

# FLY LINES



OCTOBER 2014

How can you catch more fish using simple off-the-water preparation and innovative gear? Andrew Fuller will tell us how to at the October meeting. Andrew has worked at *The Flyfisher* for ten years, and during that time has fished some of the world's great fisheries and met hundreds of knowledgeable fly fishers. He has seen anglers push the boundaries with their gear and has discovered the importance of preparation to ensure successful fishing trips. This is not about why you need a thousand dollar fly rod, but about the easily controlled one-percenters that will help you catch more fish.

Come and hear a very informative presentation by a top angler.

Thursday, October 16,  
8:00pm, at the  
Celtic Club

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

All members are invited to  
attend the Dinner, but PLEASE  
make a Dinner booking by  
12 noon on Thursday, October  
16 – by phoning 0498 254 497  
and leaving a message.



October Meeting  
with Andrew Fuller

# THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

**VOL. 63 NO.1 – OCTOBER 2014**

Organisation No. A0024750J

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	Hugh Maltby (Merchandise and Trips)
	Richard Kos
	Peter Boag
	John Permewan
	Terry Rogers (Immediate Past President)

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### Advance Notice - October Meeting with Andrew Fuller

**A**ndrew has worked at *The Flyfisher* Melbourne tackle store for ten years, and in that time has fished some of the world's great fisheries and met hundreds of knowledgeable fly fishers. He has seen anglers push the boundaries with their gear and has discovered the importance of preparation behind all successful fishing trips.

This is not a talk about why you need to rush out and purchase a thousand dollar

fly rod. Instead it's about the easily controlled one-percenters that will help you catch more and avoid disaster. Andrew will also talk about some of the exotic fly fishing destinations he has visited, and will also answer questions. He will also bring along and display the very latest in fly gear that you won't find in any other fly shop in Australia.

The date – Thursday, October 16, at the Celtic Club.



*Undersize –  
we'll put it back*

## The September AGM

Some 20 enthusiastic and interested members gathered at the Celtic Club for this year's Annual General Meeting, and a number of apologies were accepted. The order of business, published as an insert in the September newsletter, included retiring President Terry Rogers' annual report, the election of Office Bearers and Councillors for the 2014/2015 year, and the election of an Honorary Life Member.

Terry's retiring president's Annual Report is reprinted in this issue.

The new Council has the following membership:

President: Hamish Hughes

Senior Vice President: Dermot O'Brien

Junior Vice President: Mike Jarvis

Secretary: David Grisold

Treasurer: Tony Mitchem

Editor: Lyndon Webb

Librarian: Rick Dugina

Council Members: Kevin Finn (Web Administrator), Richard Kos, Hugh Maltby, Peter Boag, John Permewan, Terry Rogers (immediate Past President)

Be assured, we are in good hands for the year ahead.



*Treasurer Tony Mitchem presents his report*



*Our new President Hamish Hughes*



*Retiring President Terry Rogers passes the H.L. Ford plate to incoming President Hamish Hughes*

Our newly elected Honorary Life Member, a very popular and worthy candidate, is John Pilkington. John was present at the AGM, but had no idea that he was to be honoured in this way and was completely taken by surprise. His Honorary Life

Membership was presented by Hugh Maltby, and Hughie's notes on John's very significant contribution to the life and activities of the Association are also reprinted in this newsletter.

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## VFFA Annual Report - to September 18, 2014

... by Retiring President Terry Rogers.



The last 12 months has seen plenty of activity from the VFFA perspective. The Association has again had a busy and productive year.

The October 2013 general meeting Guest Speakers were Hamish Hughes and Rick Dugina, who entertained members with a comprehensive presentation of their expedition to Alaska in July. Their talk was supported by a very professional video.

In November Hugh Maltby again conducted our regular auction, which added substantially to the funds of the Association. The Warrnambool Weekend was another great success, attended by 15 members who again enjoyed the hospitality of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers.

The decision was made in November to publish the monthly newsletter in full colour, and in conjunction with this decision Council formed an editorial sub-committee to conduct a complete review of the format of the newsletter, leading to the new look presentation of our magazine released in June of this year.

December saw a very successful Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club

attended by some 70 members. Our Guest Speaker for this occasion was John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries for Tasmania, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the activities of his organisation in enhancing fresh water fishing in the Apple Island.

