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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

OCTOBER 2010

Organisation No. A0024750J

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**NEXT MEETING – FLY TYING WITH THE MASTERS
AT THE KELVIN CLUB, 8:00 PM, THURSDAY OCTOBER 21, 2010**

The Annual General Meeting

Members gathered at the Kelvin Club on Thursday, September 16, for the Annual General Meeting. The agenda for the meeting, which was an insert in the September newsletter, included retiring president Peter Boag's Annual Report, the financial statement for the previous 12 months, the election of office bearers, and the presentation of the Tom & Frank McDonough Memorial Trophy to the winner of the casting at the President's Casting Day.

Peter Boag's Annual Report is given in full in this newsletter. Copies of the financial statement were distributed to all who attended the AGM, and additional copies are available on request from Treasurer Tony Mitchem. The winner of the Tom & Frank McDonough Memorial Trophy was a very delighted Colin Morrison, who was present to receive his trophy.

The election of office bearers saw the elevation of Rick Dugina to the position of President and Terry Rogers to the position of Senior Vice-President. Hamish Hughes is the new Junior Vice-President. Two councillors retired – Paul Squires and Colin Morrison, and were replaced by Dermot O'Brien and Bernard Holbery.

The full council is: President - Rick Dugina, Senior Vice-President - Terry Rogers, Junior Vice-President - Hamish Hughes, Secretary - Richard Garvey, Treasurer - Tony Mitchem, Editor - Lyndon Webb, Librarian - Marty Rogers, and eight Councillors - Bernard Holbery, Richard Kos, Hugh Maltby, John Pilkington, Dermot O'Brien, Joe Haslauer, David Grisold, and Rick Williams. The immediate retiring President, Peter Boag, remains as an ex-officio member.

Advance Notice – October Meeting – Fly Tying



The October general meeting will be an evening of fly tying. Our expert demonstrators will again be Hubert Reichelt, Peter Campbell, and Andrew Mossman. These skilled exponents need no introduction – they have demonstrated their prowess on previous fly tying evenings, and we have all benefited from watching them in action.

These evenings are very relaxed and convivial while at the same time providing ample opportunity for members to find out about new flies, along with the subtle skills and techniques that make complicated patterns easier to tie and more attractive (at least to the trout we hope).

Please join us for what will undoubtedly be a thoroughly entertaining and instructive time.

President's Annual Report

(Peter Boag, retiring president)

Gentlemen, tonight it is my privilege and pleasure as the 40th President of the VFFA to present the Annual Report for 2009 – 2010.

The release of Tony Brothers' *The Country for an Angler* at the Annual Dinner was undoubtedly a highlight for the VFFA this year. To release the book at the Annual Dinner was a wonderful occasion. I do not think there are many fishing clubs in this country who could even consider such an undertaking, let alone bring it to fruition. We were very fortunate to have had Tony Brothers undertake the writing of the history. He acknowledged the enormity of the task, but nevertheless stuck to it. In addition, we were very fortunate to have had another VFFA member, Rick Keam, provide the editorial guidance necessary to bring the book to completion.



At this juncture, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the publisher of the history, Stevens Publishing Pty. Ltd. VFFA member Mike Stevens was very helpful in all matters connected with the publication of the book. In his customary manner, Michael was very professional, and delivered to us a finished book of which we can be very proud. Printed, bound, and published in Tasmania, the history makes a very neat companion to the previously published *Geehi to Great Lake*.

There is no doubting, the VFFA has had a long list of members who have been significant contributors to all matters relating to fly-fishing in Victoria, and the history makes for a very interesting read. In the words of Rick Keam, “it will be a book to treasure”.

The fact that David Grisold and I could deliver a digital copy to Tony shortly before he died, and to see the expression on his face on receiving the finished work was very moving.

The monthly newsletter over the years has been of vital importance to the VFFA. Its role is to provide well-presented and useful information, and on both counts we can be justifiably proud of our production. It has always relied on good editorship, and under current editor, Lyndon Webb, it is in very good hands indeed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all contributors. Without the wide and productive contributor base, the editor would be unable to come up with the range and quality of material necessary to maintain its high standard. Lyndon works assiduously on its production, and we owe him a very big thank you for his good work. Wherever possible, he provides a full reproduction of our monthly guest speaker presentations, which are of particular interest to the many of us who read them.

The monthly General Meetings are also very important, and one of Council's critical roles is to provide quality guest speakers for the evenings. Good speakers ensure a good attendance, which is essential for the continuing viability of the VFFA. Good numbers are dining at the Kelvin before the meeting, adding to the general enjoyment of the evening.

The 2009 October General Meeting saw members Hubert Reichelt, Peter Campbell and John Pilkington playing with feathers and fur. We thank them for their preparation, patience and skills, each tying a different suite of flies appropriate to their individual preferences.

Rick Dugina gave a comprehensive introduction to the VFFA's new website at the November meeting. We finished the evening with some historical footage of early Tassie fishing, which was very interesting to those who saw the footage.

VFFA member and Captain of the Australian Fly Fishing Team, Peter Dixon, was our speaker at the December Christmas Dinner. His very well prepared presentation gave a fascinating insight into the world of the competitive fly-fisher. It became very apparent that those who represent us at the highest level have exceptional skills in all facets of the sport.

For 'Liar's Night' in February, Hubert Reichelt, Peter Campbell and Phil Bailey, who was in Melbourne for a short visit from the UK, provided members with a very enjoyable and informative night, and not a doubtful statement was to be heard from any of the presenters. A number of members present also put their 'two bobs' worth in, which made for an entertaining night.

Neil Morrow from the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service (I.F.S.) was our March speaker and gave a well prepared presentation on the topic 'Anglers Access'. Many members spend a great deal of fishing time in Tassie, and the VFFA's strong connection with the I.F.S. is important to us. Neil's presentation was warmly received, and we acknowledge the support John Diggle, Director of the I.F.S., provides in making the Tassie visits possible.

Anthony Forster, the Inland Fisheries' Manager for Fisheries Victoria, was our guest speaker at the April meeting. He spoke on a number of issues of relevance and interest to members. Anthony was pleased with the good feeling on the night and commented to me "it makes it easier when you have a good story to tell." We have a good relationship with both Fisheries Victoria and the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service, which I believe is valuable to the VFFA.

Our speaker for May, Craig Little from Tasmania, was at short notice unable to attend and was a last minute apology. We were able to draft some last-minute speakers to salvage the night, and as it turned out, we were well entertained and informed by John Pilkington, Hubert Reichelt, Don Urquhart and Bernard Holbery.

Glen Eggleton, the author of the recently published *Jet-Fly: The Life and Flies of Noel Jetson*, was our speaker for the June meeting. His reflections on the life of Noel were insightful and full on interest, and left a number of us on the evening wishing we had had an opportunity to fish with Noel when he was guiding.

Jim Blakeslee, a member from Warrnambool, spoke at the July Meeting, and gave us a very broad snapshot of his fishing experiences from his early days to the present. He covered a broad range of topics, reflected on all the changes, but left us that which remains constant - why we call ourselves 'fly-fishers' and bother to cast a fly.

The August Annual Dinner is our premier function and the release of the history on the evening was undoubtedly a proud moment for the VFFA. John Philbrick and Rick Keam were excellent speakers for the evening. Their speeches were well prepared and thoughtful, and very appropriate for the evening. It was my very great privilege to present an Author's Copy of the history to Jan Arndt, Tony Brother's partner. She responded with some kind words, and

spoke of how much he loved the VFFA, and how much it meant to him. It was very gratifying to receive many favourable comments from members and guests on the success of the evening.

It was an excellent finale to a very full program of General Meetings which were very well attended. It is pleasing to note how many of our presenters come from within our own ranks, but we will always need to have speakers from a broader pool if we are to maintain the strong level of interest and good attendance.

Rick Dugina has provided me with a website report as follows. He acknowledges that the site is due for a review. Members' comments have in general been very favourable as to the look and feel of the site, and any suggestions will be taken on board. He feels the site is doing what it is meant to do, giving us a presence on the web. The matters which need immediate attention include making the forum operational, and the membership area to allow the downloading of the application form easily. We may also need to give more explanation as to how things work for those who are not computer savvy. We have forty-six members registered, which is a little disappointing. The most popular area has been the newsletter, followed by the fly of the month a close second.

Rick points out that the site is not a 'Google' or 'eBay'. We are not trying to sell the VFFA, but simply telling the world we are here and willing to share our interest in a fantastic pastime with like-minded and passionate fly-fishers.

We thank you Rick for your significant contribution to the website, whilst acknowledging it requires improvement for the future.

Partners Dinner in June was again enjoyed by a happy group who wined and dined at the Kelvin, and thanks again to the host, Colin Morrison, who ensured the evening ran smoothly.

