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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

NOVEMBER 2008

Organisation No. A0024750J

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**NEXT MEETING – AUCTION OF VFFA LIBRARY BOOKS
AT THE KELVIN CLUB, 8.00PM THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2008**

ASSOCIATED CLUBS: ALPINE (BRIGHT) • WANGARATTA • BAIRNSDALE • WARRNAMBOOL • LATROBE VALLEY

AN EVENING WITH PHIL BAILEY

The October general meeting was very well attended, and again we were superbly entertained. Philip Bailey comes with excellent credentials; a past president of our Association, he is a skilled angler and fly tier, and is the author of a number of articles published in angling journals both here and overseas. He also has many friends in the VFFA, who gathered to hear an engrossing account of his angling experiences in the United Kingdom, illustrated with some great photos of the rivers he visits.



Phil in full flight.

Phil now lives in Northern Yorkshire, and fishes the rivers in that area - the Wharfe, the Eden, the Dove, the Ure, and the Driffield Beck. He indicated that 85% of the British population lives within two hours' drive from London. Thus the fishing in the south of England is both pressured and expensive, with day on one of the southern chalk streams, for example, costing from £400 to £1000. However further north, in the area where Phil lives, the pressure is much lighter and the costs more reasonable. The other point to note is that the majority of UK trout anglers prefer fishing stillwaters. Phil's preference is for the rivers, and he frequently fishes all day without encountering another angler.

Phil began with some history, reviewing the contributions of Stewart, Cotton, Lawson and other notable anglers from the 'North Country School', who fished with spiders or wet flies, mainly because the rivers were rough and 'roily', and the lines they used wouldn't float. Their flies were tied very sparse, with long hackles, and their methods were very effective. Many of these great anglers were professional fishermen, and were masters of their craft. They fished with up to 10 flies on their rig, though the pattern these days is to fish with just three flies on droppers. The flies are cast across and allowed to swing around in the current, usually just a few inches below the surface. The method is deadly - one of Phil's fishing companions taking 18 fish in a session from one short section of river. He assured us that his spider patterns would work very effectively here in our waters. To fish this method the rod is held high and casts are short, with very little of the fly line on the water - thus avoiding drag. The water is typically about 5 foot deep, with fairly fast currents. Often there are very few fish rising, so Phil's strategy is to focus mainly on the bubble lines. One of his favourite rivers is the Wharfe, where he would typically take two hours to fish a 50-metre stretch. On a typical day he would fish for about eight hours and would catch 15 - 25 trout, the average size being 2½ - 3lb. The trout are all browns, and are wild fish.

The trout season ends in September, so from then on anglers focus on grayling, which provide better fishing in the colder months. The grayling season remains open until the end of February.

Phil informed us that only barbless hooks were used, and the largest hook size allowed was a size 12. A fine of £400 was extracted from anglers who were apprehended using larger hooks. Phil tied most of his flies on size 16s.

He described the style of nymphing known as Czech Nymphing, where heavily weighted nymphs were pitched out and allowed to trundle along the bottom in fast-flowing water that was typically 4 – 5 foot deep. The method was popularised in the United Kingdom following the world championships in 1990, where the Czech and Polish anglers excelled using this method. They often used rods that were 12 foot long and lines of thin spider wire.



The Wharfe at Bolton Abbey

Philip elaborated on his favourite river – the Wharfe - which he fished at Bolton Abbey. The cost included a £300 annual membership, and then £25 per day fishing fee. In comparing these UK rivers with those he was familiar with here in Australia, he suggested that the English rivers were colder and had much more fly life. He described another club that he was familiar with which had

17 members who had access to 17 miles of river. There was a bag limit of four trout per day, and the river was stocked to maintain a good head, with 20 brown trout being tipped in every 3 weeks. Phil's best fish was a 5½ lb brown taken on a 3-weight rod and 7x tippet.

He also described the Drifffield Beck, which is the most northern chalk stream in Britain. Apparently a very keen angler paid £7.2 million for a property on this stream in order to gain access to one mile of it. Anglers pay £60 per day to fish a section of this stream, where the trout average 2 - 2½ lb. Browns are the preferred species – any rainbows caught are killed. The river has a good head of fish, and plenty of fly life to keep them looking up and interested in whatever is on the surface.

Philip concluded his very informative and captivating presentation with a brief description of some angling he experienced in Islay in Scotland. His final photo showed Tony Brothers, who visited Phil in the UK some months ago, holding up a large grayling he had caught, and looking very pleased indeed.



Phil with a nice fish.

President's Message

The October General Meeting was very well attended with former President, Phil Bailey, giving a well researched presentation on some of the favourite rivers he fishes in the U.K. and the history of the flies used. Twenty-four members attended dinner beforehand, and nearly as many again joined us for the talk. Phil kindly gave us more than 60 flies, which we are free to use as we please.

Mike Stevens has also kindly donated four copies of New Zealand's *Mataura River*, by Ian Pullar, for raffle prizes and a copy for the Library.



The Opening Weekend at 'Tranquil Rises' at Flowerdale was also a great success. There is a trip report elsewhere in this newsletter.

There will be a book auction at the November General Meeting. Marty Rogers is the auctioneer, and you will have already received a catalogue of books on offer. This is a great opportunity to top up on your fishing library, or buy a Christmas present for a mate.

All members will have received their Subscription notices and I urge you to forward your subs as soon as possible. It makes the Treasurer's job so much easier – is the job ever easy?

Merchandise continues to sell well. Hugh Maltby is doing a great job and can be contacted prior to the monthly meeting, on 9455 9017, for anyone wishing to purchase any of the items for sale. The anthology *Geehi to Great Lake* has been a great success and only 27 copies remain out of the print run of 400. I have given copies as a gift to a number of non-V.F.F.A. anglers and have been pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoyed reading it.

Finally, a reminder to everybody regarding the Christmas Dinner on 18 December, which is just around the corner. Bring along a mate to hear Michael Youl from Tasmania, who is our guest speaker, and make it a great finale to the year.

Peter Boag



November General Meeting

Auction of VFFA Library Books



Marty in rehearsal

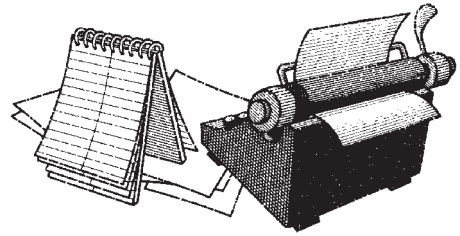
The November General Meeting will be an auction of books from our VFFA library, including some superb titles which are no longer required as part of our library stock. (Can you believe that Scholes, Sautelle, Clarke and Goddard, and John Waller Hills are among the authors whose classic titles are up for sale!) This being the case, the auction will only be open to VFFA members. A full catalogue of titles to be auctioned is included as an insert with this newsletter.

Our auctioneer will again be the incorrigible Marty Rogers, who will undoubtedly be in scintillating form – ensuring another excellent evening’s entertainment for all who attend. Make sure you have the date – 20 November – marked in your diary, and come along to bid for an early Christmas present.



Barcaldine dam

From the EDITOR'S DESK



Spring has sprung – daylight saving is upon us, the days are lengthening and the temperatures are steadily rising. And we all know, the months of November and December usually offer some of the best fishing in the trout fisher's season. This may well be the case this year. Many of our rivers, as Jim Blakeslee suggests in his Western District report, are already at their summer levels. One can only wonder what they will be like after Christmas.