The February meeting was again dedicated to Liars' Night and all who attended agreed that it was the best we have held for quite some time. Mick Hall entertained us in March with a stimulating talk on the insect life of the Thornton region.

In April John Waters, the then Australian Fly Casting Champion, delivered a wonderful talk on the finer points of fly casting for all levels of casting ability. John's approach to the topic was to ask members what aspect of their casting caused them problems, and he then went about describing what he knew they were doing to cause the problem and what they needed to do to fix it. And on every occasion he was right. April again provided the Big River Weekend Highlight at Pilkington's Paradise at Enoch's Point.

Rick Dobson of Aussie Angler fame spoke for 90 minutes at the May meeting, offering a number of thought-provoking insights into modern day fly fishing, and he received prolonged applause when he finished. It was interesting to note the

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number of members present who feverishly dragged out pens and scraps of paper and scribbled vigorously as he spoke. What he said was obviously greatly appreciated and very relevant.

Sunday Casting commenced at the beginning of June and again our thanks to Joe Haslauer for his sterling effort in running the Sunday morning casting and doing all the catering. Another successful Cane Day was also held in June. The Guest Speaker that month was David Pickering from the Goulburn Valley Fly Fishing Centre, who spoke about how best to fish the Goulburn River around the Thornton area at different times of the day and the year, taking into account the river flowrate prevailing at any time.

On Sunday, July 13, twelve members of the VFFA undertook a planting session on the Goulburn River just above Thornton. Our thanks to Rick Dugina for organising this very worthwhile event with the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

Guest Speaker at the July general meeting was Dallas D'Silva, General Manager of VRFish. Dallas outlined the activities of this body, including details of their future plans to improve fishing conditions for recreational fishers in Victoria. Dallas advised that he was more than happy to address our organisation at any time we wished.

This year's Annual Dinner was addressed by Rex Hunt, who gave an emotional talk on his passion for fly fishing on small streams. The Annual President's Casting Day was conducted on Saturday August 23 in conjunction with the McDonough Casting Competition which was won this year by one of our newer members in Iain Skinner. Congratulations Iain and thanks to Rick Dugina, Joe Haslauer and Hugh Maltby for their efforts in making the day a great success.

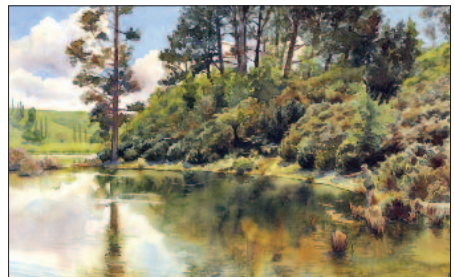
I would like to thank the outgoing Council members for their support over the past 12 months. All have done a sterling job on whatever tasks they have been asked to handle. Special thanks go to Richard Garvey in his role as Secretary. Richard will not be standing for re-election this year due to an increasing commitment in his role as a Board member of the Hawthorn Football Club.

I would also like to thank Lyndon Webb for his tireless efforts in producing, every month, a truly outstanding publication with our newsletter. This magazine is the lifeblood of our organisation and is the envy of all other fishing groups, not only in Victoria, but globally. I had the good fortune to visit the Fly Fishers' Club of London earlier this month and was told by their Club Secretary that the VFFA newsletter is read and enjoyed by a number of their members on a monthly basis, and sure enough, there was a copy of the August issue sitting on the table in their Reading Room.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members of the VFFA for allowing me the honour of being their President for the past two years. It has been a great experience and I offer my best wishes to the incoming President and his Council.

Thank you all.

*Terry Rogers*



*Tichborne watercolour, McLaren Lake*

# President's Message

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I would like to thank everyone who attended the Annual General Meeting on September 18. We had a good turn up for dinner beforehand and thus for the meeting itself.

Terry Rogers gave a succinct summary of our successful year of activities and achievements under his presidency. He passed special thanks to Richard Garvey who was standing down as Secretary, Lyndon Webb as newsletter Editor, Kevin Finn for our website developments, and Joe Hasleur, Rick Dugina and Hugh Maltby for their assistance with the President's Casting Day.