Cane Day, also in June, was another excellent occasion for members and others to meet at the Red Tag Pool and talk 'cane'. Many members have purchased a cane rod in recent years as a direct result of this day. David Grisold was responsible for getting the day up and running in 2003, and his continuing commitment and involvement with this 'fixture' on our calendar is much appreciated.

Fishing trips are an important opportunity the VFFA offers to the membership. I strongly encourage members to put their hands up and join one of these trips. The opening weekend trip in October last year was again held at Ray Butterworth's 'Tranquil Rises', located not far from Melbourne. The convenor, Richard Kos, aka "the Cormorant", very often catches the most fish on these trips, and this occasion was no exception.

This was followed in November with 14 members staying at the very comfortable Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' shack on the Mitta Mitta River at Omeo. We appreciate their generosity in allowing us to use their wonderful cabin, courtesy of Peter Campbell.

Rick Dugina again headed to New Zealand in late November with the VFFA contingent, and reading the reflections from various participants in the February newsletter, a successful trip was had by all.

The 'VFFA Return to Tasmania' trip to Peter Hayes' complex at Cressy in late February has become a fixture on the calendar. Fourteen anglers enjoyed the organization of convenor, Hamish Hughes, and the hospitality of mine host Peter Hayes for a very successful week. We are booked for February next year, and I hope it remains an established date on our calendar of events.

Unfortunately only two members made the trip to Bairnsdale in February for the 'Donger' Weekend. Notwithstanding this, Hubert Reichelt reported it was a most enjoyable weekend, with typical Bairnsdale hospitality. Let us hope a few more members can make the trip next February and give us the opportunity to bring home the Donger.

John Pilkington was again generous in having a group of members enjoy his wonderful facility at Enochs Point on the Big River. This past season it was delayed from November until April, and Pilks reports the decision to transfer this weekend to later in the season proved to be the right one.

Richard Kos was the convenor for the end of season weekend at 'Tranquil Rises'. Another good weekend but light on fish, with the inevitable inquest into why the trout were so reluctant to get caught. As is the way, the question was answered with 'there's always next season.'

Dick Goodall organized the out of season trip to Bullen Merri in August, with fifteen members enjoying the wonderful Menzies hospitality on the Saturday evening. And surprise, surprise, even some fish were caught, which had not been the case in recent years.

Again, a big thank you collectively to all the conveners and helpers for organizing these trips.

Fishing trips are a very important opportunity we offer to members. Sometimes they may be trips where not many fish are caught, but undoubtedly the camaraderie engendered from these trips is very important. I have said it all before - you may not be guaranteed a fish, but you can be guaranteed a good time. In addition to organized trips, many members have organized trips on an ad hoc basis.

Winter Sunday Casting continued under the stewardship of Joe Haslauer, who has been a stalwart in the role following on from Malcolm Elms. Malcolm was present on a number of the mornings, and it was great to see his old indomitable self to the fore.

The library is still a much under-utilized resource. I can only repeat what I said last year. Perhaps those who are interested in books already have a good collection, and have no use of a library. It could be that members are increasingly using the web for information, to the detriment of reading a book.

We only have a handful of *Geehi to Great Lake* books available for sale. For anybody wishing to purchase a copy, get one quickly before stocks run out. VFFA merchandise continues to provide a useful contribution to funds. Hughie Maltby does a very good job managing the stock, and promotes it at every opportunity. We all appreciate your work Hughie.

Whilst on the topic of funds, we thank in his absence this evening, our Treasurer, Tony Mitchem, for his very competent and efficient management of the finances of the VFFA. The job of treasurer can be thankless, but Tony does it without demur.

We have two retiring councillors, Paul Squires and Colin Morrison. On behalf of everybody, I want to sincerely thank you both for your contributions on council. In true VFFA fashion, both gentlemen have pledged their ongoing support and help in the future. It was the mark of Colin that he stayed on council this past twelve months, to help new secretary Richard Garvey find his feet, and for this Colin, Richard and I were truly grateful.

Colin Morrison has certainly given outstanding service to the VFFA over a very long period, a fact which has been previously acknowledged. Richard has had big shoes to fill, and this he is doing very competently.

We welcome back onto council former President David Grisold, who has been on the bench the last two years as an ex officio member. His contribution to the VFFA continues to be outstanding.

In addition we have two new councillors, Dermot O'Brien and Bernard Holbery. I know they will be a real acquisition to council, and I look forward to working with Dermot and Bernard on the new council.

I would like to particularly congratulate Rick Dugina on becoming the 41st VFFA President, and wish him well for the term of his presidency.

It has been a pleasure to be your President for the past two years. We have had a very good, strong, and committed council for the period, and I want to personally thank all councillors for your support during the term of my presidency. And finally, thanks to the many others who have helped with the smooth operation of the Association over the year. I look forward to the next 12 months with the new Council, and am confident we will continue to make the VFFA relevant and of benefit to the membership.

On a personal note, I have found the real value in membership has been the friendship and companionship one receives from fellow members. Long may it continue.

Thank you, and tight lines,

Peter Boag

VFFA Meetings & Activities

OCTOBER 2010

- 21** **General Meeting: Fly Tying with the Masters**
- 23 Season Opening Trip to a private fishery near Ballarat
- 27 Council Meeting

NOVEMBER 2010

- 5 - 7 VFFA Trip to Warrnambool
- 18** **General Meeting: Guest Speaker – David Featherstone**
- 24 Council Meeting

DECEMBER 2010

- 8 Council Meeting
- 16** **Christmas Dinner: Guest Speaker – Peter Morse**

FEBRUARY 2011

- 9 Council Meeting
- 17** **General Meeting: Liar's Night**
- 18 – 20 Donger Weekend at Bairnsdale
- 19 – 25 Tasmanian Trip to Peter Hayes' Complex

President's Message

What an extraordinary change we have had in our weather patterns. After so many years of dry conditions we are now suffering floods. It seems that the extremes of 'el nino' will be a feature of patterns to come. This recent rain is considered by the fly-fishers that I have spoken with to be a greatly needed boon to our river systems. The rivers have needed a good flush for a while, and the lakes have really needed a top-up. Unfortunately, the rains were too late for the Department to adapt its stocking program. We are very fortunate to have the ATF take up the cudgels and organise the stocking of some of the waters in most need.



Numbers of fish have escaped from flooded trout farms and are providing some great sport for those fortunate enough to have the time to pursue them. I have heard reports of many large fish taken, and of anglers fishing paddocks rather than streams. I am hoping to join the throng once I collect my gear from Thornton.

I wish to thank the members of the VFFA for electing me as President. I deem it a great honour and privilege to serve this Association. When I joined in 1984 we were meeting at the Victoria Racing Club. The meetings were lively and outings were rare. My most vivid memories centre around fly tying instruction from Tony Brothers and Phil Bailey. I must have tied many dozens of Red Tags. There were also the annual trips to Tasmania to fish the highland lakes, which were led by Duncan Milenkovic, Ian Michelson and Dick Goodall, where we slept five to a van. I owe a lot to these guys and others who steered me through my early years with casting, wading and tackle.

I get a little choked-up when I think back to those times. Stocking the streams with Whitlock-Vibert boxes full of wild trout ova - sometimes the Little Yarra, or Riddells Creek, or Bolinda Vale. I think of the members who are no longer with us and of their valuable contributions to the Association. Duncan introduced me to the role and responsibilities of council, and not long after I was elected Secretary. After a while my young family had to take precedence over my fishing activities, and the Association had to take a back seat, but I didn't lose touch.

I did a few stints on council and thoroughly enjoyed the meetings and the characters that were my brothers-in-arms. These things move on and we all make progress as the years pass, gaining knowledge and experience and trying to use these skills to assist the VFFA and its members.

It will be difficult to better the achievements of the preceding Presidents of the VFFA, but with the help of this council I will give it a try. Our current councillors are a great bunch and are working hard to further the aims and traditions of the Association. The calendar has events and activities scheduled that should draw good attendances. David Featherstone, our speaker for November, is always entertaining when talking of his trophy fish, and we have Peter Morse as our special guest for the Christmas Dinner meeting.

There are a number of trips and other events where members can participate, such as the Season Opener at Dunstons, the upcoming fly-tying evening, the Warrnambool weekend, the Bairnsdale “Donger” trip, Tasmania in February, and New Zealand probably late March. Further on in the year we will have our traditional Partners’ Dinner, and we are looking at the possibility of another tackle/book auction.

I would certainly like to see more members attending our activities, and the general meetings with dinner beforehand. We need to work out ways of including our country members in the activities so I will be looking for some ideas.

The website will be updated shortly, and the forum (which has had a few problems) is back on-line and I hope will be used by members to exchange information and air issues for discussion. This is a great tool for putting items in the public arena and getting comment.