So now is the time to be out and about – flicking a 'speculative dry' into all the likely spots, drifting a nymph down the riffles and runs, and casting a caddis pattern into the rings spreading across a pool as the evening rise commences. Unfortunately, for many of us, these months leading up to Christmas are just too busy, and finding the time to wet a line can be a real challenge. To help things along the VFFA has organised a number of club outings. The Season Opener, at Tranquil Rises in late October, was a huge success – with lots of fish caught and great times around the campfire in the evenings. The Whitfield King River weekend, held earlier this month, was also very successful, with great fishing and great fun according to all reports. The Big River trip, now a firm fixture and highlight in the annual calendar, is imminent, and John Pilkington has promised that this year's event will be another superb weekend.

At the end of November a VFFA contingent heads for New Zealand to spend a week at Athol and then a second week at Nokomai Station, where the trout in the Matura and other nearby streams will be severely harassed. As a member of this group I am looking forward to the trip with keen anticipation. The packing has already started, the flies are being tied, and the endless lists are being checked and revised. Hubert Reichelt is there now, enjoying three week's fishing. He has promised to leave a few trout in the rivers for us (but assures us they'll be suffering from sore jaws and toothache), and will be reporting back on his exploits when he arrives home.

In late October I spent a few days holidaying in Daylesford, and made a point of visiting the dam at Barcaldine B&B, where the VFFA has stocked trout. My time there was very brief, and the weather was bitterly cold with a howling wind, so I didn't manage to remove any fish. But while I was repairing a mangled leader I did spot a beautifully-coloured brown trout of perhaps 3lb cruising in the shallows. Richard Goodall has assured me there are fish to 4lb or more in the dam, and Frank, the B&B proprietor, reported good catches by some of his recent visitors.

This month's newsletter has two important inserts – the catalogue of books to be auctioned at the November general meeting, and the booking form for the Christmas dinner. Members are strongly encouraged to attend both of these events.

In the October newsletter I suggested that we might run a December newsletter in full colour. Unfortunately the printing costs for this venture were higher than we had hoped, and Council has decided that the money would be better spent in establishing a website for the association in the new year. We are making progress with our planning for a VFFA website, and are confident that we'll have something up and running in the new year. However there are a number of issues still to be resolved, so we'll keep you posted.

In the meantime, make the most of the spring fishing.

Text of Bob Hart's Address at the Annual Dinner, August 29, 2008



Bob Hart

A couple of years ago I decided to test the waters in Alaska, one way or another. I decided, with a mate who lives in Alaska, to combine a fly-fishing and caribou hunting expedition. And the location we chose was a spot inside the Arctic Circle, just north of a tiny coastal village called Kotzebue.

The fish we were targeting were arctic char, a very ancient trout variety that looks and behaves more like a salmon. And the idea was that our fishing adventure would also put us in the way of a few caribou, which were on the move at that time of the year, which was mid-September. I was hoping to bag a trophy animal, which, eventually, I did.

Getting there, we knew, would be challenging. But fortunately I have a friend who spends half of his year in Adelaide, but who is also a fishing and hunting guide in Alaska as well as being a capable bush pilot. He owns and flies a Piper Super Cub, which is one of the few affordable aircraft ever made that handles the territory well. The fact that nobody has manufactured a Super Cub since 1958, however, means that these are pretty funky old aircraft, held together with wires and sticking plaster. So we knew we were going to have an interesting time. We just didn't know how interesting.

Now, my fishing mate lives in Anchorage. We met up there and flew to Kotzebue to meet my pilot friend who flies out of there. We were carrying fishing and hunting gear, so travelling on a scheduled flight was interesting. When we went through the routine of: "Are you carrying firearms, ammunition, knives, or other items that could be considered dangerous", we had to reply, "Well, yes. All of the above." But it was the US, after all. And while the place seems to live in fear of being blown to bits by A-Rabs, they have few concerns about a couple of blue-eyed, sensibly-proportioned good old boys armed to the teeth. So they waved us aboard, and we made it to Kotzebue. Had there been a Democrat Convention in Kotzebue, it may have been another matter, of course. But I digress.

From there, we flew – one at a time, incidentally, as a Super Cub holds only one passenger – north for a couple of hundred clicks until we spotted a river that was dark with char. We landed on a gravel bar, unloaded, and pitched a tent. That was it. But before my mate arrived to help me pitch that tent, I had time to squeeze in a few casts and had a couple of 2 kg fish flapping on the gravel, ready for dinner, by the time he got there.

The place, first of all, is magnificent. Extraordinarily beautiful and, so far, unspoiled. In the short flight from Kotzebue, we had flown, very low, over a couple of herds of caribou, a couple of musk ox and, most alarmingly, half a dozen grizzlies, because this is their habitat. Several had cubs.

My fishing mate, however, knew a thing or two about grizzlies, having been mauled by one a few years ago, and having lived to tell the tale. So he explained that when we fished, we

would have to have a firearm close at hand. The flash fishermen up there tend to wear heavy handguns – usually .357 magnums – on their belts when they fish, but I do not own a handgun, do not wish to own one, and have absolutely no faith in them. Also, I have watched every cowboy movie ever made and have never seen a little fat bloke who could shoot worth a damn. Have you?

So anyway, when we fished, I lugged my .338 Winchester along, and my mate carried his pump action shotgun, which he had loaded up with slugs. It was all a bit of a nuisance and, frankly, the fishing was so good that after the first couple of fish, I seriously doubt I would have noticed a grizzly unless he had bitten me on the bum. Mercifully, none did.

My mate, an uncivilised chap, was spinning for char, and managed to land bigger fish than I did, but that was my own fault. The heaviest outfit I had taken was an eight-weight and a couple of the fish I tied into, which weighed between 10 and 20 kg, were more than I could manage. I still caught dozens of char, however, as well as dozens of dolly vardens and dozens and dozens of grayling, which, incidentally, are delicious from these waters. And even the fish that eventually got away were amazingly entertaining while the struggle lasted, and I did manage to land one 8kg fish, which I was happy with. It took me a while to work out that the only thing the big char would respond to was a saltwater fly – a pink Clouser – that was it. And by the fourth day, given my failed encounters with the big fish, I had run out of those. We released almost everything we caught, incidentally, keeping just a couple of smaller fish each day for dinner.

The stream which we camped near was gin-clear and the weather was staggeringly cold. At night, the temperature fell to about 16 below and the edge of the stream was frozen through much of the day.

The temperature crept just above freezing point by about noon, and that was it. But the sun shone and the sky, except for one afternoon when it snowed, was as clear as the stream. I had never experienced conditions like this before. I found it extraordinary, and very invigorating. There were a few frustrating aspects however – such as trying to thaw out your boots every morning. Not easy. Not to mention that due to the fact that it became dark early, and that we were asleep soon after 8pm, the night usually involved at least one expedition from the sleeping bag to visit the outdoors and risk a very nasty attack of frostbite.