Very appropriately David Featherstone conveyed the thanks of the meeting and all members to Terry for his outstanding leadership over the last two years. I felt very honoured, nervous and excited about being elected your new president. Honoured to become leader of your prestigious Association that has been so successful for so long; nervous that my limited fly fishing skills and knowledge make me somewhat unworthy; and excited because I have support of such qualified and experienced councillors, including John Permewan who joins us this year.

The highlight of the evening was the award of Honorary Life Membership of the VFFA to John Pilkington. I know all members will be delighted to congratulate Pilks. His contributions to the VFFA, its members and indeed

Victorian fly fishing have been considerable. They include ten years as a Council member, Assistant Editor of the newsletter, a leading role in the restoration of Alfred Ronalds' grave at Ballarat, legal adviser to the VFFA when required, and generous host to members at Enoch's Point on the Big River for many years.

By the time you receive this newsletter the new council will have had its first meeting to plan the year ahead. If you do have any suggestions for new activities, projects, trips or speakers at our meetings or dinners please let me know or raise it with a councillor. Contact details for us are on page 2.

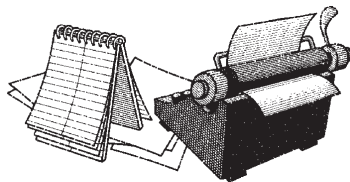
Our October 16 General Meeting will be addressed by our own Andrew Fuller of *The Flyfisher*. I am looking forward to his presentation, which will cover a broad group of topics as you have read on the front page. I am sure a cheerful crew of members will gather beforehand for dinner at the Celtic Club to swap notes on their early season activities. Why don't you join us? To make a dinner booking just call 0498 254 497 and leave a message by 12 noon on Thursday, October 16.

*Hamish*



*Tichborne watercolour, Spring Creek*

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



“Ol' man river, dat ol' man river,  
He mus' know sumpin', but don't say nuthin',  
He jes' keeps rollin', He keeps on rollin' along.”

(from the 1927 musical *Showboat*).

A great song, superbly sung originally by the magnificent Paul Robeson.

If only the rivers could talk – wouldn't we be enlightened. Perhaps they could clear up some of our confusion on the issue of trout stocking, which also 'just keeps rollin' along'. Our September newsletter carried an article by Rod Whiteway, secretary of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society, describing the stocking practices in the streams of southern NSW. Rod was querying a suggestion by VFFA member Andrew Mossman that trout populations in the rivers of the Monaro area were quickly replenished by natural spawning when rains came after a period of severe drought. Andrew has replied, and his reply is included in this issue.

In the meantime 2,500 brown trout have just been released in the Ovens River in response to a request for some recovery stocking by the Australian Trout Foundation and VFFA member Brian Eddy. In addition 5,000 browns have also been dropped into the upper Goulburn near Kevington and another 5,000 into the Howqua near Sheepyard Flat, as part of a three-year study on trout populations in rivers of the State's north-east.

It's intriguing that this stocking issue generates lots of discussion and debate in other places too. The September edition of the brilliant British magazine *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying* carries an article by contributor Mike Handyside bemoaning the fact that the Environment Agency (EA) in England

has recently ruled that only sterile triploid brown trout can be released into UK rivers 'to prevent genetic damage to established wild trout populations'. Mr Handyside suggests that this so-called 'genetic integrity' in the rivers in Cheshire that he fishes was wiped out by agricultural pollution and environmental damage in the late 1960s, and since the 1990s there have been small but significant increases in wild trout numbers in these rivers - not from any surviving native populations, but from angling clubs stocking fertile trout into rivers and anglers then practicing catch-and-release.

He continues: 'the concerns are that anglers on many rain-fed rivers could see their emerging wild population of fish diminish, or even collapse, due to an absence of fertility amongst stocked fish. In essence, where natural recruitment is hindered by environmental conditions, fishery managers need to enhance any wild population through continual stocking of fertile fish. What genetic integrity of trout, I hear you ask? Man has been selectively breeding and allowing the interbreeding of distinct brown trout populations for hundreds of years. And what does the rod-and-line licence payer want? The majority of fly fishers want sensible introductions of fertile trout that supplement and augment wild populations, which are invariably

controlled in number by environmental degradation, neglect, abstraction, etc.'