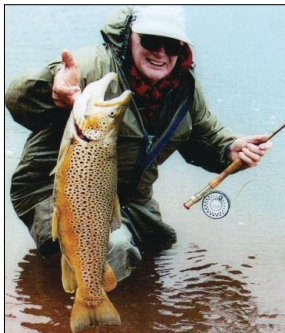
I have read the latest publication by the VFFA - *The Country for an Angler* - and urge all members to obtain a copy for their library. My personal thanks to Tony Brothers (who very sadly passed away a few months ago), Rick Keam, Peter Boag, and John Pilkington for their outstanding work. It is an invaluable history of the VFFA and very much worth having as an interesting read and source of information.

The fishing prospects in Victoria for the coming season look to be the best for several decades, so all members should be polishing, cleaning and preparing their tackle for the season ahead. I hope to see you on the water and / or joining me for New Zealand.

Tight Lines

Rick Dugina

Advance Notice – November Meeting: David Featherstone

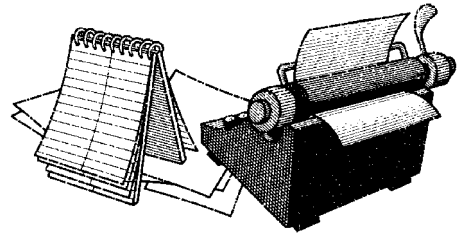


The guest speaker at the November General Meeting is again one of our own – David Featherstone. David needs no introduction. He is a Life Member of the Association, a past president, a popular speaker on fly-fishing matters, and the author of *The Australian Fly Fisher*. He has worked as a professional guide both here and in New Zealand, and is a highly skilled angler with decades of experience. He has often spoken at VFFA meetings, and his presentations are always both entertaining and informative.

For our November meeting David has indicated that he intends to talk about some of the highlights of his life of fly-fishing. These will include his experiences fishing a number of very celebrated overseas trout destinations, including his battles with Tiger Fish in Africa. As part of his presentation he will show a DVD which, he assures us, will ‘really open our eyes’. It features his battles with several monster trout.

David has put a lot of time and effort into his preparation for the November meeting, and we can be assured of great time together.

From the EDITOR'S DESK

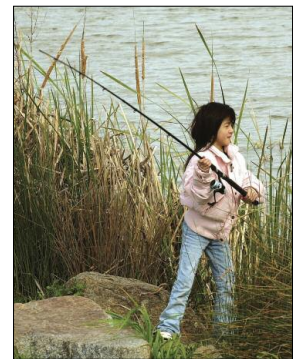


Readers of the newsletter may be wondering why the VFFA New Zealand trip, scheduled for late November, has disappeared from the calendar. The reason is that the convenor, Rick Dugina, found it necessary, for a number of reasons, to postpone the trip for a few months. So, yes, there will be a VFFA trip to New Zealand – now probably in March of next year. So those intending to join the contingent will have some extra time to tie those flies and replenish the fly boxes. A vital fly to include in the collection is a good replica of those annoying summer blowflies. The guides assure us that blowfly patterns are deadly in South Island rivers and streams, so this month's Fly of the Month gives details for the construction of a particularly effective example. Check it out.

Talk of travel to distant parts reminds me of one of my articles of faith as a Melbourne-based fly-fisher: the further you travel the better the fishing. From where I live, 45 minutes driving gets me to the Yarra at Warburton, two hours sees me in Thornton, and five hours in the state's glorious north-east. If I raise the sights for some overseas travel then Tassie or New Zealand become available. And with each additional increment of time and effort and distance the trout fishing improves. Sort of.

So what should I expect from a quiet ten minute cruise down Stud Road to the three ornamental lakes at Rowville. I head down there reasonably often – it's a pleasant place to try a new rod or a new line, or some new configuration of a leader or variety of roll cast. The lakes do have some residents – redfin, roach and carp, but I rarely encounter them, and don't expect to.

But recently the Laburnum Angling Club held a 'family fishing day' there, using a government grant to fund the exercise. The weather wasn't particularly kind, but this didn't stop several hundred aspirants – mums and dads and a host of kids of all ages – from turning up for the free barbecue and use of the fishing gear provided. The real attraction, of course, was the truck from the hatchery, which backed up and released 1,900 yearling (10 – 11 inch) rainbow trout into the main lake, along with half a dozen in the 5 – 6 lb range. Despite the obvious enthusiasm and endeavour of the gathered hordes, including the gent with 8 snapper rods propped up like a picket fence, not many fish were caught. Now, to be perfectly honest,



Young anglers enjoying some trout fishing

I prefer the South Island, but 1900 trout minus a few leaves a lot of incentive for your editor to drive for 10 minutes to practice his casting. (Just keeping his eye in for the Mataura). And high praise to the Laburnum Anglers for taking the trouble to provide a very pleasant angling experience for the next generation of trout fishers.



Trout fishing in the suburbs

Talk of trout stockings reminds me that in last month's newsletter I suggested that the ATF had been busy rounding up some fish for a few of our newly-filled lakes. This month's ATF report in the newsletter makes interesting and heartening reading.

Trout are continuing to be stocked into the Goulburn. Two in particular were of some interest – they carried \$50,000 tags. The shires of Murrindindi and Mitchell were hit hard by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, so to encourage tourists back they organized a rather spectacular fishing competition. From Saturday October 2 until Saturday October 9 anglers were able to fish for two tagged fish, each worth \$50,000, which were released into the Goulburn River. Two similarly tagged fish, released into Lake Eildon, could be caught from Sunday October 10 until Sunday October 17. The competition certainly generated some interest, and increased positive publicity for trout fishing is always a good thing. On the other hand, there were some concerns expressed at the possible impact it may have had on the Goulburn as a fishery, with potentially large numbers trespassing on private land, piles of rubbish left behind, and perhaps a lot of fish removed from the river. We hope these worries proved groundless.

Lyndon Webb

Welcome to a New Member

The Association is very pleased to welcome Brian Kent-Hughes as a member. We trust that his membership brings many years of pleasure and fulfilling involvement.



Australians at the World and Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships

(Peter Dixon, Captain of the Australian Fly Fishing Team and a VFFA member, provided the following notes from his diary)

The venue for the 30th World Fly-Fishing Championships was the San River, Poland's premier fishery, a jewel of Eastern Europe. The San is a colossal system, flowing off the Carpathian Mountain with its enormous catchment - a fact which proved to be the downfall of our preparation.

Jeremy Lucas, many times England international team member, had agreed to guide 'Team Australia'. Jeremy has made the San his second home, and his intimate knowledge of the river would finalise the preparation of the Australian team.

Our plan was to depart Australia two weeks prior to the competition to fish the gin clear streams, but unfortunately flooding rain and thus swollen rivers throughout the preparation period thwarted any attempt at gaining an advantage over our international rivals. Rumour has it that the French had one member of their team fishing the venues for 18 months! The Czechs and Poles were also expected to be figure prominently.

Jeremy, who is the author of *Tactical Fly Fishing: A guide to the Advanced and Competition Angler*, made the following absolutely crucial fly recommendations:

- Single plume tip CDC upwings;
- F-Fly (flat over the back CDC) in sizes 21, 19 and 17 Tiemco 103BL;
- Sawyer-style Pheasant Tail nymph variants, with and without 2mm and 2.4mm copper-coloured tungsten beads, in sizes 16, 14 and 12 Knappek nymph hooks;
- Orange polypropylene paraduns and a very good duo indicator pattern.

Our first days on the river were under the guidance of Jan Siman – a Czech international. Despite rain and swollen rivers Jan passed on masterful tips on the latest competition techniques.

June 14 saw the end of our informal practice, and the river flows, for the first time, were considered satisfactory for the competition. Whilst the rain and floods had thwarted our preparation plans, the team used the time with professionalism and dedication. Mentally the team remained strong, and our protracted time in preparation and the restriction on fishing due to rain and floods meant that fly tying was completed a week prior to the event, and we entered the competition fresh in body and mind.

For two of the competition days the San flowed with low water glides and visible structure, a level that traditionally indicated great fishing. The olive and caddis hatches started mid-morning but didn't quite produce their summer abundance! Large grayling were seen lying doggo on the bottom of pools but weren't responding to fishermen's offerings. Meanwhile the juveniles provided some sport and any fish rising was a ready target, with success more often than not! Dry fly and nymphing in all its combinations, along with excellent

presentation and drift, achieved an appropriate reward.

By the third day the quarry were wary! Competitors' emotions and mental toughness, training, equipment and physical condition were tested in the glare of a very public arena. Fate intervened to create an additional challenge when drenching rain and floods returned. Soaking rain created very difficult conditions for the final day. Rivers that had flowed clear and low gave way to torrents of brown. Whilst the morning rivers had clear and obvious seams, by afternoon the catching of one fish was a triumph of masterly angling. Thus the numbers that were anticipated, which on some beats were expected to be "cricket scores", never eventuated and this was thought to be due to the floods dispersing the schools.

