



• REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIA POST: PUBLICATION NO. VBH 2899 •

VOL. 62 NO.1

THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

OCTOBER 2013

Organisation No. A0024750J

P.O. Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne 3001

[www.vffa.org.au](http://www.vffa.org.au)

## **Fishing in Alaska With Rick & Hamish**

**Thursday, October 17, 8:00pm at the Celtic Club**

Last July Rick Dugina and Hamish Hughes spent two weeks at the Alaska Adventures lodge on the Alagnak River. This is in a remote part of the Katmai National Park some 300 miles south west of Anchorage. They fished every day for rainbow trout, char, dolly varden and grayling, as well as the various species of salmon. They also saw lots of brown bears, and camped in the wilderness for two nights on the shore of remote Lake Kukalek. They have a pile of fabulous photos and a host of great stories to share with us, so please join us on Thursday October 17.

The Meeting will be preceded by Dinner at the Celtic Club, commencing promptly at 6:00 pm.

All members are invited, but PLEASE make a Dinner booking by 5 pm on Wednesday, October 16. Phone 0498 254 497 and leave a message.



# THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

(info@vffa.org.au)

## **PRESIDENT**

Terry Rogers

Email:

president@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY TREASURER**

Tony Mitchem

Email:

treasurer@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY SECRETARY**

Richard Garvey

Email:

secretary@vffa.org.au

## **HONORARY EDITOR**

Lyndon Webb

Email:

editor@vffa.org.au

## **VFFA WEBSITE ADMINISTRATOR**

Kevin Finn

Email:

webadmin@vffa.org.au

---

## **October Index**

VFFA Office Holders .....	2	Elder Statesman - Hubert Reichelt (Part 2) ..	14
Advance Notice - October Meeting with Rick & Hamish .....	3	Jim Blakeslee in British Columbia .....	18
Advance Notice November Auction .....	3	This Month's Yarn .....	21
Once Only Opportunity for VFFA Members.....	4	In Praise of the Humble Shack .....	22
The September AGM .....	6	Warrnambool Season Opener .....	24
President's Message .....	7	The Nobby Hopper .....	25
Editor's Desk – Lyndon Webb .....	9	Odd Bits .....	26
Web Fish .....	11	A Note from an Old Friend.....	28
Fishing on the Frontier .....	12	Fly of the Month .....	29
		VFFA Meetings & Activities .....	32

All material copyright © all rights reserved. No part of the contents of this publication may be reproduced without prior written consent of the publisher. Published monthly by The Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association Inc., PO Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

## October Meeting with Rick & Hamish

Have you ever thought about fishing in Alaska?



*One of Hamish's smaller fish*

Last July Rick Dugina and Hamish Hughes spent two weeks at the Alaska Adventures lodge on the Alagnak River. This is in a remote part of the Katmai National Park some 300 miles south west of Anchorage. They fished every day for rainbow trout, char, dolly varden and grayling, as well as the various species of Salmon. They saw lots of brown bears. They also camped in the wilderness for two nights on the shore of remote Lake Kukalek.

If you want to see what they saw and hear what they caught and how they caught them, come to their presentation at the General Meeting on October 17 at the Celtic Club.

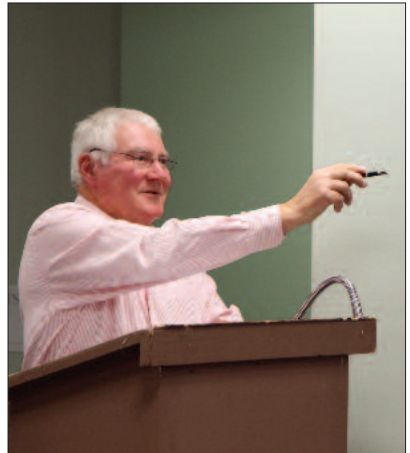
---

## Advance Notice – November Auction

The November General Meeting will be an auction of books and equipment. Auctions are always popular with members, as they provide a wonderful opportunity to acquire gear or books at often very attractive prices. They are also highly entertaining, as members compete enthusiastically for desirable lots.

The November auction will include 114 lots, with about 65 books from the library of Dr Tony Brothers and about 50 items of fly fishing equipment, including several cane rods from the collection of Henry Stephens and an assortment of flies, reels, capes, and other items from the estate of Tony Brothers.

The auctioneer will again be Hugh Maltby, and a catalogue of items to be auctioned is included as an insert in this newsletter.



*Auctioneer Hughie*

# A Once Only Opportunity For VFFA Members

*From Hardy of England in conjunction with Aussie Angler*



The VFFA in association with Rick Dobson of Aussie Angler and Hardy of England have put together a special limited edition package for VFFA members that is a ‘first’ and will not be repeated.

In 2011 Hardy introduced a new range of large arbor reels. These reels have since won world acclaim and a number of industry awards.

These reels are awesome value, being machined from quality barstock aluminium. They have precise and smooth drags and tool-less conversion from left to right hand wind.

In October 2011 the Hardy Ultralite reel picked up the ‘Best in Show’ accolade in the Freshwater Reels category at the International Fly Tackle Dealers exhibition in New Orleans. The judges chose the reel because it offers both classic looks and performance at a good price. According to MidCurrent Tackle “when fish tested, these reels responded smoothly (with fibre composite drag systems) during line pull, and were equally impressive on the uptake. They are sturdy in hand, but by no means bulky, and an all-around solid option for someone looking for polish and performance without emptying the cheque account”.

In 2012 Hardy, in consultation with Aussie Angler, developed the ‘Antipodes Special Ultralite Disc Drag reel’ (shown above). Satin black in colour with brass trim components, it is an aesthetically stunning reel. As a special limited edition offer to VFFA members, Hardy will individually number each “Antipodes Special Ultralite Disc Drag reel”. In addition the reel will be especially inscribed for VFFA purchasers and be presented in a neoprene pouch.

The reel comes in two sizes – a Model 3000 and a Model 5000. The 3000 is designed for 3 or 4 weight lines and the 5000 is designed for 5 or 6 weight lines.

As a further bonus Hardy and Aussie Angler are offering VFFA members a special price on the

Hardy Sintrix Zenith rods that have also won accolades and prizes. These rods have proven to satisfy all angling demands. They are sweet casting, and the new Nano technology means they are 30% lighter than rods of similar weight and length, and are particularly strong.

The model to win all manner of awards ahead of Sage and Winston has been the Zenith Sintrix 9 ft 5-weight rod. For smaller streams the 8'6" 4-weight is ideal. Both of these are available to VFFA members at an attractive price, and again come with a special inscription.

To see some reviews of these rods and reels readers can check these websites:  
<http://www.yellowstoneangler.com/gear-review/five-weight-shoot-out-gear-review>,  
<http://www.yellowstoneangler.com/gear-review/2012-four-weight-shootout-gear-review>, and  
<http://www.yellowstoneangler.com/gear-review/hardy-ultralite-dd-review>.

Prices are as follows:

Individual reels are priced at \$275 for the 3000, \$290 for the 5000, and \$550 if you buy the two reels.

The Hardy Sintrix Zenith Rods are priced at \$690 for the 5-weight and \$660 for the 4-weight. Both rods are 4-piece and come with a tube, a bag, and individual section dust caps.

Postage (by registered mail) and handling is \$10 flat rate, regardless of how many items are ordered.

Remembering that this is a first and only time offer, pre-payment will be required. Those wishing to make a purchase need to complete the enclosed order form (an insert in this newsletter) and forward it with your cheque to the Treasurer to ensure you don't miss out. Alternatively the cost can be paid by BSB direct deposit – details again on the order form.

We expect delivery for Christmas.

The reel can be viewed at our next general meeting or you can call Aussie Angler and have a chat with Rick Dobson. Further information on the Ultralite Disc Drag reels and Sintrix Zenith rods can also be found on the Hardy Website.

Gentlemen a great deal of time and effort has gone into making this project a reality so please support it and get yourself a valuable investment.