These are just a few selected quotes from a lengthy article which in fact drew an immediate response. In the following (October) issue of *Fly Fishing & Fly Tying* Dr Tim Jacklin, on behalf of the Wild Trout Trust, wrote this: 'My heart sank when I read Mike Handyside's article in the September FF&FT about triploid stocking and protecting the genetic integrity of wild trout populations. Undoubtedly written from a passionate standpoint, the argument made is, nonetheless, completely wrong. This issue has been discussed for the last decade, yet it still seems to be greatly misunderstood. The main reason for the triploid-only policy is to protect wild trout stocks and to ensure that they are in the best condition to survive and proliferate. This is based on a large amount of scientific evidence, underpinned by rapidly advancing genetic techniques. At the Wild Trout Trust we have looked at this evidence in depth and spoken to many experts in the field and there is a very clear message that emerges - the impact of interbreeding between wild and stocked fertile fish is real and the EA is right to do something about it. Put simply - stock fish are selectively bred for their ability to survive in fish farms; wild fish are strongly adapted to surviving and breeding in the wild. Putting fertile stock fish into any water in the hope of them breeding and enhancing the overall trout population makes the situation worse, not better. Wild trout are incredible survivors, bouncing back from very hard knocks like pollution and habitat alteration (once it is put right). The very reason they can do this is their natural genetic adaptability, which is compromised by interbreeding with stocked fish. The offspring of stocked fish, and of crosses between stocked and wild fish, are far less likely to survive in the wild.'

My bet would be that the small recovery in wild trout numbers (in the Cheshire rivers) Mike Handyside describes is predominantly derived from wild fish. The important message is that this recovery would have been hindered, not aided, by the contributions of introduced fertile fish. To put it another way - it isn't "genetic purity" that is being protected; it is simply the superior capability to survive and reproduce in each specific wild location. The wild fish have a far, far better capability to cope with poor spawning habitat than domesticated trout.' (Again, a few selected quotes from a lengthy letter.)

Another response came from Davy Wotton, well-known British angler and producer of the SLF fly tying materials, who described the wide range of stocking policies he has encountered in the USA, where both State and National programs are used to maintain fisheries. According to Wotton the main issue to address is whether there are sufficient numbers of naturally spawned trout to successfully maintain a fishery or whether it will be dependent on stocked trout. Management policies are based on the numbers of fish per mile the fishery is able to support, whether by natural reproduction, or supplementing with stocked fish, or totally with stocked fish. Management policies obviously also take into account whether the fishery allows harvest or is a no-kill, catch-and-release fishery. Slot limits are used as a management tool where fish above or below a given size limit must be returned unharmed. Policies also take into account fishing methods, as spinning and bait-fishing cause much higher mortality in released fish than does fly only. Some fisheries require barbless hooks to reduce mortality.

Interestingly, in some US states stocking involves taking fish from a river during the spawning run, stripping eggs or milt

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from them at a hatchery, then returning these fish to the river. The hatchery-raised fish are then stocked back in the river, thus retaining the genetic make-up. In some cases the hatcheries go to great lengths to reproduce more natural surroundings for the fingerlings being raised, rather than in the customary concrete raceways.

So there you have it – lots to reflect on in a very complex issue.

In the meantime the treasurer reminded me that subscriptions for the 2014/15 season are to be posted out in the next few weeks. And the good news – the rates are the same as for last year. Good value indeed.

Tight lines, *Lyndon Webb*



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## Advance Notice – November Meeting: an Auction of Books and Equipment

Planning for the November meeting is well underway. It will be an auction of both books and equipment. Our auction organisers are already busy sorting and planning, and a catalogue of items for sale at the auction will be published in the November newsletter.

Any issues or queries that you have in relation to the auction should be addressed to Hugh Maltby: Home Phone - 9459 2241 or mobile 0423 283 079, and email - [redntag@hotmail.com](mailto:redntag@hotmail.com)

# 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

## Life Membership awarded to John Pilkington (Pilks)

At our last Annual General Meeting the President and Council awarded a Life Membership to our esteemed colleague John Pilkington. During the ten years John served on Council he was either responsible for or deeply involved in a number of major activities. These include:

As Assistant Editor of the newsletter he played a significant role in the two recent and very successful VFFA publications: *Geehi to Great Lake* (2007), for which John spent many hours selecting the most interesting articles from past newsletters; and in the production of our official history, *A Country for an Angler* (2010), where he worked tirelessly in conjunction with Peter Boag supporting the project and steering it to its completion.