Team Australia measured 102 fish over 5 sessions, compared with the Czech Republic's 140 and French team's 167 and our rivals New Zealand 85. Jonathon Stagg measured the longest Huchin, a variation of Taimen, at 75 cm.

Members of the Australian Fly Fishing Team included Jonathon Stagg (Tas), Joe Riley (Tas), Emelio Caggiano (NSW), Max Vereshaka (Vic), Craig Coltman (Vic), Tom Watson (WA and Reserve), Royce Baxter Manager (Vic).

Team Australia finished 9th overall with team results going to the locals:

First - Czech Republic, second – France, third – Slovakia, fourth – Poland.

Team Australia, without Stagg and Verashaka, then travelled to Llandrindod Wells in Mid-Wales. The Australian Commonwealth Team, which had travelled directly to the venue and had been studying the local waters, provided a summary of their intelligence and thoughts on the various venues. The results waxed and waned, and coming into the final session the Australian World Team and Joe Riley were in first position. The events of the final session were gripping. Scotland challenged with two firsts and a second placing. However the final result, with Australia World placed first, was confirmed when Tom Watson finished first in his session, completing a personal campaign of two first placings and a second. A testament to Tom's commitment is that during the World Championships he positioned himself in the beats of the various champions and studied their techniques. Such are the advantages to those who embrace competition fishing ... seeing the world's best fly-fishermen under adverse conditions *go fishing!*

Results of the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships:

1 - Team Australia World, 2 – England, 3 – Scotland, 4 - Australian Mayfly

The Donger

Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' Club will be holding their Annual Dinner
on the evening of Friday, February 18, 2011

The Dinner will be followed by a wonderful fishing weekend at their lodge on the
Mitta Mitta River. Largest fish caught wins the famous 'DONGER' trophy.

Tea on Saturday will be provided. Further details to follow.

All VFFA members welcome.

Fishing Carpentaria

(Paul Squires)

In February 2007 I ticked off one of my dream fly-fishing trips on the 'to do' list by visiting the Rio Grande on Tierra del Fuego for the sea run brown trout. On the transit home, via Buenos Aires, I met Harry Robertson at the Elevage Hotel. Harry is a casting instructor from Hanover, Virginia (www.hanoverfly.com), and he organises fly-fishing trips for his friends and clients. We got on particularly well over dinner, eating massive Argentinean steaks, drinking their great red wine, and of course telling fishing tales! Harry had always wanted to fish the Gulf of Carpentaria to catch Giant Trevally. I offered to do all the investigative work for a potential Gulf trip, as I was "on the ground" in Australia.

So, after much research and talking to various people, I recommended Greg Bethune's "Seafaris" (www.seafaris.com.au) to Harry. The American agents for Seafaris, by coincidence, were old contacts of Harry's. They suggested that we take the trip in the last week of April or the first week of May in 2010. It then took a lot of time and effort to put our group together, as we required 12 takers in order to book the Seafaris boat *Tropic Paradise*. The final group was made up of Harry and seven of his clients and friends from the US, along with Scott and Lisa Terrey, and Jenny, my wife, and myself.

On Wednesday, April 28, we all met in Cairns, at the Hotel Cairns, and it was great to catch up with everyone over dinner. On the following day we flew to Bamaga, to be greeted by Greg Bethune and taken on board the *Tropic Paradise*, our home for the next week. We arrived later in the day than is normally organised so we steamed into the evening, heading to the Doughboy River. In the morning we were moored in the mouth of the Doughboy on high tide, in good time to see the resident saltwater crocodile cruise out of the mouth of the river. The Americans got the message about staying out of the water!

We were paired off for the week on a daily rotation with the guides. I was paired with Scott Terrey (aka "the Sheikh"). On this first morning we fished the mouth of the Doughboy for longtail tuna, all the while looking out for bird activity. Please note that we were all fly-fishing - no conventional gear here. We don't live on the "Dark side"! My catch for the morning was four longtail tuna, two more lost to sharks under the skiff, one queen fish and one giant trevally. In the afternoon I drew a blank, but Scott landed a huge queen fish.



Paul in action

Next morning we moored at the Jackson River. Each time the *Tropic Paradise* was moored huge groupers took up residence at the back of the boat. Huge groupers! The morning session produced four more longtail tuna, along with mangrove jack, barramundi and queen fish in the river mouth. The Americans were quite taken by the queen fish, as it's not a species they encounter and it's a great fighting fish. The two species I wanted to add to my list were permit and giant herring. Our 'caught species' list amongst us all was quite extensive - I forget how many, but one of the Americans was counting.



Well done Paul

our guide for the day, took us looking for permit. We saw some, but didn't manage a shot at them. They are unbelievably quick!

So it was back to the Doughboy River, where we caught longtail tuna and queen fish in the morning. Scott caught a respectable barramundi. In the afternoon we went out after permit again, and once again we were in range. We drifted on to a large school but had no success, even with Greg rigging our rods with crab flies. We had sinking and a floating lines set up to cover the possibilities. But permit are the fastest fish I have seen in saltwater. Scott and I are now official members of the D.O.P.A.P. crying club. (We are still waiting for our crying towels to be sent to us.)

On our second last day we stayed at the Doughboy. I caught a giant herring, which crossed one off my list – and I was very pleased! We caught more giant herring, tarpon, barramundi and queen fish. I also hooked a large barracouta and was quickly instructed by the guide not to boat it!

Last day was at the Cotterell River, where we landed a few coral trout. We also fished to milkfish, which were very elusive. You saw a fin and then they were gone.



Harry Robertson



The Tropic Paradise

Next day we arrived at the McDonald River, the only quiet day for the week. I noted that I caught only one tuna. We were actually ferrying the tuna back to the *Tropic Paradise* for sushi entrée each night, and there's nothing like it! The chef on board was fantastic. Greg, Lisa and Jenny went out that day mudcrabbing. So naturally, we had mudcrab in black bean sauce for dinner. The groupers loved the scraps that night. Pricey,

We would highly recommend Greg Bethune's operation Seafaris on the *Tropic Paradise*. His staff are highly professional, and very friendly. The food, wine and hospitality for the week were excellent. We all got along extremely well, and this added to the success of the trip. Now we are all planning a trip to the Seychelles. More permit!

Kelvin Club

The Kelvin Club has been the home of the VFFA for many years, and has proven an excellent venue for meetings and dinners, as well as a great location for housing the library and countless other VFFA assets.

Larissa Dubecki, in a recent *Age* newspaper *Epicure* section, had some news on the ‘new era’ the Kelvin Club is about to enter:

“Kelvin’s Youth Push

The august Kelvin Club is entering a new era, appointing Vernon Chalker (Collins Quarter, Gin Palace, Madame Brussels) to drive all things food and drink-related at the private members’ club. The 120 year old club with a dining room, bar and billiards room is in Melbourne Place, next to Maurice Esposito’s soon-to-open St Peter’s - and is clearly hoping to buck the trend of deceased Melbourne institutions such as the Naval and Military Club and Victoria Club by attracting a younger crowd. “It’s a funny place with a lot of history,” Chalker says of the Kelvin, which started life as a bowling club. Chalker says he’s taking inspiration from the contemporary club model of the Soho and Groucho clubs in London. Collins Quarter executive chef Michael Nunn is overseeing a new menu. They’re looking for potential new members; inquire through the website at kelvinclub.com.”

And we have a note from Peter Boag regarding dining at the Kelvin:

Many members would have been aware that the Kelvin Club has had an air of uncertainty about its continuing viability in recent times. To its credit, the Kelvin committee has grasped the nettle and made certain changes to its operating structure in order to secure its survival.

One important change involves catering arrangements. These are now contracted out to a third party, and this affects our dining before the monthly meetings. We now select from an a la carte menu, offering more variety, and in some instances, dearer prices. This is a small price to pay to continue our support for what is a very valuable asset to the VFFA, that being the Kelvin as our home for all of our functions. It would be extremely difficult to replace such an amenity.

In finishing, I encourage as many as are able to meet for dinner prior to the meetings, thus adding to the general enjoyment of the evening.

Peter Boag.

Wind in the Willows

(Do you have a favourite stream? Then perhaps you can identify with the Water Rat, from *Wind in the Willows*, that wonderful old children’s story by Kenneth Grahame. In the following exchange, the Rat is explaining things to the Mole).

“I beg your pardon,” said the Mole, pulling himself together with an effort. “You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So this is a River!”

“THE River,” corrected the Rat.

“And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!”

“By it and with it and on it and in it,” said the Rat. “It’s brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing. It’s my world, and I don’t want any other. What it hasn’t got is not worth having, and what it doesn’t know is not worth knowing. Lord! the times we’ve had together! Whether in winter or summer, spring or autumn, it’s always got its fun and its excitements. When the floods are on in February, and my cellars and basement are brimming with drink that’s no good to me, and the brown water runs by my best bedroom window; or again when it all drops away and shows patches of mud that smell like plum-cake, and the rushes and weed clog the channels, and I can potter about dry shod over most of the bed and find fresh food to eat, and things careless people have dropped out of boats!”