*Hugh Maltby*, Merchandising Manager



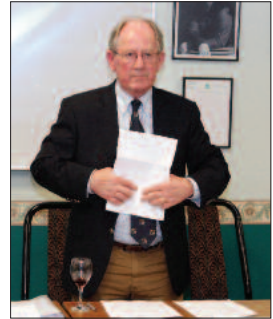
## The September AGM

Some 20 members gathered at the Celtic Club for this year's Annual General Meetings. AGMs are not always the most entertaining and interesting events, but there is no doubting their importance. At this year's meeting the President's Annual Report for the year ending September 19, 2013, and the Financial Statement for the year were both presented and accepted unanimously.

The President's Report for the year is reprinted in the President's Message in this issue.

Office bearers were elected and the new Council has the following membership:

President:	Terry Rogers
Senior Vice President:	Hamish Hughes
Junior Vice President:	Dermot O'Brien
Secretary:	Richard Garvey
Treasurer:	Tony Mitchem
Editor:	Lyndon Webb
Librarian:	Rick Dugina (immediate past President)
Council Member:	Kevin Finn (Web Administrator)
Council Member:	Richard Kos
Council Member:	Hugh Maltby



*Terry Rogers presenting his Annual Report*

Be assured, we are in for another great year.



*A captive audience*

# President's Message

---

## The VFFA Annual Report - September 19, 2013

The last 12 months has seen plenty of activity from the VFFA's perspective, though the fly fishing in the main has not been as good as we would have liked. That aside, the Association has again had a busy and productive year.

The October 2012 General Meeting Guest Speaker was our own Jon Kenfield (aka Gadget Man) who gave us a most enlightening talk on the essential gear needed to be carried by fly fishers to assure them of safe and enjoyable ventures whilst at their favourite waters.



In November Hugh Maltby organised the Warrnambool Weekend which was attended by 15 members who again enjoyed the hospitality of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers. Thank you Hughie for all your hard work.

Our Guest Speaker at the November Meeting was Gavin Hurley from Pro Angler. Gavin spoke on the various trips organised by his firm to such locations as Tasmania, New Zealand, Christmas Island and a first time location of Alaska. His talk was so interesting that two of our members undertook the trip to Alaska in July and will give the VFFA the benefit of their experiences as speakers at this year's October General Meeting.

December saw a very successful Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club attended by 70 members. On this occasion 25 Year and 50 Year Badges were presented to the appropriately qualified veterans of the Association. There were seven 50 Year nominations and fifty-three 25 Year qualifiers. Gerard Dridan (1948), David Featherstone (1962) and Lyndon Webb (1976) each spoke warmly on behalf of all recipients.

February saw a very enjoyable Liars Night with better attendance than we have had for a number of years. Bill Thomas, another from our ranks, delivered an extremely interesting talk at the March General Meeting. Bill teaches at Benteigh Secondary College where his official title is 'Head of Sustainable Practices'. In the past six years he has instituted a number of measures within the school to reduce its impact on the environment, and in the process has accumulated a very impressive collection of state, national and international awards.

In April a hardy group of members availed themselves of the hospitality of John Pilkington at his rustic retreat on the Big River. Our April Guest Speaker was Fred Craker who is a very lively and astute 84 year old. Fred lives in Warragul and has fly fished for trout from an early age and is a prolific fly tier. He recently donated a very large collection of his flies to the Australian Fly Fishing Museum. Fred talked to us about his angling passions – pursuing trout with a fly rod and tying flies. He also demonstrated the tying of a couple of his special flies. Fred was a very entertaining and informative speaker.

In May we again conducted a very successful Auction night, with thanks to our new Auctioneer Hughie Maltby. I would also at this point wish to record our thanks to Marty Rogers for his many years of distinguished service in this role. Early in May a number of VFFA members travelled to Tasmania to attend the official opening of the Australian Fly Fishing Museum.

The Partners' Dinner was again held in June and was enjoyed by all who attended. Sunday casting commenced in June and we would thank to Joe Haslauer for his sterling effort in running the Sunday mornings and doing all the catering. Thanks also to Bernard Holbery, who did a great job in organising this year's Cane Day at the Casting Pond.

Our guest speaker for the June general meeting was well-known angler Bill Classon. His company, the Australian Fishing Network, publishes a number of popular magazines, with *Freshwater Fishing* and *Flyfisher* being the two that most fly fishers will be familiar with. Bill spoke to us on two fascinating topics – trout fishing in Patagonia and fly fishing photography.

Our guest speaker for the July general meeting was Fred Dunford. Fred is an exceptional angler and an observant fly fisher and fly tier, and was a very entertaining and informative speaker with particular reference to his latest book, *Time of the Take*.

This year's Annual Dinner was addressed by Jim Allen who gave a lighthearted dissertation on "Why Men Fish". The Annual Casting Day this year was conducted as a purely social event. The Competition Day has been set down for the first Sunday in June next year.

Richard Kos did a great job in organising this year's Bullen Merri weekend which was attended by 12 members, all of whom had a wonderful time even though the fishing, as usual, was tough. The champion was Gordon Baker who proved that persistence wins out every time.

I would like to thank the outgoing Council members for their support over the last 12 months, with a special mention to Kevin Finn for the effort he has put in to sorting out our website and going into print in the newsletter in order to assist all members in being able to more easily access the site.

Thank you all.

*Terry Rogers (President)*

### **The Annual VFFA Christmas Dinner**

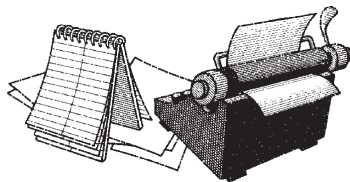
All members are reminded to keep in mind our Annual Christmas Dinner, which will be held at the Celtic Club on Thursday, December 12 – 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm commencement.

Our guest speaker this year will be John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries for Tasmania.

The cost will be the same as for last year - \$65 per person, with drinks available at bar prices. The official invitation to attend will be included as an insert in next month's newsletter.

Mark it in your diary now – Thursday, December 12.

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



“Colour is fine, but you can’t beat good prose!” (John Philbrick, in response to being asked how he liked last month’s first full colour newsletter issue.)

Actually I agree with John – well-written, interesting and informative material is vital if our newsletter is to continue to be a useful service to our members. Fortunately we continue to enjoy a consistently high standard of contributions from an increasing number of contributors, and they keep coming - much to the relief of your editor.

But it was exciting to produce a newsletter in full colour, and to hear the many positive comments that followed. Thus far no one has complained. The September issue was essentially an experiment. Our newsletters have been printed for many years on a special paper stock that was slightly larger in size than the industry standard of A4. In discussions with our printers, Elgin Printing, we learned that if we changed to the slightly smaller and cheaper A4 paper we could make some savings on our overall costs, and this would enable us to print a few colour issues each year without exceeding our newsletter budget. At this stage we plan to print another colour issue this year – probably the December newsletter. Incidentally, does the slightly smaller paper size mean less material in an issue? No it doesn’t, because our typesetter, Ross Frame at Spectrum Printing, simply reduced the sizes of the margins so that the actual area of print on each page remains the same. So we’ve lost nothing in content in the change to A4.

Why not print them all in colour? Well, that’s a matter for discussion at a future Council meeting, as it would undoubtedly entail a small rise in subscriptions. Mind you, the increased cost of colour could be offset if we had more members. Some of our colleagues have been very effective at selling the VFFA package to family and friends, and our overall numbers continue to rise. But we can always do with more members.

On a totally different tack, we’ve mentioned many times in previous issues the huge changes we’ve seen in recent years in our fly fishing, both in the gear we use (new rods, lines, leaders, waders, fly tying materials, ...) and the methods we use (indicator nymphing, Czech nymphing, French leader, loch-style on lakes, ...). So which recent innovation has been the most significant? I can’t help wondering if it might in fact be in our growing use of computers, and particularly the Internet as a source of all manner of useful fly fishing information. From weather reports and locality reports, to reviews of the latest gear, to YouTube videos on just about anything related to fly fishing, to casting instruction and fly tying know how, to of course the countless online shopping sites where we can browse for hours and drool over the latest gear - it’s all there online for us and so readily accessible. You can’t help but pick up so much useful information.