But there was another, even more interesting danger. It was brought to our attention on our third night at our camp site when, at some ungodly hour, I was awoken by the noise of the zip on the outside of our double-layer tent being opened. I was not alarmed because I assumed it was my mate venturing out of doors, as we both had to do from time to time. Until he flicked on a torch, and I noticed he was in his bunk. He had assumed I was the outdoorsman. And at that point, we both let out blood curdling screams - not especially manly ones, either. I snatched up my cumbersome rifle and he worked the pump on his shotgun and then I nervously unzipped the inner layer of the tent. All of which was enough, fortunately, to convince the owner of the big, golden, furry head that was already well inside the first layer of the tent to withdraw, give a loud grunt, and lumber off. I had never seen an animal that big before, not that close, anyway, and not in the wild. I figured at the time he must have been at least a 7-foot grizzly but now, having survived, I am prepared to swear he was at least 10-feet tall. Because who is going to argue with me.

We spent a week in Alaska and, as I mentioned, caught as many fish as we felt like catching.

By the end of the week, frankly, I needed a rest from the bloody things, and had switched to a six-weight to concentrate on graylings and dolly vardens rather than embarrass myself on monster char.

We walked just on 12 miles on the day I decided to bag my trophy caribou, and then had to field-dress the brute and carry the meat and antlers 12 miles back to camp. The Alaskan rangers run a tight ship and often check on carcasses to ensure all the meat has been taken from them. If they feel it hasn't, they will find your campsite and confiscate your antlers, which is fair.

Spare meat goes straight to the indigenous population, except for the bit the grizzlies steal from your camp. Or some distance outside it, if you're wise. It's a good system, and demonstrates a good deal more intelligence than is ever exhibited by the people who monitor hunting in Victoria who, as far as I can tell, have to take TAFE classes to learn how to scratch themselves.

Another admirable twist in Alaska is that you are not permitted to hunt on the day you are flown into your campsite. This is because you may have spotted animals from the air, as we did, and would therefore have an unfair advantage. The sun must set, and then rise again, before you can hunt. I rather like that.

In summary, then, if you are looking for a very different fishing holiday, and you are not a nervous flyer, and you are willing to accept the odds that only one in 25 grizzlies will actually eat you, and that rape allegations against 12 of the other 24 remain unproven, this is the place for you. Just make sure your sleeping bag is very, very warm, and carry a very big stick.

On an autobiographical note, I have fished and hunted all my life, and will continue to do so, grizzlies and greenies permitting. I was given my first rifle at the age of eight by my father, and I cherished it – right up until I had to hand it in to Mr Howard when it was seen to be, by the geniuses in his employ, a weapon of mass destruction. It was a semi-automatic .22. They paid me 10 times as much for it as my father had paid for it all those years before, but I would still rather have the rifle. And if there is a government adviser here tonight, by any chance, here's a tip: if I ever decide to become a mass murderer, there is every chance that I will choose a calibre heavier than .22. And that probably goes for most mass murderers, few of whom actually hold shooters licences. Tell your boss, OK?

Now, I have also fished since I was a small boy – actually, as those of you who know of my passion for food may have guessed, I was never an entirely small boy – and I began, as most of us did, I suspect, as an enthusiastic drowner of worms. My father had built a weekender on the banks of the Nerang River on the Gold Coast in Queensland and it was there that I learnt something about fishing that I would like to share with you tonight.

Our place was well up river in a patch that offered some pretty good fishing in those days – I'm talking about the mid 1950s to mid-1960s. I was excited about this place, our family's first and only holiday place, and the night we moved in I rushed out into the back yard to try my luck. I had made a pudding bait, something I loved to fish with in those days. It was a stodgy dough which I mixed with a tin of sardines, some mullet gut, a few drops of aniseed oil, and steamed in a cloth. Truly disgusting.

Anyway, I baited a hook with some of this stuff, cast into the river from our jetty, and immediately hooked into a decent fish. Within a minute, I had a good bream flapping on the

lawn. And within an hour, I had 20 of them, all decent, on the lawn. And then they went off the bite.

My mother had mixed feelings about all this. She suspected, not unreasonably, she would be cleaning the bloody things, and she was quite right. But as we had relatives dropping by in numbers the next day, she was pleased at the thought of producing a massive fish pie. And I was excited: I had never experienced fishing like that in my life, and it was all happening in my own backyard. Unbelievable.

The next morning, my mother sent me off to a nearby grocery shop to buy nutmeg, which she needed for the pie. And as I was doing this, I ran into our solitary neighbour, a charming old British army Brigadier who had retired to this spot with his wife a year earlier.

“Morning Brigadier,” I called out. “How’s things.”

“I’m fine,” he said. “But the mem’sahib is off colour.”

“Nothing serious, Brigadier?” I said.

“Not really. It’s just that since the day we arrived, she’s been training these bloody fish to eat out of her hand. Feeds ‘em every morning, regular as clockwork. But when she went out this morning, not a bloody fish. Ungrateful bastards.”

Naturally, I sympathised. And I managed to discourage my mother from inviting them over for fish pie which, I am pleased to report, was a beauty. But curiously, in the 10 years we owned that place, I never caught another bream there.

Thanks for your attention, ladies and gentlemen. And for inviting me along tonight, and for putting up with my nonsense. And finally, a disclaimer: I no longer fish for bream with pudding bait. I am a very ordinary fly-fisherman, but a fanatical one. And if there are any questions anybody has about the wonders of fishing Alaska, or anything else, such as how to frighten a grizzly or make a fish pie, I will be happy to try to answer.

VFFA Meetings & Activities

NOVEMBER 2008

7,8&9 Fishing Weekend – King River
20 **General Meeting – Book Auction**
21-23 Fishing Trip – Big River
23 Nov-5 Dec – Fishing trip to NZ

DECEMBER 2008

18 Christmas Dinner
– Speaker Michael Youl

FEBRUARY 2009

19 **General Meeting** - Liar’s Night

MARCH 2009

7-13 Fishing Trip “Hayes on Brumbys”,
Tasmania
19 **General meeting**
- Speaker John Philbrick

APRIL 2009

16 **General meeting**
- Speaker: Peter Dixon

New Members

The VFFA welcomes Norman Griffiths as a new member, and would wish him a long and fulfilling membership of the Association.

JAZZMAN TURNS 70

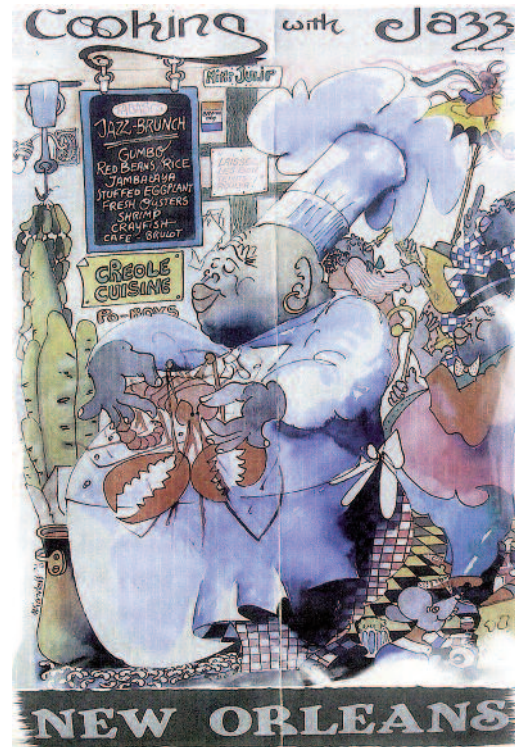
To celebrate a very significant birthday, Tony Brothers recently hosted 70 guests at The Kelvin Club and treated them to a Cajun Meal fit for a king.