John also spent countless hours, in conjunction with Jim Allen, in organising the replacement of Alfred Ronalds' headstone after it was vandalised in the Ballarat Cemetery. Alfred Ronalds (1807-1860) was internationally recognised as one of the most important early fly fishing authors, especially noted for his highly acclaimed work, *The Fly Fishers' Entomology*. The restoration of Ronalds' gravesite included lengthy discussions with his relatives and negotiations with the Cemetery Trustees. This is a project for which we, the Victoria Fly Fishers' Association, should be truly proud.

As a practicing barrister John was, and still is, available to offer sound advice on legal matters. Whilst on Council he was a steadying influence, and was able to provide informed advice on any issues having legal implications. As one example, he shaped the legal aspects of the Association's OH&S Policy for Trips and Outings.



*Retiring President Terry Rogers presented a very surprised John Pilkington with his Honorary Life Membership badge*

Finally, over many years members have enjoyed John's hospitality at the family's little piece of paradise at the "Enoch Country Club", nestled in the Big River Valley at Enoch's Point. John first visited the area with his father in the summer of 1954. His father had built the fishing hut there in 1937, and the tradition continues with John and his sons continuously improving the site. The annual VFFA trips to the Big River are legendary, with members enjoying the wonderful environment, hospitality and food that is John's hallmark.

Let me present to you a very worthy Life Member, a great bloke and a true friend: our congratulations to John Pilkington (Pilks).

*Hugh Maltby*

## Trout Stocking in NSW

... a response by Andrew Mossman to Rod Whiteway's article in the September issue.

I read with interest Rod Whiteway's comments in his article published in the September issue of our newsletter, in response to the editor's article in the previous issue apropos trout regeneration and restocking. I was especially interested in Rod's comments referring to what I said at a VFFA meeting where we discussed these issues.

Over the years this topic has come up many times and is always discussed with passion and often with a little emotion. While passion and emotion are often enjoyable conditions they rarely, in themselves, add anything that helps resolve this problem. The best way to decide whether to restock is to do some serious research and to make that decision based on the results.

I started fishing the north-eastern rivers of Victoria - the Delatite, Goulburn, Howqua and Acheron rivers and the rivers around Mitta Mitta - in the mid 1950's with my Dad. The overriding memory I have of those early days was of the high numbers of fish that were in the rivers, and that many of them were small, between 7 and 12 inches. There were plenty of bigger fish there also, which we occasionally caught, but when fishing up through the riffles and runs with a fly, masses of the fish we caught were below the legal size of 11 inches. In those days we could only fish during the open season, there was a minimum size limit of 11 inches, and there were bag limits which, in the Goulburn catchment, was six fish. Many of the rivers we fished were stocked and occasionally we caught larger hatchery fish with their fins clipped.

As a teenager learning to fly fish, catching fish of any size was wonderful, but we always hoped to catch fish that we could keep, and the bigger the better. We killed all the fish we caught and ate them.

Looking back to those times, our years were dominated by our fishing and we all eagerly looked forward to the Trout Opening ritual that occurred on the first Saturday in September.

In the early 1970's A. Dunbavin Butcher and J. C. Wharton, both Directors of Fisheries and Wildlife, Victoria, initiated research on the trout populations in the rivers in the north-east of the state. A finding from this research was that amateur fishing had no effect on fish populations in those rivers, and that only environmental factors such as drought, floods and bushfires effected fish populations. Due to their adequate spawning sites most of these rivers were overpopulated with fish and this led to the abundance of small fish. As a result of these findings the closed season was removed, as were the bag limits and the minimum size for trout. Stocking regimes were also changed. Lakes were given a much higher priority, and rivers were to be stocked more on a needs basis. As I have been unable to find any confirmation of these statements I am relying here entirely on my memory. Therefore I might be a little inaccurate with some of the details, but I do have some confidence in my memory of these events.

I fished on through this new more open period and my results, which I always faithfully recorded in my Log, more or less confirmed the findings of the research. That is, I had better fishing



*A very competent Andrew Mossman with a fine catch from Little Pine*

when the seasons were good and poorer when droughts happened, ignoring my catches on "Tailrace" rivers such as the Goulburn and especially the Mitta Mitta, which were more or less unaffected by fires or the weather.