Just the other day I was listening to a podcast I’d downloaded in which Rick Hafele, a top US guide and fly fishing author, was discussing ‘common nymph fishing mistakes’. I won’t give you the whole works, but there were two suggestions that caught my attention. Rick suggested that we compare the nymphs in our fly boxes with those in the rivers we fish. We’d quickly discover that the real ones from the rivers are invariably much smaller. Rick mostly fishes nymphs in sizes 16, 18 and 20 to try to match the sizes of the naturals.

He also described an experience where he put on his scuba gear and lay on the bottom of a pool and watched as his companion, a well-known US angler, fished the pool with nymphs under an indicator. The angler made a number of casts, and on every cast at least one fish, and occasionally two or three, swam up and took the drifting nymph, then quickly spat it out (having detected the fraud). The fish then kept on feeding. There was a small amount of slack in the angler's line and hence the indicator barely moved as the fish mouthed the nymph. So the angler had no idea until informed later that he could have hooked a fish on every cast. The lesson here is that detecting the take when nymph fishing is extremely challenging, and Rick Hafele suggests that at least once in every drift the angler should 'strike' (i.e. quickly draw the rod tip back just enough to drive the hook into the mouth of any fish mouthing the nymph), regardless of any indicator movement. Rick assures us that in making these random strikes we might be surprised at how often we find ourselves connected to an equally surprised trout.

I'll give it a go later this week when I head out for a fish. In the meantime,

Tight lines,

*Lyndon Webb*

## **Bairnsdale Donger Weekend**

Final Call - this is the last invitation to all members to enjoy a great weekend of fishing and fun.

Our hosts will be the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers, the date is Friday October 25 for their Annual Dinner, followed by fishing on the Saturday and Sunday for the Dudley Lee Donger. You can then stay on if you wish for the Sunday night and fish again on the Monday, leaving after lunch.

The Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' Mitta lodge is five-star accommodation. It sleeps 12 and is very well appointed. I have been attending this weekend for about 30 years and can assure you of a truly great time.

The main meal on the Saturday evening is roast beef with all the trimmings, followed by desert consisting of my renowned apple pie with lavish helpings of cream. There is a barbecue lunch on the Sunday at 1 PM, following the official weigh in.

The fishing in this area can be quite challenging. However you will be given plenty of advice and guidance and possibly even guided by one of the Bairnsdale club members on some delightful stretches of the justifiably famous Mitta Mitta River. You can also fish some of the many other surrounding streams. They should all be flowing well and running clear by this time.

We need to know numbers at least two weeks prior to the date. If you would like to be part of this great weekend then please contact either Peter Campbell on 9744 3308 (after 8 pm) or Mike Jarvis on 9822 4017.

# Web Fish

Cast regularly at [vffa.org.au](http://vffa.org.au)

## About the VFFA web site:

The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings , trips, ...updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

## Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format that can be read and saved on iPads and tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities that can be synced with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos and Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand

---

## Jennifer Hughes

(15th January 1946 – 25th September 2013)

It is with great sadness that we inform VFFA members that Jenny Hughes, beloved wife of our Senior Vice-President Hamish, died on September 25, following a four-year battle with cancer. Jenny's funeral service was held at Immaculate Conception Church in Hawthorn on October 1. The service drew a large gathering of family and friends including many of Hamish's VFFA colleagues.

President Terry Rogers and all members of the VFFA extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to Hamish and his family at this time.

## Fishing on the Frontier

(... from Jeremy Lucas. Jeremy is a member of the Hardy Greys Academy and former England all-round international, and is author of the book *Tactical Fly Fishing*. He guides mostly on the San River, Poland, and the Eden in Cumbria, England, these being the two best mixed trout and grayling rivers in Europe. The following article first appeared on the very popular UK based site [www.flyforums.co.uk](http://www.flyforums.co.uk), the largest fly fishing website in Europe. Jeremy's articles keep us right up to date with the latest developments and trends in trout fishing techniques in England and Europe.)

### *From Fly Fishing Magazine – The World of Fly Fishing Online: Fishing on the Frontier - Part 48 - Euro-Style: A New Boundary State (March 2013)*

The modern river fly fisher exists at a boundary state, right on the cusp of control. There is a vast difference between the angler who is just that tiny bit out of control, fishing over-range or without a 'tight' line, say, and the one who achieves the optimum in all the possible variables. The casual observer cannot possibly see these differences, and only the angler himself, or perhaps a nearby experienced observer, can really see this fugitive element of control. But it exists and is the single most significant aspect of the sport that determines success or failure. To be out of control, by even a little, results in compromised presentation, a poor hook up ratio and excessive disturbance, and much else besides.

In my experience many anglers are in denial of this attribute of control for much of the time, often attempting to cover up any inherent faults or lack of skill in casting. Indeed casting control is part of it, but there is much more involved in achieving presentation with control. As readers know, I have long suggested the shortcomings of conventional high-mass fly lines and ill-conceived leader constructions. Historically, these have developed with ease of casting in mind, which is natural, but I'm afraid this is merely the easiest aspect of the situation to correct. The plain fact is that the more mass with which we hinder ourselves in order to make casting very easy at range, the more both presentation and control get away from us. As you might remember, I put the outer limit of control on the river at somewhere around 10 metres; and this with a good quality fly line, say a DT4F - probably the de facto standard nowadays. At any greater range even the exceptionally good caster is losing control.

The dynamics of the fly line, quite apart from the rod length or leader construction or casting ability, are what initiate this loss of control. To be completely clear: control is defined as having such contact with the fly that it remains in its dead drift state unless there is some movement of the rod tip. This is what we refer to as being in contact with, or tight to, the fly. Most river anglers usually have either too much contact, such that they are 'leading' nymphs for example, or insufficient when they then have no tactile indication of a take to a nymph. The situation is altogether more critical with the dry fly, because overmuch contact leads to the anathema of drag, while too little leads to a loss of accuracy and high disturbance.

I mentioned the four-weight line above and it might seem counter-intuitive, at first, to suggest that to decrease the line mass - to a three or two-weight - actually increases the range at which we have control. It all comes down to the mass of the line/leader construction. The lower this mass the greater range at which the angler can maintain control. Lower diameters also help here, and it is noticeable how many top European anglers are now using low mass silk lines, such as AA format, in order to achieve this. We have all experienced that awful loss of control as a heavy fly line interacts with the current. In order to minimise this, the river angler often shortens the range to a typical six metres (using a 10 ft or longer rod).

Czech-style nymphing has long been a method in which the fly line is obsolete, and Euro-style is merely an extension of this. Tenkara has been popularised in the west because of its great virtue of superb presentation - with control - at short range, particularly with dry fly or near-surface flies such as spiders. Another alternative that recovers some of this lost control is to abandon the fly line and go with a leader-only approach; something that I have been promoting for several years now. The benefits to nymph fishing (and fishing spiders) are huge, but with the dry fly there is simply unprecedented levels of control and contact possible, with zero disturbance even beyond the 10 metre limit.

One important caveat: French leader is not the answer. It is merely an adaptation of the Euro-style, specifically designed for nymph fishing at various ranges. French leaders are not designed for dry fly (and by extrapolation are not usually ideal for spider or low mass nymphs either). What are required are leader constructions in which the mass is distributed properly (away from the rod tip, rather like a weight forward profile fly line or some of the contemporary Tenkara leaders).

So the modern river angler is pushing out the boundary at which we can achieve control, and it is nothing short of a delight. We have borrowed a great deal from Tenkara, and probably as much from early developments with French leader. Although it feels new, it is maybe all part of the sport's development. It is, at least, a delight to have stumbled upon new levels of elegance that are so extraordinarily effective. In phase with all the above is the way the fly has developed; escaping from fairly simplistic ideas of imitation which had dominated for so long and being more dynamically designed to meet presentation requirements.