The meal was followed by copious amounts of his speciality - Jazz. Tony whipped up a storm on his 'liquorice stick'. With Janet providing the vocals and with the support of a dozen other musicians, he provided some superb entertainment for the invited guests.

All of Tony's family were in attendance, and were very proud of their dad. I have never seen anybody work so hard on their 70th birthday.

Thank you Tony for a wonderful night and congratulations on your 70th.

Choco



The birthday invitation



Janet adds some vocal support



Tony in performance mode

Tranquil Rises

When your correspondent arrived at Ray Butterworth's 'Tranquil Waters' on Friday afternoon, a number of members were already in camp and out fishing the dams. Come evening, there was a baker's dozen around the fire pit, which is more than I recall in the past for the first evening at Flowerdale. A good number of fish had been caught on both wets and dries.

On Saturday morning a couple of us fished the King Parrot upstream from Hazeldene without success. Bill Skacey and Rob Ainscow fished the King Parrot downstream, with Bill remarking it bears no resemblance to the stream he fished years ago; overgrown with blackberries and the stream in poor condition, it is one to cross off his list.

For those who stayed at 'Tranquil Rises' success was to be had in varying degrees, and again wets and dries were successful. With arrivals during the day we had 21 for the evening. A feature of 'Tranquil Waters' is the fire pit, and even with this number cooking and chatting about the day's fishing, it works very well indeed. Joe Haslauer provided his usual assortment of Austrian style meats, cheeses, breads etc, for general sharing, if you were lucky enough to be present before it all disappeared.



*John Kenfield (aka "Gadget")
sneaking up on them*



Richard Kos investigates a rise

We thanked Ray for his hospitality over the years the VFFA has had its Opening Weekend at 'Tranquil Waters'. Because of his ongoing health concerns it may be our last visit. However, he assured us that as long as he continues to own the property we are always welcome.

Sunday morning looked as if we might see some rain, but alas, although a few spots were felt it was just that, a few spots only.

I spent some time chatting with Ray and learnt how much he had put into his 'dream' over the 10 years of his ownership, every year of which has had below average rainfall. This story sounds all too familiar. Notwithstanding the lack of rain he has the property looking in good shape as a result of his work over the years.



Treasurer Tony Mitchem in action



John Kenfield strikes again

Sunday's fishing turned out to be very slow, with only a small number of fish caught before lunchtime. A highlight of the morning was Tony Mitchem observing his son, Alex, catching his first trout on the fly. When Tony jumped into the air and shot off like a rocket towards where Alex was fishing, I initially thought he had trodden on a snake.

Rick Williams also got the first scales on his newly acquired Peter Campbell landing net, which made him very pleased with himself. A few of us remained for a short lunch and reflected on what a successful weekend it had been. Again, thanks to Ray, and I am sure all members thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.

Peter Boag



Hugh, Ray and David



All fired up

Don't Miss Your Christmas Dinner This Year

The VFFA annual Christmas Dinner will be held again this year at The Kelvin Club on Thursday, December 18. Our guest speaker this year is Michael Youl, who lives and fishes in Tasmania, and has some special family connections to those original intrepid and determined pioneers who organised the transportation of trout fry to Tasmania in 1864.

The VFFA Christmas Dinner at The Kelvin Club is always a very special occasion, and members are encouraged to complete and return the enclosed Booking Form, and bring a guest or two as well.

Michael Youl

(The following notes on our guest speaker was provided by Nick D'Antione, a friend and fishing companion of Michael Youl.)

Michael is the great grandson of Sir James Youl, who was responsible for the introduction of trout and salmon to Tasmania in 1864.

Michael was born in Launceston in December 1928. He grew up on the family property, "Elsdon" Perth in Tasmania, married Julia Bell (Dooie) and shortly afterwards moved to "Fairfield" at Epping Forest, where they farmed for some 35 years. Michael and Dooie have three children - Carmen, Vivienne and Arndell. They also have four grandchildren.

Michael has been a notably innovative farmer and international sheep judge. As a sheep breeder he bred and exported stud Polwarth and Merino sheep, raised prime lambs and beef cattle and developed Fairfield into one of the finest properties in Northern Tasmania. His interests have included horse racing, fishing, tennis, shooting, and latterly has taken up playing bridge. He is also a very astute and knowledgeable share trader.

In recent years Michael has taken up saltwater fly fishing, again with all the vigour and enthusiasm of his other pursuits. He has a keen interest in all that is new and innovative, and always seeks out those who are breaking new ground. This trait applies to all facets of his life, but no more so than with his fishing.

Michael's enthusiasm and knowledge of flyfishing is immense. He recalls wonderful memories of his early days fishing with his brother Bill, Max Christianson, Colonel GAD Youl, General Wordsworth, and Frank Bond, to name a few. There are stories of how he introduced many younger people to fly fishing (myself included). From November to April Michael is to be found at his summer residence in the highlands of Tasmania, enjoying the company of fellow flyfishers and practicing his craft.

One of his signature traits is his encouragement of younger people and genuine interest in their company. His willingness to listen to new ideas and also impart his knowledge to others is something we could all aspire to.

Where There's a Will

By Sir Julian Paget

(The following article was published in a recent Flyfishers' Journal (Summer 2008 issue), the official journal of the Flyfishers' Club, based in London. A copy of the journal was posted to David Grisold, then president of the VFFA. Sir Julian Paget is a retired Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Army and the author of a number of books on military history. He is a very keen fly fisher, and the article below provides a fascinating tale of the lengths to which he went to find some fishing at the end of the Second World War. In seeking his permission to use the article, we received a letter from Sir Julian in which he said that he was 'delighted and flattered' that we would include it in our November newsletter.)

It was late May 1945 and my battalion was at rest in a little village between the Elbe and the Weser, with VE Day only a few weeks behind us. Life was leisurely, the weather was fine; it was also the season of the Mayfly, and I felt the urge to go fishing. The prospects did not look particularly good however. The country was very flat, and the only streams we had seen were slow and muddy, and unlikely to hold trout. None the less, I set forth armed with a one-inch map and the 'hope that springs eternal in the Angler's breast.' Another inveterate angler came with me, and we set off in a jeep towards the only piece of higher ground shown on the map.

Arriving at a village where there was a brook marked as flowing off some nearby slopes, we found to our great surprise a stream far lovelier than we had dared hope for. It flowed through rich grass meadows, clean and shallow, and fast. It was full of good food, and between patches of weed were fine shingly lies, which were actually occupied by fat, speckled trout, feeding greedily on a good hatch of Mayfly. It was all too good to be true, and we sought an explanation as to why this bit of water was so different from all the others nearby.

Spying a German in uniform, actually fishing, we approached him and demanded in indifferent German (but somewhat arrogantly as the 'conquering heroes') an explanation of what was going on! He bowed politely, and answered in excellent English. "I am actually the owner of this stream, and am enjoying some good fishing." He then opened his fishing bag and showed us four lovely brown trout of about two pounds. 'Fraternisation' was still forbidden at this stage, so I proceeded to 'interrogate' our former enemy, who was only too pleased to tell us all we wanted to know. He said he was a doctor and that his house had been occupied by a British cavalry regiment.