During this period I also fished a great deal in the Monaro area of NSW. I fished Lake Tantangara and most of the rivers in that area, in the Nimmitabel area - especially the Maclaughlin River, and the rivers around Bombala. Now of course these rivers are in NSW and were managed quite independently of

Victorian rivers. The incident I referred to involving the regeneration of fish in the Maclaughlin River was in November 1974. The year or years before had been dry, but I did not record how severe the drought was, or when it finished. The winter of 1974 was very wet and when I arrived in the area in November all the rivers were high but clear and fishable. I caught fish everywhere. On the day in question I was fishing in the middle section of the Maclaughlin and caught a bag of 10 fish, nine of 12 to 13 inches, and one slabby fish of 3½ pounds. The river appeared to be full of small fish, and I

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could have continued catching them but stopped at 10, despite releasing all of the smaller fish. The larger fish was caught in a deep corner pool under willows, and I assumed he was a survivor of the drought. The seasons remained good for a number of years and good bags of fish from 1½ to 3½ pounds were common.

I had assumed that these smaller fish were the result of natural recovery, and John Sautelle thought they were too. However I guess it is possible that they may have been released. I just don't know. I have always assumed that the Maclaughlin had adequate spawning areas in the granite country where it rises behind Nimmitabel when the seasons were good, but I guess Rod Whiteway would know if my assumption was correct. His comment that the Maclaughlin, Kybeyan, Kydra and the Bobundara have "intermittent fish kills and /or provide inadequate spawning opportunities" throws doubt on my belief. Fish kills I have seen, but I am surprised that the top end of the Maclaughlin has inadequate spawning areas, and I would welcome Rod's comments. On rereading my Log I notice that three of the little fish caught on that day were rainbows, and this might indicate that they at least were hatchery fish. If they were I guess the others may well have been also. I have only caught two other rainbows in the Maclaughlin since that time - one in 1976 and the other in 1977. I knew rainbows had been put into the Cambalong Creek and did very well in the large pools there. The Sautelle brothers both believed that the rainbows ran downstream once they were mature and were of little lasting value in those streams with adequate flows and with downstream access in that area. I agreed with this belief, especially as there were no rainbows in the rivers around Bombala that had good water flows, and

as our rainbows originated from 'sea-run' steelhead stocks in the US. However this is not always the case as rainbows stay permanently in other rivers.

The fishing on all the other rivers, and especially those near Bombala and Delegate, was fantastic in that year and for a number of years while the seasons remained good. Those rivers with their many gravel runs clearly enjoyed adequate natural recruitment. Bags limits of 10 fish were common, the fish mostly around ¾ to 1½ pounds with quite a few up to 2½ pounds and the occasional bigger fish.

So in conclusion, I have seen some spectacular fish recoveries in North-Eastern Victorian streams and elsewhere, following droughts, fires and periods of extreme heat. Some of these rivers flowed into large dams or tailrace streams, from which spawning fish that survived would have come. However there are some other examples where rivers have recovered without large fish populations further downstream. The original findings of the 1970's research would indicate that recovery is to be expected, all things being equal.

In relation to the Maclaughlin River, I have had some spectacular fishing there during good seasons, and to see several fish rushing all over a pool chasing and taking spinners, often in the air, or quietly holding in the current or cruising a beat and delicately sucking down duns or spent spinners, is fascinating and exciting. In my experience these fish were often ultra selective and behaved just like the best wild fish should behave. It took me years to learn how to catch those fish when they were taking spinner, so if some of them were hatchery fish then they are a great recommendation for releasing fish. But perhaps only for the Nimmitabel and Western Victorian



*Andrew with  
a magnificent  
Mataura  
River brown*

streams that have very limited or no spawning sites.

What has happened in Victoria this past year though is a perplexer, and why the trout populations have not recovered is worrying. Cormorants seem to be involved, and perhaps the much increased fishing pressure may also be involved, as are periods of drought, fire and extreme heat. Global warming, which I am certain is happening, may just be increasing temperatures in some years sufficiently to damage our normally healthy Victorian north-eastern rivers, and perhaps seriously damaging more marginal rivers like the Maclaughlin. I hope not, but only time will tell.