In the river scene, quite unlike what we see broadcast from the stillwater scene, typical flies are beautiful exercises in minimalism in which we see the influence of dynamics, or behaviour in the water, as being the overriding influence. So far as dry patterns are concerned, CDC is dominant, particularly in the simple form I describe as Plume Tips, which are little more than (typically) a quill or heron herl body and a pair of CDC plume tips tied in shuttlecock style flat over the back, or upright style, to suit the prevalent food forms. Variation in nymphs is more extreme, though the fundamental Sawyer-style PTN remains timeless, especially with the depth variations possible with tungsten beads.

Two newer styles of nymphs, however, are dominating the European scene. Jig-style patterns have offered new opportunities in fishing deep, with control, largely afforded by the way the hook bend and point are inverted (significantly reducing fouling on the river bed). The so-called Euro-jig is a variant that has stemmed from FIPS-Mouche international championships - from the stable of several national teams - and consists of a 3.0 - 3.5 mm silver tungsten bead on a suitable jig hook (12s and 14s being most popular), with a Coq de Leon tail, stripped peacock quill body (natural, olive, yellow, orange and crimson all being successful) and a mix of dubbed hare or squirrel fur with CDC at the thorax.

The other group of flies that are having as profound effect on the river sport, again throughout Europe, are ceramics. These slim profile, dense patterns have been astonishingly effective, ever since the French introduced them about a decade ago, though surprisingly few anglers from other countries paid much attention to them for several years, and it has been only very recently that British anglers have discovered them. I think they will make as much long-term impact on the sport as either Czech nymphs or tungsten beaded nymphs. It all has to do with that element of control, and how a rapidly sinking pattern such as a ceramic - incidentally, with excellent GISS (i.e. general impression of size and shape in an imitative sense) profile almost by default - can be held with precision through a drift.

It has been a convergence of approaches, nymph and dry, that has led us to the delightful minimalism of what is regarded as Euro-style. We apply this to winter grayling, or deep nymphing, double nymphing, or clear water nymphing with a single ceramic to targeted fish in clear summer waters, or spider fishing. Then, at its best, we discover that fishing leader-only we can also have unprecedented levels of presentation and control with the dry fly, all with the same tackle - a 10' two or three weight and ultra-long leader that allows delicate touch down, with accuracy and zero disturbance, and if necessary, way out beyond the fly line-imposed limit of 10 metres.

(NB: your editor discovered that Rick Dobson at Aussie Angler stocks the Jig hooks mentioned in this article in sizes 10 and 12. No doubt other stores around Melbourne have them too. In next month's Fly of the Month we will feature a couple of very effective nymphs tied on these Jig hooks.)

---

## ELDER STATESMAN – Hubert Reichelt (part 2)

**Dermot O'Brien continues his series on the VFFA's Elder Statesmen.**

**Here is the second half of Hubert Reichelt's thoughts on fly fishing. Hubert is an elite fisherman who has become an expert in New Zealand's South Island rivers.**

### **What are your favourite flies?**

While the fly is the smallest part of the fishing outfit it is also the most important. The line and leader connected to the fly serves its delivery, but once the fly lands on the water it is on its own to convince the fish that it is edible. I find it fascinating that this deception is achieved by just tying a few bits of fur and feathers onto a hook.

Where it becomes complicated, and often confusing, is that a particular fly may work very well on one river but not on another, or only at certain times of the year, or at a specific phase of the hatching cycle. To find the right fly for a given situation by logical deduction is one of the great pleasures of fly fishing, and it requires a fly box or boxes with many different flies in at least two sizes to find the best match for a given set of conditions.

When I fish in Southland of New Zealand I have a fly for every stage of the life cycle of the Mataura Red (*Deleatidium vernale*), all in size sixteen: a weighted nymph, unweighted nymph, Andrew Mossman's possum emerger, a stillborn dun, a dun, a spinner, and a spent spinner. In addition I carry a weighted caddis (deep sparkle pupa, by Gary LaFontaine) and an emerging pupa, a palmer deer-hair caddis (all these in size 14), and a black spinner in size 16. In summer I add cicadas in green and brown, grasshoppers, a couple of beetles, two blowflies in iridescent blue and green, a Royal Wulff as a strike indicator for the free-stone rivers, and two stone-fly nymphs for high-country wilderness streams. When I fish for rainbows in the McKenzie Basin in early November, I mainly use the Prince Nymph weighted with a gold tungsten bead and a weighted Hare's Ear and Gold, both in size 12.

For north-east Victoria I always carry gold ribbed Hare's Ear nymphs, gold ribbed Dark Olive Seal's Fur nymphs and gold ribbed Brown Seal's Fur nymphs, all weighted in sizes 12 - 16. I also carry Royal Wulffs in sizes 12 and 14, Parachute Adams in sizes 12 - 16, Shaving Brushes in sizes 14 and 16, Sulphur Duns and Black Spinners in size 14, CDC Emergers in size 14,



*A familiar scene – Hubert with yet another fine New Zealand capture*

Kosciuszko Duns in sizes 10 - 14, CDC Caddis in sizes 12 and 14, Tent Wing Caddis in size 14, Deer Hair Caddis in size 14, and Deep Sparkle Pupa and Emerging Sparkle Pupa, both in size 14. As the season warms up, I add Christmas beetles, gum beetles, Geehi beetles, Bogong moths, cicadas and grass hoppers.

For the rivers around Lake Eildon I carry the above flies minus the Kosciuszko Dun, Bogong moth and Sulphur Dun, but add the Blue Whirling Dun in sizes 14 and 16, Greenwell's Glory in the same sizes, and winged termites in size 16.

Although this may sound like a lot of fly patterns, I must confess that I also carry many more in small quantities just for that occasion when a fish rejects all my favourite patterns. When I finally hook up, fly fishing doesn't get any better for me. As I tie all my own flies, I still collect insect specimens in search for new patterns or to improve existing ones by making use of newer materials.

### **Greatest influence over the years:**

Without any hesitation I can say the Tony Brothers had the greatest influence on my development as a fly fisher. He introduced me to fly fishing and fly tying, got me interested in entomology, and invited me to join the VFFA. When I started fly fishing I was very fortunate to have Tony as my mentor, and he fast tracked me through the bewildering maze every beginner faces. Tony was well read in the history and traditions of fly fishing, he knew the originators and ties of dozens of flies, and was actively engaged in the conservation of catchments and the preservation of wild trout in their natural environment. He was very knowledgeable in all matters of fly fishing and I benefited greatly from the discussions we had on our numerous fishing trips together, especially

during his presidency from 1980 to 1982 when I got my first insight into the politics surrounding our trout fishery. In 1983 he suggested that I should stand for election to Council, which was the beginning of a very rewarding experience through to the end of my presidency in 1992. There is no aspect in my journey as a fly fisher that was not influenced by Tony in some way.

**Advise to the inexperienced:**

My advice to beginner or inexperienced fly fishers is to split up the learning process into discrete steps of casting and fishing. The most common mistake beginners make is to try to fish before they can cast.

So my first piece of advice is to learn to cast with the help of an experienced caster or casting instructor, and to do this away from the river on still water where one can see how the line and leader lands. At this stage it is important to not have any distraction from concentrating solely on the casting action. The criterion before going fishing is to be able to cast a fly 30 feet and to straighten out a 9 ft leader. 30 ft is how far back a fly fisher must be from the fish to stay below its angle of vision. While learning to cast the beginner should also become familiar with what the trout are eating throughout the fishing season and which flies represent these food items. In addition, every fly box should hold a few attractor patterns such as the Royal Wulff, Parachute Adams and some Stimulators. There is a vast amount of fly fishing literature available, and it pays to buy or borrow a few books to become more familiar with the subject.

Once equipped with basic casting skills and some knowledge of what fish eat, it is now time to visit a river for learning the important skills of stream-craft. While much has been written on this subject, there is no better way to acquire these skills than to be coached by an experienced fly fisher who can point out the likely trout lies, the best position to take up in relation to casting to the fish, and how to present the fly in different situations. By this time the beginner will have started catching enough fish to fuel the passion and the desire to learn more about different casts, drag control, reading the water, constructing a plan for how to fish the water, and learning how to spot fish. Nowadays all these skills can be seen in action on the many DVDs in the libraries of fishing clubs, which is just one of the many good reasons why everyone who takes up fly fishing should join one.