"They behaved very well," he declared. "They were true sportsmen. I used to be a national casting champion, and I had 17 Hardy rods. They told me to keep my three favourite rods and to hand over the rest, which I did. I have always loved fishing, and I created this stream by installing a series of sluices, planting plenty of chalk stream weed and making some gravel lies. Then I stocked it annually with 6,000 trout brought specially from Bavaria. I am quite pleased with the result!" We had to agree, and left, impatient to take up his invitation to come and fish whenever we wanted. The only problem was to find the necessary tackle.

I had optimistically brought with me in my Left Out of Battle baggage, a reel and line, together with a packet of assorted hooks, and that evening I got down to tying some flies. There was a farmyard near the Officers' Mess, and a visit to the chicken run produced a collection of brown and grey feathers of various sizes, while a cockerel that was destined for our dinner that night provided a complete neck. During the war we had been issued with a splendid little cloth hold-all, intended to help us carry out 'running repairs' to our clothing. It was called a 'housewife', and contained buttons, needles, wool, cotton, safety pins and even a thimble. I don't remember ever using it for its intended purpose, but now it suddenly came into its own and proved invaluable. Before long I had quite a good selection of Ginger Quills, Grey Wulffs and even some Mayflies of a sort.

The next morning I wheedled out of the Medical Officer some surgical gut, once used to sew up wounds but now happily no longer needed. It was of the highest quality, and I soon tied up several casts tapered to 4X. But I still had no rod. The answer to this was the wireless aerial on my jeep which had, after all, been made by Hardy as part of their war effort! Placating an indignant Signals Officer with promises of trout for breakfast, I set to work. Having bound on wire eyes and a cloth butt for a grip, I had a very reasonable rod; the action was rather slow and stiff, but one could cast a long and accurate line quite easily and lightly. The reel was soon fixed with plaster (again from the medical supplies), and I was ready.

Two days later, I had the opportunity to get away, and hurried off to the river, full of hope. It was not an encouraging day, very hot and bright, but I was fishing and I was content with that. Walking slowly along the bank, I saw nothing moving, but seeing a likely looking lie alongside a patch of weed, I cast my Ginger Quill into the head of the stickle and watching it float down. Nothing happened, but as it came down a second time, a long, dark shape appeared from under the weed bed, turned slowly and followed my fly downstream. He rose, opened a wide, pink mouth, and slowly and gently sucked in my fly. Somehow I waited those agonising moments until he turned, and then I tightened. The hook was well home, and away he went across the stream, straight for a maze of roots under the other bank.

I held him as hard as I dared, praying that the Medical Officer's gut would stand this unaccustomed strain. It did, and the immediate danger was averted. But then the fish came back downstream, and was fast into a heavy patch of weed before I could stop him. There was no doubt that it was a good fish and I was determined to land it if I could. But he would not budge, and so, with a prayer that there would not be an Adjutant's Parade next morning, I slid into the river in my Battle Dress, up to my waist. Here I felt on more equal terms, and soon hand-lined him out of his lair.

But that was far from being the end, for he led me a merry dance, up and down the stream, from one weedbed to another, while I stumbled along behind from one pothole to another, but still hanging on, just hoping for the best on my makeshift tackle. At last, he showed signs of tiring, and I coaxed him downstream to a spot where the bank was less steep; but the end was not to be yet, for I had no net. I could not beach him, and so the only hope was to try and grab him and throw him ashore. The first attempt nearly ended in disaster. As I touched him, he came to life, doubled round behind my legs and buried himself deep in a thick patch of weed. Very carefully, I persuaded him to come out, and managed to draw him alongside the bank again.

Tucking my rod under my arm, I grabbed him with both hands and flung him up and onto the bank, with myself on top, equally exhausted.

All's well that ends well! It was a beautifully marked cock fish weighing two pounds fourteen ounces. The Medical Officer and Signals Officer both got their promised trout for breakfast. And I had several more happy days on that lovely stream before we moved on elsewhere.

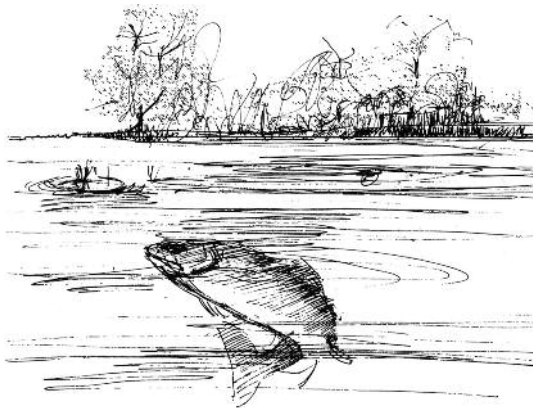


Cartoon by Roger McPhail

Summer Days In The High Country

(Julian Newton-Brown)

Once I got the hang of fly fishing I became somewhat addicted to it, and I assume most of those who take it up suffer a similar fate. Volumes have been written, as we all know, about this sport or pastime. Much of the appeal is that the places where one enjoys such a pursuit are invariably of great beauty or tranquillity, rather than, but not excluding the reward of a fish or two. Solace is a necessary requirement for the human spirit, and this is provided abundantly with rod in hand. Busy people are unable to turn their minds off, and find problems invading their consciousness without being resolved. When the mind is given an enjoyable task the problems recede and the enjoyment becomes dominant. Later on, in returning to normality, the solution will often be obvious. It is a bit like delaying a vexing decision until after a night's sleep. How often have we made hasty decisions only to see the error next day. But I digress.



During my first two summers of flyfishing I worked in a soil and concrete laboratory at Rocky Valley as the dam was being built. Part of the job was to measure evaporation. The tank containing the instruments needed topping up at times, so we took buckets to the creek for water and often watched the trout taking insects. I was told the cattlemen had brought them up many years earlier. In 1960, when the dam first filled, the Fisheries Department liberated 5000 rainbow fingerlings there.

The Bogong High Plains have a vast area of fishable water. Apart from the two high dams, Rocky Valley and Pretty Valley, there is over 30 km of aquaducts ('racelines' in engineering terms). Above Pretty Valley Dam the river is joined by the creek from Mt Jim, which snakes through a grassy alpine plain. Further afield, in a valley between the Bogong High Plains and the Mount Locke-Mount Feathertop ridge, lies the West Kiewa River. The East Kiewa River has two branches which join at the little town of Bogong. Both east and west branches come together near the town of Mount Beauty and from there the Kiewa River eventually joins the Murray near Albury.

Over the next few years I explored almost every bit of these waters above Mount Beauty, and one of the things which helped was a motorbike. Alex Milledge, of Milledge Brothers in South Melbourne, had bought a flat in Falls Creek. He told me that motorbikes were coming back into fashion. He loaned me an Hodaka for a short time, and then I purchased two Yamaha 100cc bikes, one being for my new wife Beth. With the Hodaka, a friend Doug Paine and I set off for Pretty Valley for a morning's fishing. We caught numerous fish as the day wore on. I said I had better go home as something was on my mind. Doug said, "Well, you would have missed lunch by now so why don't we fish the rest of the water". This appealed to me, so we continued on and I caught my bag. By then it was about 6pm. When I

arrived back home I saw that the car was gone, which seemed strange. I'm going inside, my new mother-in-law, who was minding our baby daughter, greeted me frostily. Then I remembered why I should have left the river earlier - it was our daughter's first birthday. Beth had assumed that I must have come to grief on the bike, as I could not be so inconsiderate as to miss the occasion, and had left in the car to search for me. She was equally unimpressed, and I remained as popular as a pork chop in a Synagogue for several days after.