... “I mustn’t be hard on you,” said the Rat with forbearance. “You’re new to it, and of course you don’t know. The bank is so crowded nowadays that many people are moving away altogether: Oh no, it isn’t what it used to be, at all.”

(And isn’t that the truth of it!)

This Month’s Yarn ...

(From May 1966)

“I was telling a chap about that dog of yours helping you catch fish near Dalesbridge,” said Alf, nodding to the barmaid, “and he reckoned it must have been just a fluke.” “A fluke!” McTaggart exploded, “Why, my old dog Fut has helped me on countless occasions through his intelligence and incredible powers of observation. I’ll give you another instance, and I could give you many.”

McTaggart took a good strong sip of lunch, and continued: “I was on a fishing trip to the lower Wingiwoba, camping out. Fut was with me. The only fish that were rising during the daytime were very small ones, and not too many at that. Fut was just as disappointed as I was.”

“Then one morning, shortly after dawn, Fut jumped onto my bed and woke me up. He looked at me, then made for the door. I guessed what he wanted, so I slung on some clothes, grabbed my rod, and followed him. He took me downstream a few hundred yards, and then along a narrow track through some scrub towards the river. Before we got to the bank Fut looked around and put his front paw to his mouth, counselling quietness. Approaching very cautiously, I looked over, and there near the bank, taking an occasional beetle as it floated down, was a very large brown trout. Fut looked up at me, nodded, and wagged his tail.”

“Four pound eleven ounces that trout weighed. Now”, McTaggart added, “would your friend class that one as a fluke?”

HOPPERS AND SPINNERS

(Andy Hodson)

The two recent bereavements in the Association will undoubtedly cause us all to reflect on our own mortality and perhaps encourage us to increase our fishing time. Having had the pleasure of sharing time astream with both Tony Brothers and Dudley Lee the following is being passed on for all to share.

Tony had a great love for fishing the lowland rivers of Tasmania - especially for the red spinner falls. This season is shaping up well following good soaking spring rains here in the north several weeks ago. The rivers have had high flows to give them a tidy up and hopefully reduce any farm chemical residues. There have been top-up showers to keep things soaking - the poppy farmers are getting anxious as to when they will be able to get their crops in. The recent arctic blasts with heavy snowfalls have mainly affected the south and west coast, and the snow in the Highlands augers well for filling up the lakes (especially the west coast hydro lakes which will then take pressure off Great Lake for power generation).

The arctic blast did not affect us much here in the north and as the daylight and daytime temperatures have extended, so too has the grass. The sound of long dormant Victas is now reverberating throughout the suburbs. Whilst the 'traditional' time to commence red spinner fishing has always been Launceston Show Day (this year Thursday October 7) I've had more faith in looking at the vegetation. The hawthorn hedges in 3/4 leaf with buds ready to blossom, and willow leaf also on the move, have been my signals. The hawthorn at the back of my garden in Deloraine used to blossom about a week later than those in the midlands, but this season the signs are that the 'naturals' will line up for the traditional date. Think about those airfares! The other condition normally required is three consecutive days with temperature over 18°C. We are starting to get close with some 17's and no longer routinely turn on the house heating in the evening (though a jumper is being put on after coping in a shirt during the day).

As to which flies to use? While the traditional red spinner ties need to go in the box, I'd encourage you to also include some black spinner patterns - my preferred being the 'wonderwing' style body tied size 12 but on a size 16 hook.

From reading the reports from the big island up north it seems you will be heading for massive hopper fishing this season - every cloud has a silver lining! Good to see the Goulburn having a flushing flood and to hear that the impoundments are filling - perhaps Victoria will be able to leave some water in those original catchments rather than flushing it down to the metropolis.

I spent many days fishing the Omeo region with Dudley during hopper time, with our favourite spot being at Alf's. I've forgotten the name of the creek, as fishing with Dud was more about the property owners rather than the creek names, but remember its topography well. There is a nice flat near the homestead where we would camp. Having been settled and grazed for ages the streamside there was quite degraded with lots of willows. Whilst shady to camp under, the shallowing effects of the willows had caused the creek to lose its depth. The only saviour was picking up an odd fish in the hottest part of the day. After the flat came a rising section through a tussocky sheep paddock. With scattered gum and

overhanging tussock this stretch was a delight. The bank edges had their nice high spots with undercuts, etc - perfection! As you left the property you came into a reserved park area and the fight with the blackberries began!

One trip in particular stands out for the superb hopper fishing we had. It was way back in the 'Piscator/Venator' stage of our relationship, when standing back to observe Dudley fish a pool with his wonderful cane-influenced casting action was of more instruction than fishing myself. We set out from camp after a leisurely breakfast and did the willow flats without much enthusiasm. As the sun got higher and the hoppers more active we entered the tussock paddocks and had an absolute ball. We did the traditional 'splat' casting that goes with hopper fishing and it was like the dinner bell at a boarding school! By the time we stopped for our sandwich lunch we each had our 'limit' (only keeping a couple though). Dud was still in the habit of drying and cleaning his line during these breaks so I took the opportunity to dress the keepers - hoppers were falling out of their mouths they were so full!

After lunch we continued on. I continued catching fish whilst Dud's success tailed off. He snuck back to check my fly, etc - same pattern as his. We were using latex hoppers with the deer hair head and wing, but instead of the usual knotted/clipped hackle for legs ours were tied with a red-dyed strand from a poly bag. These were much more durable and readily obtainable from old feed bags. I had made a change and it was not till after dinner back at the camp that we discussed the matter further. My change had been to forget 'splatting' the fly down but rather to make a traditional dry fly gentle presentation directly in line with the fish. My reasoning was that with the fish being so gorged and the hoppers so reliable the trout were no longer going to make any great effort - too much treacle pudding in the dining room effect! Maybe this season will be similar?

A further little Dudleyism relates to his version of the brown nymph. Dud was a great exponent of the 'across and down' style of nymphing. The Kirk emerger style was not for him. He used a larger 8-12 size, with a wing case made of any available feather - anything black or brown found astream would do. The rib was fairly stout - the copper pot scrubber usually doing duty. As to fur, he used a 50/50 mix of brown seal's fur and hereford cattle rubbings - yours for free from the wire fences where they had a scratch. This would be a mixture of under fur and some longer hairs and gave a nice tonality to the seal's fur (also making it a bit easier to dub!). There was always a plentiful supply around Alf's paddock fences.

Yes, there are lots of wonderful memories.

Andy



Some Famous Fishing Writers

Viscount Grey Of Fallodon (1862-1933)

Lord Grey's reputation in angling circles rests on a single book, *Fly-Fishing*, published in 1899 – and what a magnificent book it is! Indeed, I think many would agree with me that it is the best fishing book ever written, for in addition to imparting a great deal of useful information, no other writer has succeeded to quite the same extent in capturing the charm of the riverside or the true spirit of fishing.

Sense Of Duty

Edward Grey was born on April 25, 1862, and was educated at Winchester and Balliol. He succeeded his grandfather, Sir George Grey, to the baronetcy in 1882, and from 1885 until 1916 he was Liberal M.P. for Berwick-on Tweed. After being Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1892 - 1895, he became Foreign Secretary in 1905; a post he held on the outbreak of war in 1914. It was, however, only his stern sense of duty which kept him in office, as he disliked London and, if he had felt himself free to choose his own life, he would probably have been content to remain a country squire. He was made a K.G. in 1912 and a Viscount in 1916, and in 1919 - 1920 was H.M. ambassador in Washington.

Edward Grey began his fishing career at the age of seven on the Northumberland burns near his home at Fallodon. He started with a worm and later learned the art of the wet fly in Scotland. It was while he was fly fishing for trout that he hooked and landed his first salmon – to be precise, a rather red grilse of about six pounds – but such fine distinctions did not matter to him in those days!

His introduction to the dry fly came on the Itchen when he was a boy at Winchester, and he enjoyed considerably greater success there than G. E. M. Skues, his senior by four years. He promptly became so enamoured of this method of fishing that, during holidays in Scotland, Ireland and the North and West Country, he introduced the floater to many rivers where it had never been seen before. Although he became a keen salmon and sea-trout fisherman, it was the dry fly and the Itchen which held the chief claims to his affection. In the 'eighties he took a rod at Itchen Abbas, some five miles above Winchester. There, in 1890, he built a fishing cottage, which became his headquarters whenever he could escape from London during weekends.