*This one's from the Oreti – a wonderful Southland river*

### Advice to the experienced:

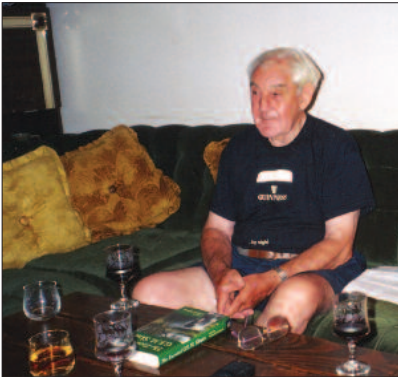
Although there is no clear criteria as to what constitutes an experienced fly fisher, the ability to catch fish on a regular basis would have to be one of them. It is also said that 80% of fish are caught by 20% of fishermen, which is probably not far off the mark. Whatever the exact figures are, it is obvious that the fish population would be adversely affected predominately by the experienced fly fishermen if they kill their catch. My advice to this group is to strictly practice catch and release in rivers and natural lakes, and to use their standing amongst their peers to promote this practice. Fly fishing is similar to playing golf in that nobody will ever be the perfect practitioner in either sport.

In fly fishing the most difficult aspect in river fishing is to prevent the fly from dragging. When fishing the dry fly it is easier to recognise the speeds and directions of different surface currents, and one can achieve a drag free drift over a short distance by choosing the most appropriate cast. Controlling sub-surface drag on a nymph is much more difficult. Sub-surface velocities are three-dimensional, nearly almost invisible, and with water speeds that vary through the water column. To have some chance of minimising sub-surface drag requires a basic knowledge of hydraulic flow in open channels and what effect obstructions have on velocities.

Obstructions in the river produce tell-tale signs on the surface that indicate possible trout lies and flow conditions. When the nymph moves naturally with the current it is extremely effective in attracting fish. This is demonstrated indirectly by the Leisenring Lift. In this case the nymph doesn't drift naturally with the current but it's upward movement looks like natural movement to the fish, which has seen it many times before when nymphs are ascending to hatch.

Achieving a natural drift by a nymph in upstream nymphing is a big challenge that I recommend experienced fly fishers tackle in order to further increase their angling success.

### Alive or dead who would you like to spend a day on the water with?



*Norman Marsh*

In 1984 I read the book *Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand* by Norman Marsh, and I felt an instant affinity with the author as our journeys to becoming fly fishers were almost identical in the first 15 years of our lives. When Norman arrived in New Zealand in 1953 he settled near the upper reaches of the Mataura River. In his book he describes the fishing as it was then and how it changed over the years. He also describes how he had to develop his own flies to more closely resemble the insects in and around the river, as most of the flies used in New Zealand at that time were traditional English and American patterns which did not pass the scrutiny of the selective trout in many of the New Zealand rivers. He describes how he made sketches of insects, and took notes and photographs, and how this kindled his urge to learn about aquatic

entomology. His wonderful descriptions of fishing sections of the Mataura and other South Island rivers had me feeling as if I was walking beside him, as I had also fished these same spots.

As I could identify with many of his ideas on fly fishing I wanted to meet Norman. In the late 1980s I was near his house when I decided to pay him a visit (unannounced). Unfortunately, everything was locked up and a sign on the door read "Gone fishing". The same happened again

five years later. I had almost given up on ever meeting him when a good friend I was staying with in New Zealand told me that his best friend, who happened to be Norman Marsh, was to visit him the next day. We subsequently had a wonderful conversation together, though initially it felt a little like sitting a fishing exam. He quizzed me about Frank Sawyer, Skues, Goddard and Schwiebert, the latter two being actually friends of his. Finally he wanted to have a look in my fly boxes.

I must have passed the test as the conversation picked up and the time passed all too quickly. We finally decided to fish the evening rise together in a small creek nearby that was home to a few thumper brown trout. Unfortunately our host decided that this was a bad idea in light of Norman's frail state and the long walk back in the dark. Sadly, before the start of the next fishing season I was informed that he had passed away. I would have loved the opportunity to spend a day on the water with Norman Marsh, grovelling in the gravel looking for insects and casting to selective trout.

### **If you were starting out again, what would you do differently?**

The saying "you must learn to walk before you can run" certainly applies to fly fishing. Like most beginners, I raced straight to the river after I acquired my first fly fishing outfit and expected to catch fish the same day. At the end of the day I was utterly frustrated and fishless because I couldn't place the fly where it needed to be. To compensate for my poor casting I fished boisterous free-stone rivers where one can get closer to the fish and inadequate casting is less noticeable on the choppy water. This enabled me to catch fish on the fly, but did little to improve my casting until I took casting lessons away from the river. As my casting improved so did my fishing. In retrospect, if I had to start out again I would first learn to cast from an instructor, and only start to fish after casting has become a subconscious action.

---

## **Jim Blakeslee in British Columbia**

**W**hat do you normally think of when you read stories about fishing for Pacific salmon in the Province of British Columbia on the west coast of Canada? Do you see, in your imagination, steam rising from the surface of an icy river on a frigid autumn morning? Bears emerging from the stream-side willow thickets and crashing through the shallows in pursuit of schools of spawning fish? A wary fisherman decked out in neoprene waders and rugged up against the cold? Breaking the ice from the runners on a 10-weight Sage rod before, once again, casting a high-density shooting head line attached to a 6 foot leader with a weighted #2 Purple Demon on the end? The line cast downstream and across and the fly allowed to slowly swing? Or for a change, a floating line cast upstream, New Zealand nymphing-style, with a feather duster for a strike indicator and an egg fly sinking to the bottom on a dead drift?

Can you visualize the fisherman as he watches and waits in anticipation? And then "the take!" The fly scooped by a huge fish! Is it a King? Maybe a Coho? It feels like a freight train as it races off downstream, the reel screaming, the fisherman's heart pounding!!! And it's comforting to know the trusty guide is nearby with the gaff at hand, ready to strike.

Well, the reality can be somewhat different if you go fishing for pink salmon on the Campbell River on Vancouver Island, B.C. If you ever decide to fish for "pinkies", the first thing you need



*British Columbia Long Weekend – lots of anglers fishing the Campbell River*

to do is arrive in summer on an odd numbered year. (True – they only run in odd numbered years!) Anyway, August 2013 will do as an example. When I was there not too long ago, the air temperature was in the mid 30's Centigrade and the water temperature was maybe 18°C. Wading wet, and decked out in boots, T-shirt and shorts was the way to fish in comfort on a hot day. It was the “B.C. Long Weekend” and every man and his dog (literally) were out enjoying themselves; in this case, fishing the first salmon run of the season. One has to be prepared to share the water with other people (forget about bears) when the salmon are in. The main action appeared to be taking place only a couple of kilometres upstream from the river mouth and well within the city limits. The easily accessible deep holding pools near bridges were lined with fly fishermen casting sinking lines with pink egg-flies down and across, allowing the flies to sink deep. They were often side-by-side with spin fishermen who were casting lead-pencil sinkers trailed by pink egg-lures. Occasionally a fisherman struck a fish and the battle was on!

I chose to avoid the crowd and fished for an hour on a gentle glide a bit further downstream. I was fishing in front of the home of the (now deceased) B.C. Chief Magistrate who was also the renowned author of fly fishing books such as *A River Never Sleeps*. Yes, Roderick L. Haig-Brown (whose equivalent in Australia would be Douglas Stewart). It seemed fitting to pay homage to the great author by casting a line on a stretch of water that had been dear to his heart. I soon found out why.