Apart from fishing, we rode bikes on all the SEC's fire tracks, and even up along the West Kiewa track to Mount Locke and on to Hotham for lunch before returning home. I had heard there were trout in the river, so at one of the many bridges we crossed I scrunched up a bit of grass seed and tossed it into the water. It was devoured immediately. So on the next trip I took a small four-piece rod, and fished while the others went to lunch, catching about 20 trout. Most were small and were returned, but I kept a few. When the other riders returned they were amazed and enquired how they were caught. I walked down stream and caught another two in front of my audience, who were most impressed. We had trout for dinner. I later extended such trips by camping at night on a grassy bank.

Sometimes no fish were seen or caught, and later I discovered why. A few of us took a walk to the Red Hut (burnt in 2003) on the bank of the Rocky Valley branch at the foot of Mount Spion Kopje. Simon Paton and I walked upstream armed with our rods. A young chap, Mathew Dobson, had preceded us and had thrown rocks into the water. For some time we didn't have any action, but all of a sudden we found heaps of fish – at the point where Mathew had turned back. We concluded that if the water had been fished or disturbed the fish would be put down for at least a day.



When the fish were on the job they were really hungry. The West Kiewa River is in a moderately steep valley with small pools, and a small fly lobbed in while keeping a low profile would invariably result in a take. One day I kept count of 60 fish hooked. Most were rainbows and were returned as far too small, but what sport it was!

The rainbows liberated at Rocky Valley in 1960 grew well, and by the time I started fishing we were catching them up to, and over 1 kg. I met Geoff Brooke at his restaurant in Queen St, and as we needed all the help we could get in attracting summer visitors, I invited him up. He came up a week later with his wife Fairley.

His first request was, "Are there any grasshoppers about?" Beth gave him a baking dish and told him where to find them. He was perplexed and asked, "Why the dish?" She told him to "Put some water in it. They will hop in but can't hop out". Geoff filled his cork box, and I took him and Peter Robinson out in my homemade tin boat. Geoff caught only one small fish, but as it was hopeless to fly fish, I cadged a hook and a grasshopper from him. Soon

my fly line started to disappear and a 2½ lb rainbow was the culprit. Geoff was not impressed, but that evening I gave him a couple of Dunny Brushes and he caught a lot of trout, exclaiming how fantastic it all was. I was delighted to hear him say so, and thought he would give us a good write-up in his column in the Sun. But all he wrote was that we “caught trout up to 2½ lb at dusk on a large dark fly.”

One cold foggy day in late May Mike Nicholas came in and asked if I had any scales. He then emptied a rucksack of trout into the sink. The largest was 6.5 lb, another was 4.5 lb and about a dozen were smaller. I asked how they were caught. He held up his hand and said, “Dry”. I asked, “Fly?” “No,” he said and held his hand up again. The penny dropped - they had been tickled. The Jim Creek had held those fish, and this was a revelation. In subsequent years I caught large trout there. Stomach contents revealed they were cannibals. Mike said he would get the 6.5 lb fish mounted. He got his comeuppance though - a news item indicated the taxidermist’s premises had been burnt to the ground, and nothing was salvaged.

One evening as Mike Nicholas and I came ashore in my tin boat we met two chaps. One was Bob Roles, and the other his mate Jim Allen. Bob told me he worked at Turvilles, and I visited him there a few times to buy gear. Bob Browning was a frequent visitor to the area and I came to know him well. He told me of a new fly-fishing shop being run by these two, and known as “Roles and Allen”.

Another visitor was Allan Figgis, a retired bank manager. He related how he fished the Test, in Hampshire in the UK. A wealthy cousin of his, also a Figgis, was a member of a syndicate owning a section of the river, and so Allan was given permission to fish there. But he wasn’t impressed. The bag limit was a brace of fish per day, and certain flies were not allowed. He caught his two fish by 10 am and had no option but to fill in the rest of the day at the pub. The syndicate members had their own room and grog cupboard there, and a member told him, “Oh, you are a Figgis. You may drink Figgis’s grog, and sit in Figgis’s chair”.

One summer in the early 1970’s a couple booked in for a week or so. They were Jack Kelly and his wife. I later discovered they were on their honeymoon, even though Jack was then in his 50’s. Jack asked me if there were any fish in the rivers nearby. I explained there were, and that they were prolific but mostly very small. This suited Jack and off he went every day, later telling me he preferred fishing small waters and puddles. In later years I came to know Jack (a VFFA member) very well indeed, and fished with him on numerous occasions.

The fishing in Rocky Valley and Pretty Valley remained good until the mid 70’s, and then started to decline, even though I caught my biggest Rocky Valley fish of 3lb 5oz in March 1976. As chairman of the Falls Creek Chamber of Commerce, and with their support, I wrote to the Fisheries and Game Department, outlining a management plan we were prepared to perform under their supervision. They responded in the affirmative, sending two field officers up to us. They did a netting survey at Rocky Valley, shot two cormorants, poisoned good fish in Pretty Valley, said what a great idea we had, and then nicked off, never to be heard from again.

A Report From The West – Jim Blakeslee

Since my last report, we've had a month of dry, warm conditions. The downside is that river levels are as low as they would normally be in December and January. Not good for irrigators and maintaining environmental flows later in the season. But on the bright side, the water is running clear, providing excellent conditions for polaroiding Western District trout. On still, humid afternoons, the browns are cruising runs and pools in search of shrimp and aquatic insects – good targets for the sunken nymph. The warm conditions have also accelerated the hatching of caddis and mayflies, and the trout are rising freely to these tasty morsels floating on the surface. The rivers in our area flow through volcanic county. As a result, the water is nutrient rich with luxuriant growth of aquatic plants and algae. These provide habitat and food for swarms of aquatic invertebrates and minnows – all good tucker for hungry trout that grow to surprisingly large sizes relative to the body of water in which they live.



Jim with another fine Western District trout

On a recent outing to the upper reaches of one of our local spring-fed creeks, Bob Loch and I decided to take a bet each way. He tied on one of his #12 deer-hair caddis patterns to



Bob was successful too

fish dry. I tied on a brace of wets – a green #10 “shrimp” (actually a caddis emerger) and a #10 black woolly bugger. We spent a pleasant four hours under blue skies, light breeze, 19°C, stalking the trout that were cruising in open pockets of water under the willows and amongst the ribbons of strap weed. The real challenge was in delivering the fly to the fish that were feeding in confined spaces with very little room for a back cast. The answer was a crisply delivered bow-and-arrow cast. Bob and I took turns spotting fish, then slowly moving into range to “ping” the fly into their feeding path without any false casting. This was really doing battle at close quarters, and required a stealthy approach to avoid spooking the fish. This involved getting into the shade (if possible), with the sun behind so we could see the fish, but they couldn't see us. If the fly was a sunken nymph, we would watch as the trout would swim, and in some cases rush, up to the fly and greedily



Bob extracting another one

suck it in. As the fish turned, munching on the fly, there was just enough time to say “God Save the Queen” before setting the hook. From that point on it was a real battle to keep them from racing into the submerged tree limbs and roots in a frantic effort to break free. Many did their own version of catch-and-release without any help from us. If the fly was a caddis dry delivered by Bob, the trout rose enthus-iastically, and once again, did their best to break him off. In one case I climbed out onto an overhanging limb and reached down into the water to free the leader that had become tangled in a submerged branch by a fishy adversary, which Bob was then able to successfully land.