His second great interest in life was birds, and he was never so absorbed in fishing that he failed to observe those he encountered by the waterside. He had a fine collection of waterfowl on his lakes at Fallodon, and many of these birds became so tame that they would feed from his hand. He wrote a delightful book on the subject, *The Charm of Birds*, which is as good to read in its way as *Fly-Fishing*, and he also published his autobiography and a collection of miscellaneous essays and addresses under the title of *Fallodon Papers*.

Grey had many advantages which lesser men might envy. He had a delightful home to which he was greatly attached. He had good looks, charm of manner, outstanding ability and a sufficiency of this world's goods to enable him to indulge his tastes. He had, moreover, that mysterious asset called "style" in everything he did, and was a natural games player,

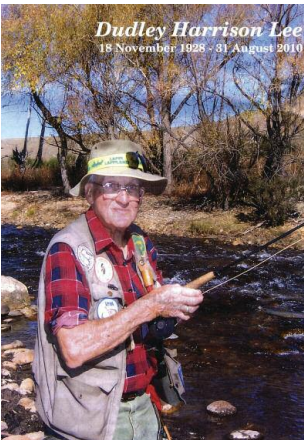
excelling especially at rackets and tennis, besides being a superlative fisherman. Yet withal, his life was clouded by personal tragedy.

His first wife died as the result of a carriage accident, his fishing cottage was burnt down, and during the First World War his eyesight began to fail. As a result, shortly afterwards he was compelled to give up dry-fly fishing, being unable any longer to see either his fly on the water or the rise of a trout. Yet for some time after this he continued to fish his North Country streams with a wet fly and a companion to guide him, striking at the feel of the fish. Finally, in his later years he was haunted – quite unjustifiably – by the fear that if he had pursued some different course of action in 1914, he might have been able to avert the war.

He was a member of the Flyfishers' Club, but probably owing to his arduous public duties he never became its President, though he presided over the annual dinner in 1900. He died, a great loss to his country, in 1933.

(Taken from *Trout and Salmon*, December 1963, written by C. F. Walker, and notes provided by Andrew Braithwaite)

Vale - Dudley Harrison Lee



(November 8, 1928 - August 31, 2010)

I have had the pleasure of knowing Dudley since 1978. I first met him when I attended the first of many Bairnsdale Fly Fishers Club annual dinners. I was given Dudley's phone number by the VFFA president of the time - Tom Riley. I rang Dudley and was duly invited to come to the annual dinner and fishing weekend at Omeo. From this point we formed a friendship that lasted for 32 years.

Dudley was a great fly-fisher and fly-caster. He loved his cane rods, and fished with them regularly. He was also a very skilled fly-tier, and tied professionally for J. M. Turville for many years.

Dudley held many positions at the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers Club. He was instrumental in initiating the first meeting of the club in March 1967, and was thus one of the founding members. He was president for one term and secretary for many more. He was the first member of the Bairnsdale club to receive a Life Membership. He was also made an honorary life member of the Victorian Fly Fishers Association. A highlight of his fishing career was his selection to represent Australia in the World Fly-Fishing Championships in Finland in 1989. He was a very proud participant and very proud to represent his country in the sport that he loved. Dudley was heavily involved in building the club's first Mitta Lodge, and again with the building of the second. He worked tirelessly for the club over the many years of his membership.

Well done Dudley – you were a great fisherman, a hard worker, a true gentleman and a wonderful friend. You will be sadly missed by all of us who loved you.

Peter Campbell.

A SUMMER ON THE TEST

By John Waller Hills

(On the prompting of librarian Marty Rogers the editor recently borrowed Hills' classic *A Summer on the Test*. What a wonderful writer he was, and so insightful in his thoughts on fishing. Here are a couple of very short extracts - on 'good days and bad days', and some instruction on spotting trout in the stream – remembering that Hills was writing in the 1930s, well before the advent of Polaroid sunglasses!)

“Fishing is a sport in which we may have not only a bad day but a bad series of days and even a bad season. The truth is that in a pursuit so infinitely varied the possibilities of disaster are innumerable, and these may occur one after another, until you see no reason why you should ever catch another fish as long as you live. If we could look into the diaries, even of the great ones, we should find many blank days. An honest diary is instructive reading. When we write or talk in public, and even when we think, we dwell naturally on our successes, and the uninitiated get to imagine that these are the whole story. But a diary tells a different tale, at any rate mine does. Very different indeed. The day which I have just described (in the preceding pages) came after a succession of heart-breaking failures. The very day before I had had one of those shattering experiences which almost persuade you to be a golfer. It was on the fine Middleton water, below Longparish. All was in my favour: I had a nice stretch to myself, wind was not troublesome, big fish rose, and olives hatched from eleven to six. From eleven to six, for seven hours; I can hardly bear to write about it, for I came home fishless. I could rise the fish. Sometimes I could hook them. But land them I could not. Fish after fish, large and fat, broad-shouldered and spotted, were either missed at the strike or escaped after one or two rushes: trout were lost in every way in which they can be lost: they weeded, they broke, they got round snags, or they just let go: and in the end there came over me the hopeless finality of a nightmare in which the air is heavy with black disaster which you know will never lighten.”

(On seeing fish in the water:)

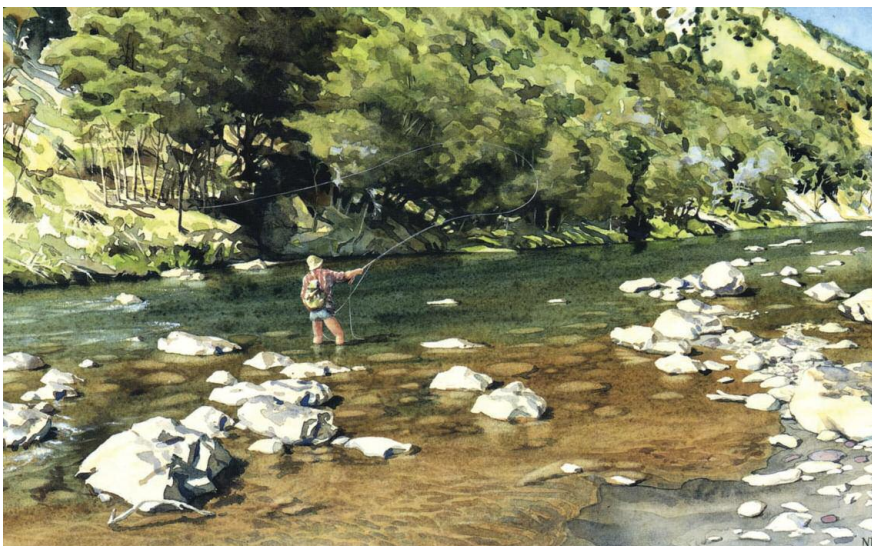
“But in the lower Test it is different, for there the water is deeper, heavier, and tinged with colour, and you are usually fishing for trout which you do not see. And yet you must see them, to succeed in summer angling. You must cultivate an eye for water and an eye for trout. The gift is not easily attained: in all cases it requires practice: and some never acquire it. But it can be learnt by nine people out of ten. It is learnt by what seems easy but is hard: looking at the water. Looking at it not lightly or casually, but examining it intently, boring into it, determining to penetrate its hidden recesses.

Have you ever lain on the heather in Scotland alongside a stalker, both of you sweeping your telescopes over the hillside opposite? If you have, you will know that when he shuts his glass he has not only seen more stags than you have, but knows more about those he has seen. You put it down to his better sight or superior telescope, but you are wrong, for both your sight and your glass are as good as his. He beats you first of all because he knows where to look, and what to look for. ...

These two powers, that of knowing where to look and what to look for, he has gained, no doubt, from long experience: but he has one faculty which you can possess just as well as

he: a concentration, an intentness, an almost savage determination to miss nothing and to tear its secrets from the distant hill. And this is the beginning of his success. You must follow in his steps. You must make up your mind that if there are trout in the river you will see them. It is often wonderfully hard to do so, for the lower Test is deep and swirly and usually ruffled by breezes. Trout are dim, uncertain and nearly invisible. You learn after a time where to look and what to look for. You must not expect to see a whole trout, outlined solidly as though lying on a fishmonger's slab: any fool can see that: but what you have to train yourself to pick out is a flicker, a movement, a darkness, a luminosity which if you stare at it hard enough will resolve itself into a shadowy form. It may be weed, or a reflection, or a shaft of light through the wavering water: but on the other hand it may be a trout: whenever, therefore, you pitch upon anything unexpected or surprising which by remote chance may be a fish, never leave it until you have solved its riddle. You will waste time on stones or gravel or sticks or such-like, but it is remarkable how you improve, and nothing improves you so quickly as being with someone who is good at the game.