I only had to wade out knee deep into the river to spot huge black masses of fish that were fresh in from the sea, pausing on their run up to their spawning grounds. They were holding in water that appeared to be only 3 to 4 feet deep and well within casting range. I was using a 9 foot 5-weight RPL Sage rod with a floating line, 12 foot leader, 8 pound fluorocarbon tippet and a weighted #6 pink egg-fly. I had been well advised in advance of my trip to B.C. by my fishing mate, Peter Conrick, who lives near Seattle. Apparently, pink salmon are the first of the season to make their spawning runs. They are the smallest of the pacific salmon (and probably not the best eating), usually 3 to 6 pounds in weight, and they love to take pink flies that are retrieved in short strips.



*Not a place to fish in solitude*



*Tricia Blakeslee at  
Roderick Haig-Brown's residence*



*Nice work Jim – a fine 'pinkie'*

Sure enough, all I had to do was cast the fly upstream of a school of fish, let the fly drift downstream and sink a for few seconds to get down to their level, then begin to strip – pause – strip – pause ... wham! I was into my first pinkie. The fish raced off downstream, cartwheeling out of the water a couple times. Luckily, I stopped it just before it reached the downstream rapids. A few minutes later I landed my first fish - it was 3½ - 4 lb.

I then had to put my fishing on hold and wait a few minutes while a group of eco-tourists, decked out in wetsuits and snorkelling gear, drifted downstream through Haig-Brown's glide looking at the schools of salmon. At first I thought to myself, "Bugger! That's the end of my fishing! The fish will be well-and-truly spooked." I needn't have worried. They didn't react like trout would have. In fact, the schools of fish moved aside as the snorkelers went past, then re-settled into their holding positions in the glide, as before. I cast again, let the fly sink, strip-pause – strip - pause ... wham! I was into another pinkie. After an hour I had landed 4 fish to 4½ pounds, and lost a few other (larger?) fish that made it to the rapids downstream and broke me off. Maybe time to call it quits and leave the spawners in peace? It was lunchtime so I made tracks for the car. I knew where I wanted to go. That morning a local lass had told me, "the best fish-and-chips in Campbell River was at the pier down on the waterfront." She wasn't wrong.

---

## This Month's Yarn

(from September 1968)

"What's the best thing you ever caught with a dry fly?" Mick Crewes asked as he refilled McTaggart's glass.

A look of happy reminiscence came into his canny eyes. "It was some years ago," he replied, "but I remember it well. I was staying in a pleasant little country pub up in the north-east, and there was a charming young lady holidaying there too. My gosh she was a handsome lass with glorious red hair. Now at this time I was supplying the hotel with enough trout for everyone's breakfast, and one morning this delightful young lady expressed an interest in how I caught them. I described how I was taking them on a dry fly, so she asked if she might come along with me so that she could see what this fly fishing was all about."

"So the next morning we set out together, and as you might guess I just couldn't find a rising fish anywhere. I suspected I'd taken the wrong flies. My companion for the morning seemed quite surprised and disappointed, so I told her that if she gave me a little snippet of her beautiful hair things might change. And she did, so using a tuft of her hair as a hackle and wing I tied up a special fly there and then. It looked a bit like a Red Tag. Almost immediately I got into a fish and my companion was delighted of course, and no doubt very flattered."

"How big was the fish?" asked Mick expectantly. "I can't really remember," said McTaggart, "Possibly about half a pound I guess." "But ... but ..." Mick spluttered, "Surely that couldn't be the best fish you ever landed with a dry fly!"

"The best fish?" came McTaggart's response, "By no means my good friend. But when you first put the question to me you didn't actually say anything about a fish."

## In Praise of the Humble Shack

(... by Dennis Carter, a member who lives in Bendigo, and has recently contributed some delightful articles for our newsletter. Here is another of them.)

Life can be experiential - learning by doing; underpinned by an indefatigably and laterally inquisitive nature which endures until they put you in a box and either burn or bury you. The driving force is exploration, leading occasionally to what becomes intuitive.

From time to time, with luck, we can slip sideways, take a little time out and recharge. For me, that time is best spent close to nature; as close to wilderness as I can get. In these instances, the most fundamental shelter does more than suffice; it can nurture the soul. A good lightweight tent, given the security of knowing it is leakproof and well pitched on a drained site with openings away from the weather, is the most basic of shelters and can be fine. Lying in a down sleeping bag mere centimetres from the thinnest of fine woven waterproofed fabric protection can induce the most peaceful sleeps, even during the most severe weather.

Once, "home" for nine months of traveling was a short wheel based diesel Land Rover. Every night for that nine months in pelting Irish rain, or shimmering Afghani desert, or Hindu Kush snows, the plywood "bed" was dropped from the roof for sleep. Fuel, water for washing and drinking, food, cooking utensils, clothes, and all the other basic necessities were carried aboard. Home was a compartment 2 metres long, about 1,200 mm wide and 1,200 mm high, and it provided secure, comfortable basic shelter. It was "home".

Many of the nicest places I've slept in are shacks. Rude improvised shelters around which winds could howl, rain could pelt down on, snow softly settle or hot sun beat; but where inside one is totally relaxed and at ease with the world. Dumb places inhabited by eccentrics or eccentric places inhabited by dumb people. I know of no better time out.

They're the sort of make-do places that for me can be imbued with a precious ineffable charm - too often out of the realm of tidy-minded Council Planners, possessing what might be called "rustic charm"; really quite wonderful and fragile. Some existed quite recently alongside the insensitive Rifle Range Estate on Kororoit Creek. There were others, with their fishing boats and old tractors and appurtenant sheds, dogs and struggling little flowerbeds, along the foreshore between Altona and Werribee. Blanket Bay, near Cape Otway used to have some of the best. They're gone now without a trace, their insubstantial structures permitting easy destruction, as has Doug Seabrook's old shack of memorable nights on the banks of nearby Parker River. The cattlemen's huts of the mountains and high plains with their romantic and even heroic connotations are on the other hand readily accepted and even eulogised.

But the genuine and loveliest shacks, built with desperate measures by often desperate people, or alternatively as peaceful places of temporary refuge for true romantic recreators, or squatters of one kind or another who could not be bothered with permits or approvals, are fast disappearing or all but gone.

Modest in size, intrinsically protective from the vastness of Nature outside, resourcefully constructed over time using scrounged materials and bush timbers, these humble and humbling places with a fireplace, watertank and long-drop toilet are surely the first Australian examples of sustainable "architecture".

Childhood huts, cubbies and caves offered the same real and imagined shelter. Huts are similar, shearer's quarters can be included, with cabins the next in the sophistication hierarchy. We stay from time to time, or did before the "drought", in shearers' quarters to which I am privileged to be invited, on a barren property in a place we call "New Caledonia". It is nowhere near Caledonia, but rather creekside, in the toughest and most fragile of landscapes not far from Cooma.

The first time I visited, we slid in late one night in snow and woke next morning to the stillness and quiet of an aged barren landscape covered in white. It then rained, a rare occurrence in this place, and we stayed inside, inspecting tackle, fidgeting and pretending to read. Comfortable, until the weather cleared.

Here, the beds sag, some worse than others. The walls are thin and earplugs essential to escape from the tremendous snoring induced by glorious meals and copious quantities of good Australian red wine. (Do you know a bad one?). The fireplace works, the fridge works, the stove works, the shower is hot and the toilet is just off the broad-decked verandah which is elevated three steps above the ground. A few straggly trees struggle just to survive, but we have wonderful times there in all weathers when this built place of no beauty is briefly ours and "home".

Some of the best shacks, built by anglers, are on the Central Plateau of Tasmania in strips and clusters along tracks by Great Lake, Arthurs Lake, Little Pine Lagoon and alongside the nearer Western Lakes. The remaining old ones were tough places providing essential shelter and refuge from the elements in a tough landscape where a foot of snow can fall in a few hours in January, or it can be 40 degrees.