We kept a couple fish for dinner and checked stomach contents to confirm our suspicions. They were mainly eating shrimp, which accounted for the bright orange colour of the fillets. They were grilled that night, sprinkled with lime, finely chopped fresh dill and spring onions from the garden, and matched with a refreshing local chardonnay. A most satisfactory way to end the day!



Another small Merri River trout



Jim's deadly flies



That bow and arrow cast

Eildon Report

(The following report is a compilation of notes provided by Gary at *Eildon Bait and Tackle* and the GVFF website)

Some 5,000 trout (small – 130 gram) were released into Lake Eildon last week, and 400 were released in the Pondage. DPI had a fishing day at the Pondage recently for primary school students from Alexandra and Eildon, and the largest fish taken was a 10lb brown, caught by a 12 year old girl (on Pink Powerbait – sorry fly fishers!). Her grandfather rang Mick Hall to get the name of a taxidermist!

A 7lb brown and some smaller rainbows were also caught off Riverside Drive by a coarse angler (no reflection on his character – this merely describes his method).

Many rainbows from 2 - 2½lb have been caught in the Upper Goulburn near Jamieson.

The boys at GVFF Centre report that the Goulburn was running at 2000 ML and is crystal clear. All angling methods are working well. Nymphing with #14-16 beadheads has been effective, and significant hatches are occurring throughout the day. Caenids are hatching in the mornings, and caddis through the day and into the evenings. Mayfly duns are present in very small numbers through the day, but from 5pm to dusk Mayfly spinners are in the air in huge numbers.

The smaller streams are also beginning to fire, with good catches on the Rubicon by anglers fishing nymphs. Hatches are increasing in intensity on the Rubicon, so good dry fly fishing should be available soon. The other local small streams are also beginning to fish well.

Antony reminds us in his report that we all need to practice and encourage 'catch and release'. These streams see a lot of anglers

in a season, and stocks will be decimated if fish are kept.

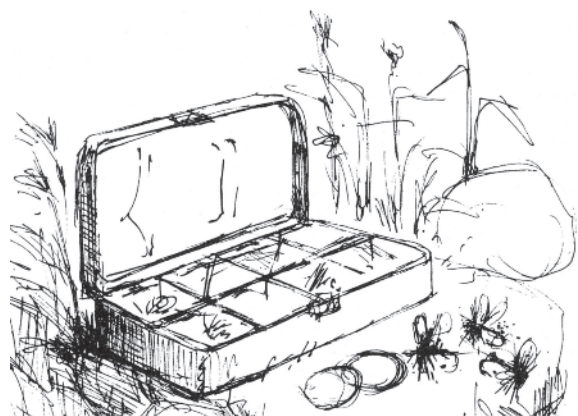
The North-East

VFFA member Andy Zarro has just arrived in Khancoban, and has provided a few brief notes on conditions in the North-East.

Andy reports that a 9lb brown was caught in the Khancoban Pondage a few days ago. The Swampy Plains below the Pondage is apparently fishing well to small fish (up to 2lb). Reports from Eucumbene and Jindabyne indicate that these two storages are also fishing well at present.

However Andy suggested that the rivers in this area should be fished before Christmas, as they are now already at their summer levels, and if they follow a similar pattern to last year, will heat up after Christmas and thus not fish well.

Milton Zeuschner recently spent a week fishing the Eucumbene River with four friends. Over the week they caught 280 trout – mostly browns and most taken on nymphs. Milton was keen to assure us that all fish were returned to the water.



VFFA 2009 TASMANIAN TRIP



A Few Spots Left For The 2009 Tasmanian Trip.

Having had a wonderful time in March 2008, the VFFA will return to Cressy from Saturday March 7 to Friday March 13 next year. Hayes on Brumbys has been booked. Bed and breakfast will be provided, as will linen and towels. We will self cater for lunch and get together for a barbecue at dinner time. Peter Hayes and his guides will be available to take you to the streams or lakes of your choice.

The VFFA Tassie 2009 contingent will meet at 6 pm at the Kelvin Club before the Christmas Dinner on Thursday, 18 December, to discuss the details and finalise sharing arrangements. Members will be responsible for their own travel arrangements to and from Cressy. Some will take their cars over on the Spirit of Tasmania, while others will fly and hire vehicles from Launceston airport.

Accommodation is limited but there are still a few vacancies left, so if you are interested in being part of the team please contact Hamish Hughes on 9822 6811 or hthughes@bigpond.net.au



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TASMANIAN FISHING

The following information has been taken from online reports provided by Mike Stevens and Daniel Hackett. Mike has an excellent website at <http://www.tasfish.com> which provides up to date reports and articles on the fishing in Tasmania, and Daniel Hackett's website, at <http://riverfly.com.au> is another site that members can check for current reports, tips and information on the Tasmanian fishery).

Western Lakes

Mike Stevens fished 'a nice little western lake last week'. The water was still well up and brownies were laying just a metre from the shore in less than 20 cm of water waiting for frogs.

Polaroiding was a cinch with blue sky and good sun. A slowly twitched Mrs Simpson did the trick and ten fish up to a kilo and a half were hooked and released before lunch.

Tasmanian Fly-fishing Championships

The Tasmanian Fly Fishing Lake Championships were held on October 25 and 26, with a large field of 38 anglers. Venues were Little Pine and Penstock, with four three-hour sessions over two days. Despite windy conditions on the Sunday, all anglers caught fish.

Duns are not on either water yet, so stripping wets was the order of the day, with 270 trout caught and released for an average of 7 fish per angler. The best colours for flies were black and green marabou and some "flashy wee wets". Most anglers used fly rigs with two or three flies. A number of

thumping browns and rainbows were caught over 60 cm, with many break-offs, especially on "the hang" at the boat.

A guest angler was 19 year old Lisa Isles of Poulton in the UK. Lisa fishes for the English youth team and she caught 6 fish. Winner of the individual competition was Ian Donnachy with 16 fish, a consistent four in each session.

First time anglers had a great time and benefitted from the experience of fishing with the 12 former and current Australian world team members in the field. (Report by Mark Youngman)

Woods Lake A Mecca For Early Season Anglers

Woods Lake continues to be one of the most exciting trout fisheries in Tasmania. Catch rates are high, with many anglers taking limit bags of five fish. It should be noted that regulations are quite specific to Woods Lake.

A 5 fish bag limit applies for Woods Lake, with a minimum length of 30 cm and only two fish exceeding 60 cm.

Lures, trolling and casting have had very good success, as has fly fishing with Woolly Bugger style flies.