However although some of our best loved streams are currently very low in fish numbers, the Howqua and the Ovens to mention just two, others have high fish populations, based on recent anecdotal

advice and recent catches. So nothing is simple and only some well-designed research will resolve these conundrums.

I understand that the Howqua, the upper Goulburn and the Ovens Rivers are to be stocked as a trial repopulation exercise. However the results of any releases into the Howqua and the Goulburn will be difficult to interpret as normally there would be a substantial run of spawning fish into these rivers out of Lake Eildon each year. Understanding the results of stocking the Ovens should be a little more straightforward. It is a very difficult and confusing situation, but at least something is being done.

Thanks to Rod Whiteway for his comments and for taking the trouble to comment on my observations. It is good that someone keeps us "Old Buffs" on the game.

*Andrew Mossman*



## Gear Reviews on VFFA Website

A recent upgrade to the website reflects the latest trends in fly fishing from equipment manufacturers / suppliers worldwide. The products exhibited provide web links to that supplier's full range. This information is provided without a brand or commercial preference, but simply a guide to our members.

Majority of brands exhibited are available through Australian Fly Fishing outfitters



Brands	Major products	Other products	Web site – Link
Abel	Reels	Pliers, Nippers	<a href="http://www.abelreels.com">www.abelreels.com</a>
Danielsson	Reels		<a href="http://www.danielsson-flyreels.se">www.danielsson-flyreels.se</a>
Einarsson	Reels		<a href="http://www.einarsson.com">www.einarsson.com</a>
Galvan	Reels		<a href="http://www.galvanflyreels.com">www.galvanflyreels.com</a>
Hardy	Reels/Rods/Bags	Waders/Hat/Nets/Accessories	<a href="http://www.hardyfishing.com/en-us/home/">www.hardyfishing.com/en-us/home/</a>
Innovator	Rods	Rod tubes/Net holders/Accessories	<a href="http://www.innovatorrods.com">www.innovatorrods.com</a>
Loomis	Rods	Jackets/Caps/Bags/Racks-waders	<a href="http://www.gloomis.com">www.gloomis.com</a>
Nautilus	Reels	Scales / Caps	<a href="http://www.nautilusreels.com">www.nautilusreels.com</a>
Orvis	Rods/Reels/Waders/ Boots	Vests / Luggage/Accessories	<a href="http://www.orvis.com">www.orvis.com</a>
Redington	Rods/Reels/Waders/ Boots	Vests / Accessories	<a href="http://www.redington.com">www.redington.com</a>
Ross	Rods/Reels	Rod Holders / Pliers	<a href="http://www.rossreels.com">www.rossreels.com</a>
Sage	Reels/Rods/Rod tubes	Jackets / Sports clothing	<a href="http://www.sageflyfish.com">www.sageflyfish.com</a>
Simms	Waders/Boots/Vests	Jackets/Bags/Hats/Gloves	<a href="http://www.simmsfishing.com">www.simmsfishing.com</a>
St. Croix	Rods		<a href="http://www.stcroixrods.com">www.stcroixrods.com</a>
Thomas & Thomas	Rods/Reels		<a href="http://www.thomasandthomas.com">www.thomasandthomas.com</a>
Tibor	Reels		<a href="http://www.tiborreel.com">www.tiborreel.com</a>
Vision	Waders/Boots/Rods/Reels	Vests/Jackets/Bags/Tubes/ Sunglasses	<a href="http://www.visionflyfishing.com">www.visionflyfishing.com</a>
Waterworks / Lamson	Reels	Related accessories	<a href="http://www.waterworks-lamson.com">www.waterworks-lamson.com</a>

## Warrnambool Season Opener Weekend & Dinner

It's on again – the Season Opener to Warrnambool and District - from Friday, November 14, to Sunday, November 16. Following magnificent visits to the Warrnambool area over past years we will do it all again for this year's opening weekend.

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.



*Jim Blakeslee with a typical Mt Emu brown*

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

This will be a great weekend, so reserve your spot now by contacting Hugh Maltby on 9459 2241 or mobile 0423 283 079, or by email at [redhtag@hotmail.com](mailto:redhtag@hotmail.com).