A favourite of mine was one habitable room with a central table and chairs, a couch, a fridge and kitchen bench and dresser at one end and sets of bunks at the other, a shower cubicle down a step to one side, the fire place opposite, the dunny several steps down the hill, a huge lean-to lock up shed where wood was stored and a Suzuki parked and waders hung. That's it, and several of you have enjoyed the privilege. Unlike us mainlanders Tasmanians have fought for their shacks and thus retained their precious communities, albeit with modifications like composting toilets. And these are places of real history. In Tasmania the shack is now culturally recognized, and they have become posher, with a few even designed by architects. Shelter on the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair can be provided in designed 60 square metre huts that can comfortably sleep eight weary walkers.

Shacks have a place in our recreational future. They can touch the earth so gently. By definition they are modest in size and frugal in their use of materials; improvised but considered shelter, by design precious, sustainable autonomous architecture than can be there one moment as "home" and gone the next, leaving not a trace of their being at all.

*Dennis Carter*

## Warrnambool Season Opener Weekend & Dinner

It's on again – the Season Opener to Warrnambool and District - from Friday, November 15, to Sunday, November 17. Following magnificent visits to the Warrnambool area over past years we will do it all again for this year's opening weekend.



*The Mt Emu is weedy and very productive. Jim Blakeslee with a fine 2 lb brown*

Accommodation has been booked at the Surfside Holiday Park - a very comfortable complex in a great location. The accommodation has been booked in cabins from arrival on the Friday until departure on the Sunday.

We will fish a number of local rivers including the Merri, Hopkins, Mt Emu and Moyne. These rivers offer a wonderful variety of fishing to some very big brown trout. Both wet and dry fishing styles may be employed, depending on the height and clarity of the water.

The President and members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers will again guide us, and join us for a magnificent evening meal at Jim Blakeslee's Winery on the Saturday evening. Jim and his wife Trish will be our hosts. Members will each share the cost of this meal and provide their own drinks.

The Notice of Event (NOE) was published, with all relevant details, in the August newsletter.

This will be a great weekend, so reserve your spot now by contacting Terry Rogers on mobile 0438 553 326.



*Tichborne watercolour - Kaiwi Lakes*

# The Nobby Hopper

(A poem by Steve Suito – this time in praise of a wonderful summer pattern.)

In the middle of the summer  
With the dog days at their height,  
When the water's low and brassy,  
And the fish just will not bite.

When the trout ignore your spinners  
And your nymphs and beetles too,  
Shun your ants and duns and caddis,  
You are really in a stew.

When you gaze into your fly box  
With a blank, defeated stare,  
When your sagging spirits threaten  
To descend beyond despair.

'Til you sight a Nobby Hopper,  
Battle scarred from seasons past,  
And your flagging spirit's lifted  
As you knot it to the cast.

So you add a little floatant  
And you hold it in your hand,  
Your confidence is soaring  
And the feeling's something grand.

Your cast is long and arrow straight,  
As good as you can do,  
When there comes a savage rolling take,  
Your strike is perfect too.

The afternoon becomes a blur  
Of battles lost and won,  
But in your memory's deeply etched  
That crashing take and searing run.

When the shadows finally lengthen  
And you decide to call it quits,  
Your chewed and tattered Nobby  
Is about to fall to bits.

So you snip it from your leader  
And you stick it in your vest,  
And you wear it like a medal  
Won beside the nation's best.

Now a Nobby isn't dainty  
And you cast it like a brick,  
But on those hot, dog days of summer  
It will surely do the trick.

When you're there to do the business  
And the trout just will not play,  
Tie a Nobby to your tippet  
And then wade into the fray.

So let us hail the Nobby Hopper,  
Raise a glass, drink a salute,  
The Nobby is a champion fly,  
What we Aussies call 'a beaut'.



*Tichborne watercolour - Lochy River*

# Odd Bits

## *Adding the 15+*

We often fish in the sun, and even with a hat on we get burnt, particularly when there's a good strong northerly blowing. So the addition of some sunblock or 15+ is wise. But the smell of the stuff is supposed to repel trout; they're apparently not keen on 15+. So what are the options?

- Get your wife to put it on before you leave home.
- Use the back of your hand to wipe it on (but I find that awkward and messy).
- Put on one of those cheap thin food handlers' rubber gloves from the supermarket, then with your hand protected from the smell, wipe on the sunblock. Then discard the rubber glove.
- Buy sunblock that comes in a stick form, or perhaps one of those with a foam pad as the dispenser that you just dab on.
- Use some odour free and non-fish repelling sunblock. (AFN stocks this type).

## *Want some cheap gear?*

A 1975 Compleat Angler catalogue recently turned up. Would you believe that Pezon & Michel cane rods were selling for \$120 and top Hardy reels for \$30 - \$55. Hardy fly lines were \$23, and a pair of Horne thigh boots was \$14.95. Wheatley fly boxes going for \$6.95? As for books, Douglas Stewart's *The Seven Rivers* was priced at \$5.95. And best quality (Indian) grizzle hackles were \$6.95.

I was wondering if they still had any of this old stock around?

## *Cleaning Fly Lines*

The Scientific Anglers website recommends the following steps for optimizing performance of their fly lines:

“Line Cleaning: The best way to clean lines is to use one of Scientific Anglers' proprietary cleaning pads. Mild hand soap and water on a cloth also works well. Don't use detergents or harsh soaps, as these may remove some of the important lubricants from the line's surface. Clean your line whenever you see that it is getting dirty, or if you notice that it doesn't float or shoot as well as it used to.

Maximum Performance: For maximum performance and line life, keep your lines clean using the above methods. Should you desire a further temporary performance boost, dress your line with Scientific Anglers line dressing. Any line will shoot and float better after dressing, although the effects are temporary as the dressing will wear off with use, and it also tends to attract dirt and algae (??).

Dressings: Use only a silicone based dressing. Scientific Anglers recommend their Dressing (of course). Avoid solvent-based dressings such as Muclin which can actually damage fly lines.

Protection: Avoid as much as possible excessive exposure to heat and UV light when you store your lines. Do not leave them for long periods in a hot car, as this can be very damaging. Avoid line contact with any solvent-based chemicals, insect repellent with DEET, and sunscreens.

Storage: It is not necessary to remove lines from your reels for off-season storage. They should be clean and dry, and should be stored where they will not be exposed to heat or light. If you have lines that you plan to store for extended periods, the refrigerator or even the freezer is best.”

Now what about those tired old lines that you’re trying to squeeze an extra season out of? In the old days we used to polish them up with Armorall. The first few casts with the treated line really flew, but it didn’t last long because Armorall was apparently soluble in water. Some line manufacturers also warned that it removed the essential plasticizers from the line.

Tiemco Line Cleaner has had some good reviews, but then there are lots of other commercial line cleaning and maintenance products available, so I guess the clue is to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.

But there is one other product that deserves a mention. Peter Hayes, in an article I now can’t find, discussed the merits of soaking your fly lines in 303 Aerospace Protectant. This is similar to Armorall but doesn’t harm fly lines and isn’t water soluble. The Orvis site says this:

“The 303® sales department originally approached Orvis about selling 303® Aerospace Protectant™ for waders. After all, wasn’t 303® the most powerful longest-lasting protector for rubber? Orvis had their own ideas. They tested it on fly lines and came back with the fact that 303® Aerospace Protectant™ is flat-out, hands-down, no-contest, absolutely-the-best fly line dressing anybody had ever seen. And since 1987 Orvis has sold 303® Aerospace Protectant™ for that - a fly line dressing that among other reasons for using it “... adds 10 to 30 feet to your casts without additional effort...” This has to do with repellency, penetrating and bonding to a surface in such a way that it reduces the drag co-efficient to close to zero. It waterproofs lines and is too incredibly smooth for anything to stick to it.”

So there you go. Autobarn sells the stuff if you’re willing to give an old line a new lease of life.