10 Best Inland waters by catch rate

The top ten stillwaters fished in 2007-08 (in descending order) were Arthurs Lake, Great Lake, Penstock Lagoon, Little Pine Lagoon, Woods Lake, Four Springs Lagoon, Bronte Lagoon, Bradys Lake, Brushy Lagoon and Meadowbank Lake. The most popular rivers (also in descending order) were Brumbys



Creek, River Derwent, the South Esk, Macquarie, Mersey, Huon, Tyenna, Meander and St Patricks rivers and the River Leven. Meanwhile, the highest daily catch rates for the year were reported at St Patricks River (3.54), Arthurs Lake (2.98), Woods Lake (2.96), Tyenna River (2.6) and Lake Burbury (1.91). (from Mike Stevens)

Tailing trout and mayflies... by Daniel Hackett

Over the past few weeks it has been great to get back into the season, and as per usual, the action has started with tailing trout and floodwater feeders. While headwater creeks proved difficult due to lower than normal temperatures, classic tailing waters such as those along the Little Pine River (eg Little Pine Lagoon and Lake Kay) have fished extremely well as above average September rainfalls pushed waters out into floodplains where trout happily foraged. On the lowlands, the South Esk also flooded twice, which provided excellent fishing for river fish cruising onto pockets of pasture after beetles and worms.

The fishing highlight of September and October was flood-feeders. Better than average rainfall (and snow) has recharged the headwaters of the South Esk, North Esk and St Pats, and filled the Western Lakes region to overflowing. During the past week the mayfly have started on the rivers, with the lower Macquarie and Brumbys Creek getting the first of the hatches, while the South Esk and North Esk are due to start any day.

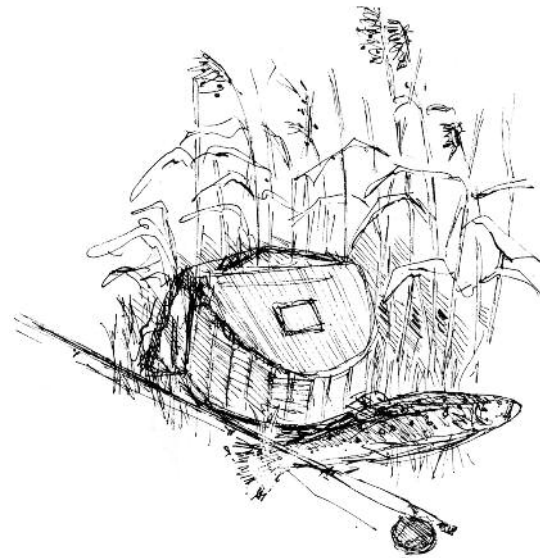
A Fishing Tip:

If tailing trout are proving difficult, suspend a small, inert wet such as Simon's Snail or a Black and Peacock Spider under a Glister Tag. A small twitch should be employed to get the trout's attention, followed by a pause as the fish inspects the offerings.

Problems In Potato Country

Since the invitation was advertised a few months ago a number of VFFA members have taken the opportunity to become affiliated members of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers. However in recent weeks the members of the Latrobe Valley club have found that they can't fish their dams. The local potato crops have been stricken by a debilitating potato cyst nematode (PCN) – a microscopic, worm-like organism which, while not harmful to humans, has the potential to devastate potato crops. As a result, a 20km quarantine zone was placed around the detection site, virtually cutting off all trade between Thorpdale and the rest of Australia. The nematode can be spread by people either walking or driving over infected areas.

So the Latrobe Valley members have agreed to not fish their dams until the problem is dealt with. Locals are confident the situation will be resolved soon and fishing will resume on the dams. We will let you know when the dams are again available to us.



ATF – The Latest

Mick Hall has just arrived home from the UK, where he was a guest overseas fly tier at one of the major Tackle Shows. He reports that he had a thoroughly good time – fly tying, fishing, and talking fly fishing with lots of fellow anglers.

Mick has again accepted the position of President of the Australian Trout Foundation, and is already up to his eyebrows in proposals, submissions, meetings, discussions, articles and projects, all designed to protect and promote our local trout fishing. If we still have some reasonable trout fishing in five years' time, then Mick's efforts on our behalf, along with those who work beside him in the ATF, will be a major contributing factor.

Mick has advised us that there will be an important ATF meeting on Friday, November 21, to discuss the structure and administration of the organisation. The meeting will be held at a private house in Ferntree Gully.

Interested VFFA members are most welcome to attend, and more importantly, are invited to become involved in aspects of the ATF administration, where there is a great need for additional help. Many of the tasks will involve only an hour or two per month, but some extra manpower will make a huge difference to the effectiveness of the organisation.

If you are interested in helping and would like to attend the November 21 meeting, or would just like to have some more information, then please ring Mick on 5774 2825 or 0427 445 439.



FLY OF THE MONTH

This month we feature another of Andrew Mossman's flies – his Parachute Blue Dun.

The Parachute Blue Dun

This is a variation of the standard Blue Dun, but is tied without wings and with a poly post around which the parachute hackle is wrapped. It floats well and sits nicely in the surface film. On occasions it outfishes the standard pattern, and I don't really know why, as it lacks the prominent wings which I think are an important trigger. It is probably taken for an emerger, because of the way 'para duns' sit down in the surface film. In any case it is a useful fly when the duns are hatching and also a good nondescript for searching likely water.

My tie for this fly is:

- Hook Tiemco 102Y, sizes 15,17 & occasionally 19
- Body Mid-grey Seals' Fur
- Ribbing Waxed dark brown sewing thread
- Tail Natural grey cock hackle
- Post 'Hi Vis' microzelon, off white or light grey.
(Only use white if your eyesight is poor)
- Hackle Grey saddle 'Whiting', probably dyed

This is a great little fly and is one of the many flies that I use when the *Deleatidium Vernale* duns are coming down. In quieter times, when the fish are not rising, I find that searching likely water with an Adams, tied in a similar way, is usually more successful. The flies are so similar that it is hard to understand why the fish seem to prefer the Adams. I guess that the slight brown hue in the hackles must be the difference. This is yet another example of the importance of colour in artificial flies. I am convinced that colour is critical in fly tying, and is often responsible, if used skilfully, for successfully deceiving a selectively feeding trout into taking a fly.





LIBRARY NEWS

All members should remember that the Mick Martin Memorial Library is one of the most extensive collections of fly-fishing literature in Australia. It is valuable in its own right but is a great asset to members wishing to expand their knowledge or who simply enjoy sitting by the fireside and vicariously enjoying the exploits of others. In addition, the library boasts a number of videos on trout fishing. Our librarian Marty Rogers will be available prior to each general meeting to assist members wishing to borrow books or videos.

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

Part 2 Books available for reference only and not to be taken from the library.

Part 3 Books bequeathed to the Association and not to be taken from the cabinet.

OVERDUE BOOKS

Our librarian reports that a number of members have failed to return library books on time. Could all those book loving members who have failed to return books promptly do so.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "Geehi to Great Lake"	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon)	\$35.00 each
Cloth badges	\$7.00 each
Diaries	\$2.00 each
<i>The Australian Trout by Jack Ritchie</i>	\$20.00
<i>(Special offer – buy one, get one free!)</i>	
V.F.F.A. car stickers	\$2.00 each

Members wishing to purchase any of these items should contact Hugh Maltby prior to the monthly General Meeting on telephone 9455 9017.

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2008 Annual Dinner:

- Armadale Angler • Aussie Angler • Australian Fishing Network • Compleat Angler Box Hill • Compleat Fly Fisher Melbourne • Daniel Hackett, RiverFly, Tasmania • Fly Life Publications • J M Gillies • Lowes Furniture • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall www.kossiedun.com.au • Michael Steven's Publishing • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Nick Taransky - Bamboo Rod Maker • Pro Angler Fishing Tackle • Ray Brown, Onkaparinga Flies & Cane Rods