There used to be a keeper on the St. Cross water on the Itchen who was a marvel. Neither bad light nor wind nor cloudy water made any difference: not only could he see fish invisible to my eyes, but he could see them sufficiently clearly to make out whether they were likely to take; and I owe to his capacity many a trout for which otherwise I should not even have fished. He taught me much; and for summer fishing you must have this power, if you are to be properly equipped. It is often amusing, if humiliating, to see how sturdy and obvious a trout is after you have made him out, whereas a second earlier you could have sworn that there was nothing there. Only recently I was fishing at Mottisfont: the morning was running on, and I was doubting whether I should get a fish. I had over and over again run my eye up and down a stretch of fast, broken water: nothing could I see but active and obtrusive youngsters, disgustingly conspicuous: and I was just going to give it up, when suddenly I fancied there was a movement quite close to me. I looked again, and saw nothing, and thought it must have been a dancing ripple; I looked a third time, and behold there was a trout; a trout fat and conspicuous; and I had not seen him sooner because the tumbling water threw a flickering shadow over him and broke him up into what looked like pebbles, just as our battleships were camouflaged in war. He took a dark hackle olive, and weighed only just under two pounds.”



*Nancy Tichborne
Watercolour –
New Zealand's
Waiau River*

Mindset - A Fly-fishing Challenge

(The following article was submitted by a VFFA member who is currently experiencing some quite difficult and challenging times with his health. He did not wish to have his name included, preferring because of his illness to remain anonymous).

As you get older and less able, the challenge can often be measured not by venue, conditions or fly choice, but by distance. I well remember my uncle, Grant Petch, taking me up to the Monaro to fish the Mac, with Jim Mossman (Andrew's father). It was renowned at the time for its two and three kilo fish.

“Jim, with your gout, you've got the hundred metres either side of the car. Young Fred, you go up to the Boko Rock. It's about two kilometres upstream - you won't miss it, and start there. I'll fish the crap water in between you and Jim.”

Of course Grant must have had the “crap” water because he caught nil. I, on the other hand, had managed a couple of two pounders, covered a lot of terrain despite having very little local knowledge. On arrival back at the car Jim had just finished in his quiet, deliberate manner and tipped out of his bag - two beautiful brownies of three and a half and four and a half pounds. I'm not saying he had better water or skills but he certainly had a better mindset and approach to his task of fishing his “allotted” water.

This may help to illustrate my point of view. Being a person obsessed with fly-fishing for 43 years, a medical setback can prove to be an interesting mental as well physical challenge. I've had eleven months to reflect and work on this task, and will elaborate further.

At this time my lack of fitness is mostly manifested in an inability to cover much distance with energy and facility. In this situation your mindset and approach is tested. I've always been interested in developing and testing new flies of all types. Having recently acquired a boat, my poor fitness has found me in it, rather than walking the banks, for most of my fly-fishing. One reason is that my wife (and partner) is also a fisherwoman and the boat gives more chances for fishing opportunities. Also, fly-fishing from boats, whether loch style with multiple flies, or small flat punt-style fishing in estuaries and dams, has gained prominence.

The effect of less skill highlighted the need for development. I had read and met some of the “experts” so I began developing my boat skills. I am now a competent boat plastics fisherman for flathead and other bottom species, but less skilled in bass, perch and bream catch and release. I have been adapting flies in both shape and weight to achieve the same level of success compared with the plastics. This is a work in progress.

An encounter in an estuary lake proved influential. I was sneaking along a rock ledge (about a cast out) when I saw a large school of poddy mullet. Some were on top of the rock ledge in shallow water, occasionally showing their fins. At this time I wasn't able to stand for long,

so I had temporarily abandoned my fly rod. My cast with the plastic rod was accurate enough to lead the fish by a metre or so. The fish went to the plastic in response. After a few good casts I managed to get the fish to eat the plastic lure. The 6 lb poddy mullet took a huge amount of time and effort to land and release, and put an end to my boating session for that day.

The waiting, the timing of the strike, the size, shape and smell of the lure are all variables that can test the mind of a fly tier, or in my case a mix of fly and lure making. Hooks can be shaped, bent, modified and weighted, and then decorated in many ways. My preference at the moment is for smelt and baitfish representations. The bubbles produced, the flash of the lateral line or flanks, the size, and the drop and drift of the pattern may all be important. Liam's "Fire Ball" from the July edition of the newsletter sent me hunting overseas for some special body and tail materials.

I'm keen to mix traditional fly-fishing with my boat fishing experiences, but at this stage 50 to 100 metres walking is my limit, and time spent at the work bench is limited too. However despite having some of my skills and opportunities compromised I look forward to my next outing or time at the bench, and thoroughly enjoy fellow fly-fishermen telling of their experiences. Fly-fishing is a lifelong pursuit. Building learning about fly-fishing into your life when you have a setback is well worth the effort, and could prove very significant for me.

A Notice from the Treasurer

Annual accounts

For those members who were unable to attend the AGM and would like a copy of the annual report of the Association, a copy is being posted to the members' section of the web-site, or alternatively members can contact the Treasurer either by email (tony.mitchem@bellp.com.au) or by phone (9832 8405).

Annual subscriptions

All members will shortly be receiving their annual subscriptions for 2011.

At its first meeting for the year, the Council approved the 2011 annual subscriptions to be \$90 for City members and \$70 for Country members. Pensioner and Student subscriptions remain unchanged at \$35.

Members will be able to pay their subscriptions via internet banking again but please ensure that you include the reference number for payment identification.

All membership payments are due before 31 December 2010.

Tony Mitchem

ATF Report

(Mick Hall has provided the following notes)

Fisheries Victoria and the Australian Trout Foundation working together to enhance our Trout fishery

Following the drought breaking winter and spring rains, many of the lakes in our Western District are now full again, several for the first time in almost a decade. There has been a big call for stocking of these waters and this underway.

Earlier this year the ATF attended the Vic Fish Stock Meetings, formally CONS. Naturally during the discussions it was hoped that the drought would break and many of our most important lakes would come back on line. As we are now aware this has happened, but responsible stocking can only take place on what has happened, not what may happen. So it was a wait and see situation and a number of these lakes were earmarked for re-assessment later in the season. This assessment has been completed and those waters that were dry and now predator free will be stocked with fingerling trout during November this year.

One big problem is the food supply in these once dry waters. As they fill there is plenty of terrestrial matter for those fish to feed on, but once that has gone there is very little left until the aquatic life forms come back on line, which can take some months to happen. We can only hope that we receive good rains next year to keep this momentum moving.

The total number of waters to be stocked has yet to be confirmed, but Fisheries will stock as many as feasibly possible. As you can imagine, the breaking drought has put considerable strain on Fisheries and its available stocks to meet this increased and unexpected demand.

During the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires the Buxton Trout Farm was badly damaged and the Australian Trout Foundation and Futurefish lent a helping hand to rebuild this very popular business. Well, the Trout Farm is back and running at full pace. In fact Mitch MacRae, who owns the Buxton Trout Farm, has had a great year with his fish production - so much so that he has offered as a gift to the ATF 20,000 trout fingerlings. So to keep everything legal and on the right line, the ATF in turn has offered these trout to Fisheries to assist in getting those once dry Western district lakes back on line.



Fisheries was only too keen to accept this gift and allow the ATF to share in this highlight of the Trout season. These fingerlings are only small but by this time next year they will be a lot bigger, and the year after that, with the aquatic food chain back on line, we can expect to see some of the best trout fishing this

From left Mick Hall ATF, Ewan Mclean Fisheries Victoria and Mitch MacRae of Buxton Trout Farm

state has seen in many years. All we need to do is just keep adding water.

Nariel Creek Stocking

Mick also indicated that following submissions from the ATF some 500 brown trout will be released into the Nariel Creek near the caravan park at Clack Clack. Part of the motivation for this stocking was to provide better fishing for those staying at the caravan park over the Christmas period. Anglers who know and love the Nariel Creek will be pleased to hear of this boost to its trout resources.

A Note From Bernard Holbery

On October 24 Bernard Holbery is organising a day on the Acheron River for men who suffer with depression or who experienced the horrors of the Black Saturday fires.

As November approaches and the Cancer Council and the Beyond Blue organisations unite in supporting men with illness, the *Fly Fisher's Rod and Creel* is organising a second annual "Healing Waters" day. This will be a day on the Acheron River for men who have suffered the tragedy of the Black Saturday fires, along with men living with depression or cancer. This event was a great success last year, with over 60 people attending.

Bernard is looking for members of the VFFA willing to volunteer to assist him on the day with casting, cooking and fly tying demonstrations.

For more details contact Bernard on 0432 023 502.

Some VFFA Fishing Events ...



The Season Opener

The traditional Season Opener this year is scheduled for Saturday October 23, and the venue is a private lake near Ballarat. Richard Kos is convening this event, and members keen to attend should contact Kossy on (mob) 0430 091 300, or (Home) 9744 2375 to indicate their interest.