### *Nymphs and Dry Fly Indicators*

Many of us fish a nymph under a dry fly. The dry fly acts as the indicator, and the line running down to the nymph is tied off the bend of the dry fly hook. But sometimes you want to quickly remove the nymph in order to cast the dry to a rising fish. Then after you’ve caught the rising fish (or not) you want to re-attach the nymph again to fish the two fly rig. A suggestion here is to use a Grinner Knot to connect the line to the hook of the dry fly. When you tie the Grinner Knot you slide it down to tighten it up on the barb. But you can also do this in reverse. When you want to remove the nymph, you simply use your fingernail to open the Grinner Knot loop where it is tied around the dry fly hook. Then you can slide the knot off and store the nymph and dropper temporarily by winding it around your hat (or somewhere). When the nymph needs to be re-connected to the dry fly simply loop the opened Grinner Knot loop around the dry fly hook and retighten it. Ready to go again.

A guide in the US takes this process one step further. Rivers of course vary in their depth and with the dry fly / nymph rig it is tricky to adjust the length of the dropper to the nymph to accommodate the different water depths. This guide carries three or four nymphs of increasing weight, tied to differing lengths of line. When the water is shallow he uses a light nymph on a short dropper under the dry. When he gets to some deeper water he opens his Grinner Knot and swaps this nymph for a heavier one on a longer dropper. It all sounds somewhat complicated, but it works for him.

## A Note from an Old Friend

(Bob Roles recently came across a brief note from an old friend and fishing companion - the late Bill Morgan-Payler. Bill was a past VFFA president who sadly died whilst in office in 2006. Bill and Bob were good friends and often fished together. Bill owned a farm overlooking Apollo Bay, so often fished the delightful little streams flowing out of the Otway Ranges. Here is an account of one such an outing in October 1999.)

October 1999.

Dear Bob,

Remember last weekend - the weather was lousy. Just the dog and I were in the country, and as often happens, thoughts turned to angling. "Not in this weather," the little voice inside said, but then another, slightly louder voice raised the local stories of an eleven pound brown trout caught (and supposedly released) in the lower Aire River a few weeks earlier. "Let's go," said the dog, the Aire being one of the few places where she is permitted to fish. So, we went.

I don't think that you know the Aire, but below the bridge it opens into a wide, deep slow moving estuarine river that crosses flat farmland for a mile or so before flowing into a salty lake behind the dunes. On arrival the weather had not improved. We walked downstream to some more likely looking water where a trout might be smelting around the weeds along the edge.

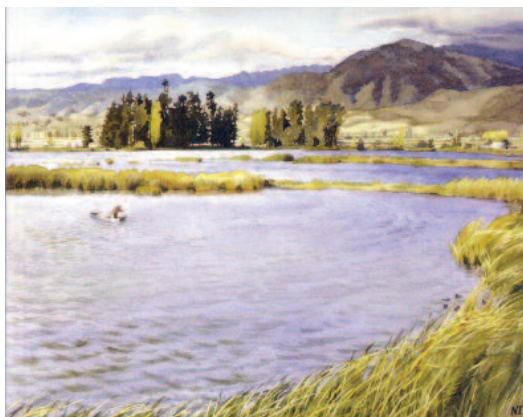
Whilst tackling up a huge gust blew my hat away; the weather was not improving. Then I glimpsed it, but right out in the middle, not on the edge. Speed was required; I hastily tied on my largest wet fly, all along fearing that it would disappear. The cast was a long one and the wind kept blowing the line off course. Eventually I put it in the right spot and started stripping line back.

I could glimpse it, just below the surface. Resistance felt, I lifted the rod and it was on. The 4-weight outfit was fully tested but eventually I was able to scoop it up from the water's edge. What a relief. That hat cost almost a hundred dollars!

Otherwise, not a single fish sighted.

Regards,

*Bill*



*Tichborne watercolour - Lake Aniwhenua*

# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *The infamous Egg Fly*



Here is a fly that is relatively simple to tie and that has proven to be a very effective fish catcher. But it clearly represents a trout egg. Is fishing a fly that imitates trout ova pushing the ethical boundaries a bit? Using trout eggs as bait or berley is illegal in Victoria (and most other places), so is fishing a replica of an egg a tad dodgy?

I must confess I had never tied or fished this pattern, but I was speaking with Milton Zeuschner, from Hookup Tackle Shop, and he described a recent winter trip to one of those lakes near Ballarat. The group he was fishing with wasn't seeing much action - except, that is, for one particular angler who was catching heaps of fish. And of course he was the one fishing with an Egg Fly. He shared his supply with the other anglers, and then they too started catching lots of fish.

A quick browse on the Internet reveals that the Egg Fly is a very popular and successful pattern overseas. A guide on one site suggested that if you had an Egg Fly and a Prince Nymph you could clean out the rivers in his area.

I recall that in the year I lived in New Zealand one of the most popular and effective flies used on the Tongariro was the famous Red Setter – which was essentially two lumps of orange chenille tied on a large wet fly hook. No one pretended it represented anything other than a pair of trout eggs, and everyone had lots of Red Setters in their fly boxes. And I recently heard well-known fly fishing author Tom Rosenbauer, on an Orvis Podcast, explaining that yes, smaller immature trout do sit downstream from spawning adult trout and eat the eggs that drift down from the redds. But these drifting eggs would never have hatched anyway; only the fertilised ova that remained buried in the gravel develop into

fingering. However these loose eggs drifting free provided excellent food for the waiting juveniles, and it was far better that they be eaten than wasted. So there you go.

Some of the websites suggest, or at least imply, that this fly might work better with rainbow trout, but brownies are still quite partial to it too. A popular technique is to fish it under an indicator.

If you want to tie up some of these 'flies' then there are any number of YouTube videos showing the stages of construction. Three that I found helpful were:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Zie03a1sWE>,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbV6viJlx0g>, and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=084LghTOF24>

On one YouTube video the presenter simply purchased a packet of orange Pom Poms at a craft shop and speared them with a hook. Job done. But for those who actually want to tie some Egg Flies here is the procedure:

### **The Orange or Pink Egg Fly**

**Hook:** Any relatively heavy wet fly or nymph hook should do in sizes 12 or 14, but I used a short shank hook – a Kamasan B160, size 12.

**Thread:** Red, white or yellow 6/0 thread (it needs to be strong).

**Body:** I used Wapsi Egg Yarn, Fluorescent Fire Orange (often also used as a yarn indicator for nymphing), but pink would be fine too.

### **Tying Procedure:**

1. Tie half a dozen turns of thread in the middle of the hook shank.
2. Take a short (2 cm) length of the yarn and tie it against the far side of the hook shank, holding it in place with two or three firm ties of thread.
3. Take another similar piece of the yarn and tie it against the near side of the shank, again holding it in place with two or three firm ties of thread.
4. Take a third piece of the yarn and tie it on top of the shank, again using two or three firm ties of thread.
5. Wrap another two or three tight turns over the yarn, then use a whip finisher to tie off the thread (here the Matarelli Whip Finisher is the ideal tool).
6. Use some sharp scissors to trim the bundle of yarn into a nice round egg shape. If you want to, you can add a dot of bright red with a red permanent marker pen.



# 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 or one of his assistants 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.

## V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA) .....	\$70.00 each
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
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges.....	\$7.00 each
<b><i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie .....</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
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 0423 283 079.

VALUED DONORS

### The following made donations for the raffle at the 2013 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Magazine • Hayes on Brumbys • Hookup Bait and Tackle
- J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Mountain Stream Company • Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker • Pro-Angler Tackle • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Compleat Angler Box Hill
- The Flyfisher Tackle Store • Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

## VFFA Meetings & Activities

### October 2013

- 17        **General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Alaskan Adventurers**  
            – Rick Dugina & Hamish Hughes
- 23        Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club
- 25 – 27    Re-scheduled Donger Challenge at the Bairnsdale Fishing Lodge

### November 2013

- 15 - 17    Annual Warrnambool Trip – Convenor Hugh Maltby
- 21        **General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – Book and Gear Auction**
- 27        Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

### December 2013

- 12        **Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club with guest speaker John Diggle**

### February 2014

- 12        Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club
- 15 – 21    Annual Trip to Tasmania, staying at Hayes on Brumby's
- 27        **General Meeting: 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club (speaker TBC)**

### March 2014

- 20        **General Meeting: 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club (speaker TBC)**
- 26        Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club