
- Daily fishing updates



GOOD TO KNOW

- You'll need to arrange your own travel and local transport
- Taupo Airport is about 5 km from the lodge
- Winter conditions can be cold, wet and windy, so bring proper gear
- A Taupo District fishing licence is required
- Hard-soled wading boots only — felt/absorbent soles are not permitted



REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

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Do not book travel until your place is confirmed by VFFA.

FLY OF THE MONTH

Mick Hall's Beadhead Brown Nymph



Here is a fly that is simple and quick to tie, and a very good catcher of trout too. Some years ago I was watching Mick Hall tying up a pile of nymphs (this pattern in fact) to use in his teaching classes on nymph fishing. He used to take groups of eager fly fishing aspirants to the Rubicon River and show them how to catch trout using nymphs. I went with him on one occasion, and yes we used this pattern, and it worked well. Even your editor caught some fish, so this must be a very good fly.

Tying materials:

Hook: Mick was tying his on Mostad Model R72 hooks, sizes 12 - 16

Tying thread: Brown 6/0

Tail: A few fibres from a ginger cock hackle

Bead: Gold bead, 2mm - 3mm, depending on the hook size

Body & thorax: Spirit River dubbing - Diamond Bright Chocolate Brown

These are the materials that Mick used, and his fly works fine. The Diamond Bright dubbing material has an attractive sparkle or flash that undoubtedly adds to the appeal of the fly.

VFFA 2026 meetings & other activities

(Unless otherwise notified, all meetings are at the Kelvin Cub, 14 - 30 Melbourne Place)

May

- 2 Saturday ATF Loombah Weir Project induction day
(Organiser - Rodger Muir)
- 3 Sunday Snobs Creek Open Day, 9:00am – 3:00pm
- 10 - 14 Team 1 on site at Loombah Weir (Whitelaw/Tuck/Walton)
- 21 Thursday General Meeting – Will Minson, 6:30 for 7:00pm
- 26 Tuesday Fly Tying - The Fundamentals Part 1- Richard Kos, 7:00pm, at The Botanical Art School, South Yarra

June

- 2 – 8 Team 2 on site at Loombah Weir (Clayton/Spragg/Muir)
- 11 June Council Meeting – 6:30 for 7:00 pm
- 16 Tuesday Fly Tying - The Fundamentals Part 2 - Richard Kos, 7:00pm, The Botanical Art School, South Yarra
- 18 Thursday General Meeting – speaker TBA, 6:30 for 7:00pm
- 21 – 28 Winter Taupo Event (Organiser - Rodger Muir)
- 28 Sunday Casting Day, 11:00am, Red Tag Pool, Fairfield
- 30 Tuesday Fly Tying - Intermediate - Richard Kos, 7.00pm, The Botanical Art School, South Yarra

July

- 16 Thursday Council Meeting – 6:30 for 7:00 pm
- 23 Thursday General Meeting – Update on AFFC/Red Tag pool/Fairlea Road redevelopment – Stuart Murphy/Chris Grey, 6:30 for 7:00pm
- 26 Sunday Casting Day, 11:00am, Red Tag Pool, Fairfield
- 28 Tuesday Fly Tying - Advanced - Richard Kos, 7:00pm, The Botanical Art School, South Yarra

August

- 13 Thursday Council Meeting – 6:30 for 7:00 pm
- 20 Thursday Annual Dinner – Venue/time TBD
- 30 Sunday Cane Rod Casting Day, 11.00am, Red Tag Pool, Fairfield

September

- 17 Thursday Annual General meeting (virtual)
- 24 Thursday Council Meeting – 6:30 for 7:00 pm