The Warrnambool Trip

A new venture this year, members of the VFFA have been invited to join with the members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers to fish some of those wonderful streams in the Western District – the Hopkins, Merri, Moyne and Mt Emu rivers and streams in particular. Jim Blakeslee and other Warrnambool members have very kindly offered to act as guides to show us city dwellers where their best fishing is. An opportunity not to be missed!

The date – Saturday November 6 to Monday November 8.

The plan is to book cabins at one of the large caravan parks in Warrnambool. The convenor is Hugh Maltby, and members interested in attending should phone Hugh on (mob) 0400 887 065 or (home) 9459 2241.

Eildon Report

(Provided by Mick Hall)

At the time of this report the Goulburn was low and running at 130 ML/day. It was also very dirty, because the water coming out of the Pondage was quite muddy. However by the time the flow reaches the Breakaway it is running a little clearer.

As a consequence anglers in the area are heading to the Rubicon River, which is running very high and fast but clear. Thus, because it is the most accessible fishable river in the area, it is getting hammered. Some of the access points are reminiscent of a shopping centre car park.

The lake itself is still discoloured but is clearing and still rising. The fish are coming in along the edges, with a brown of 14 lb being caught off the wall by an angler who was trolling.

Lots of fish have been rising and visibly feeding along the edges, but carp are mixed in with the trout so anglers need to be wary when targeting a feeding fish. Areas that were fishing well include the lake edges around Jerusalem Creek and the Fraser National Park. A number of reports confirm that fish were feeding and rising in big numbers in these areas at dawn.

Mick predicts that with the water rising over submerged trees and other shrubbery there will be lots of rotting vegetation, and the midge hatches later on in the year will be enormous. There are numbers of small trees in the lake which have been isolated by the rising water, and bugs have been falling in to provide a steady supply of surface food for the trout. But for those using boats Mick's advice is to take care, as there are lots of logs and fallen trees floating in the lake.

The bridge over the Rubicon River at Tumbling Waters has been repaired temporarily - a single lane army bridge has been put in place. As for the other small streams, the Acheron River is still very high and discolored and the Steavenson River is high and clear but the water is very cold.

Now here's a novel feature - a number of the trout farms in the area were flooded and as a consequence the Steavenson and Rubicon rivers are holding stocks of Atlantic salmon – escapees from the flooded fish farms, where the fishout ponds were inundated and lost their stock.

As indicated earlier the Pondage is very dirty and difficult to fish, despite the 5,500 yearling trout and 500 very large trout that were recently stocked – these being the last of the promised 20,000 fish to be released into the Pondage over the winter months.

Mick had a final warning for travellers to the area - watch out for wombats! Their holes and sleeping quarters have been filled with water from the floods, so they are wandering around somewhat homeless, and many have wandered onto the roads to be struck by cars. Their carcasses are everywhere. Anglers should also be wary of some very cranky snakes – these too have been dislodged by the rising water and are out and about as the temperatures rise.

Report from Out West

(Jim Blakeslee)

Jim has been holidaying up north and managed a very handsome 6 lb (72 cm) flathead from the Clarence River at Yamba. He looks the part in the photo on the right.

After arriving home he took a break from the lawn mowing for a couple hours and went out to check the water conditions. The level in the Hopkins was back to its normal springtime level, but the colour was still chocolate.

Still, that didn't bother the fish. Jim landed seven between 3 and 4 lbs using a #6 Spuddler fished upstream (nymphing) along the edges and behind rocks where there was a bit of slack water. The two (pictured in the photo) that he kept were full of gudgeon.



Jim spoke with Scott Gray and learned that he had been doing well in the Moyne, over near Port Fairy. Both the Merri and Moyne rivers are at normal level and beginning to clear, but are still too murky for polaroiding. However hatches of caddis and the odd mayfly are starting. And three new members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club - Hafey, Chuck, and Qui - have been doing well at Lake Aringa (Port Fairy) on the dry fly. It was supposed to be warm the following weekend, so Jim planned to check the upper Merri for some action.

He assures us the Warrnambool Club members look forward to the visit of the VFFA team in early November, by which time the local fishery promises to be in great shape.

Fly fishing the UK and Europe

(This notice by David Long has been included in a number of recent newsletters, and the invitation has been accepted. A small number of members have indicated their interest, so it is very likely that the trip will now be going ahead. So if you want to fish in Europe next year, give David a call.)

Ever thought of doing a trip to the UK or Europe to fish but were worried about where to go and how much it might cost? Now here is an opportunity for any interested VFFA members to enjoy about two weeks of fly-fishing in the UK and Europe under the expert guidance of our own Philip Bailey. Destinations also include Scotland, Slovenia, Italy and Poland. For more information and a copy of the suggested itinerary contact Dave Long on 0419 369 248 or email dl.ssv@bigpond.com

FLY OF THE MONTH

A New Zealand Blowfly – suggested by Tom White



Tom White is the past president of Yarra Valley Fly Fishers' and Secretary of the Australian Trout Foundation. He also ties a very neat fly. At the recent 4WD & Fishing Show he was demonstrating the tying of this highly effective blowfly pattern. Tom fished New Zealand's South Island a couple of years ago, and had great success with this fly.

All of those who have fished New Zealand's South Island will have heard the guides recommending blow fly patterns, and the tackle shops carry a variety of patterns in various forms. This particular pattern is one that Tom purchased on one of his trips. He subsequently had great success with it and has been tying and using it ever since, as the trout in Victoria like blowflies too!

Tying the Blowfly

(There are two photos above, showing two different forms of the fly – one with a white Hi-Vis type wing post, and the other with Pearl Flashabou wing post. Both forms are sold in New Zealand tackle shops. Tom's preference is for the one with the Flashabou wing post).

Materials:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Hook | Sizes 10, 12 and 14 Dry Fly Hook, eg Mustad R50 or similar |
| Thread | Black 6/0 Uni-thread |
| Wing Post | White Hi-Vis or Pearl Flashabou |
| Body | Bright blue holographic Flashabou |
| Back | Black foam (see note below) |
| Wings | Four loops of Pearl Flashabou – two each side to represent the blowfly wings |
| Thorax | Peacock herl |
| Hackle | Black Cock |

Suitable foam for the body material comes in a couple of forms. An email from New Zealand guide Daryl Paskell (<http://www.southlandflyfishing.co.nz/index.html>), who fishes and recommends the fly, suggests that some 1.5 mm or 2 mm black foam, as sold in tackle shops or craft shops, should work. On the other hand, Tom uses a type of soft black rubber foam cord of 4.5 – 5.0 mm diameter that he obtained from an auto manufacturing company, but this supplier is no longer available. A very similar type of foam is sold by Ambassador Industrial Rubber Mouldings, Westpool Drive, Hallam, phone - 9796 5588. The 4 mm diameter ‘sponge rubber extrusion’ may work, but is possibly a little too firm. If a supplier of Tom’s original material can be found we’ll pass it on.

Method: (using the Pearl Flashabou wing post version)

1. Place the hook in the vice, tie on the thread and tie in 2 – 3 cm of the black foam body material, starting about 3 mm behind the eye. Bind it down firmly along the shank so that the remaining material points out the back of the fly, ready to be tied over to form the back. (If you are using the 1.5 mm or 2 mm foam then cut a narrow strip about 4 mm wide to use for this part.)
2. Tie in four strands of the Pearl Flashabou – two each side of the shank, tied on the underside of the foam body material and pointing backwards. Each strand should about 12 - 15 cm in length, as they will be used to form the loop wings and also the wing post.
3. Tie in a strip of the blue holographic Flashabou above the barb, and wind it forwards towards the eye to form the bright blue body. Tie it off where the wing post will be formed – about 3 mm from the eye.
4. Bring the foam over to form the back and tie it down firmly at the point where the wing post will be formed.
5. Bring two strands of the Pearl Flashabou over on each side of the body and tie them down at the forward end of the foam body so that they form loose loop wings as shown in the photos. Use a needle or bodkin to keep all four strands even in length, and ensure they are not twisted.
6. Now stand the left over strands of the Pearl Flashabou up to form the wing post. Double them over twice to create 12 – 16 strands and tie them in firmly, with turns of thread in front of them and strong turns around their base to form a solid and firm wing post. Cut through the strands making the wing post but don’t trim to the correct length yet.
7. Tie in the hackle feather. Bind it up the wing post a short distance so that it stands vertically, ready to be wound on.
8. Tie in one or two strands of the peacock herl at the eye and make a couple of turns back to the wing post and then one or two turns behind the wing post. Tie the herl off at the base of the wing post and leave the thread hanging down on the far side behind the wing post.
9. Wind the hackle feather down (four or five even turns) and then tie it off at the base of the wing post. Trim the thread. Head cement is optional but recommended. Now trim the wing post to its correct length.
10. Book a flight to New Zealand. Tom recommends the Ahuriri River – the big rainbow trout there just love eating blowflies.



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 2010 Annual Dinner:

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