*The Saturday night gathering at the Blakeslee's Winery on the upper Merri is a fabulous feature of this weekend*



# Season Outlook for the Tasmanian Trout Fishery 2014-15

... From John Diggie, Director of Inland Fisheries, Tasmania

The 2014-15 season started with a Southerly Buster bringing heavy rain in the lowlands and snow to the highlands. This tough start to the season followed an exceptionally mild June and July and brought back memories of the very unpleasant first half of the 2013-14 season. Despite the arduous conditions many anglers still turned out, with some reasonable catches reported from lakes across the State.

At the time of writing in September things have again settled down and many fisheries have started to fire and should continue to perform well for the remainder of the season. The standout fisheries this season appear to be Lake Leake, Tooms Lake, Arthurs Lake and Lake Crescent. The three smaller lakes are now well into recovery following the breaking of the drought in 2009. They all have reasonable water levels and more importantly are regularly producing cracking browns and rainbows. Lake Leake was a good fishery last season and is now a great fishery with fish regularly over the 2 kg mark at a good catch rate. The story is similar at Tooms Lake, with good catches of browns and rainbows. Browns are regularly being taken over 2 kg and the catch rate is better than Lake Leake's.

Lake Crescent is now well on the way back to its former glory as the premier trophy fishery in Tasmania. The catch rate has been low and the fishing extremely challenging, but the rewards are high with the occasional brown over 7 kg taken this month and most browns and rainbows in the 2 - 4 kg range. This lake has suffered for some years with elevated turbidity levels as a result of wind-induced erosion and suspension of fine sediment during

low lake levels over the past 15 years. It still has some way to go but is now clear enough to fish big wets successfully for monster trout. Early or late season is best and on current trends I expect to see fish in the 10 kg plus range produced by this fishery in the next year or two.

I presented earlier in the year on the problems at Arthurs Lake and the approach IFS is taking to address the issue of over-recruitment and consequent small fish size in what was the number one fishery in Tasmania. Migrating fish traps are now in place at Scotch Bobs Creek and Tumbledown Creek in addition to the long established site on Hydro Creek, and IFS successfully transferred over 20,000 fish to other waters including Penstock Lagoon, Four Springs Lake, Lake Leake, Bradys Lake and Tooms Lake. The fish size at our long term monitoring site on Hydro Creek showed a further decline this winter. However there were some unexpected results with a sprinkling of larger fish, particularly in Tumbledown where fish up to 3 kg were recorded. The good news is that the condition of trout improved dramatically through the 2013-14 season and nearly all fish in the spawning runs showing a good to excellent condition factor. This improvement was a consistent theme through last season, and given the elevated nutrient levels reported from water sampling in the lake and continued high water levels good growth is expected again this season. All of the indicators point to Arthurs Lake producing good bags of well-conditioned fish this season and I expect that this will be the top fish producer for the State.

Monitoring of river trout populations was undertaken by IFS earlier this year, and

this showed that most rivers across the State had some degree of recovery from the cormorant predation that was particularly severe in 2012. As an example, by the end of 2013-14 season the Tyenna River and St Patricks River had rebounded strongly with good catches recorded, and the only river not showing any sign of recovery was the Leven in the north-west of the State. I expect that the recovery of most river trout populations will accelerate in season 2014-15, with fisheries in the Mersey, Meander and South Esk to be the feature.

For anglers heading to Tasmania in October good whitebait runs have already commenced and provided there is no major deluge some fantastic sea run trout

action can be expected. The River Derwent is in the middle of a big *Lovettia* run with big fish being taken in the section from Bridgewater to New Norfolk, and similar action can be expected in the Huon River, Mersey River, Inglis River, River Tamar, Henty River and Pieman River, just to name a few.

If you need any other incentive to fish Tasmania this season the IFS is celebrating 150 years of trout in Tasmania and will be giving away a Ford Ranger 4x4 to a lucky angler. To go in the draw all you need to do is be 18 or over and have purchased a full season licence before the end of March 2015. The winner will be announced at the IFS Trout Weekend at Liawenee on May 16, 2015.



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## Celebrating 150 Years Of Trout

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, 2014 is the year that celebrates 150 years of trout in Australia. So the Tasmanian Inland Fisheries Service is selling a range of commemorative items to mark the occasion. Their Online Shop at <http://ifs150anniversary.businesscatalyst.com> tells us:

“The introduction of trout to Tasmania seemed like an impossible dream for a group of pioneering anglers. The fact that Tasmania today is the undisputed home of trout fishing in Australia is as a result of the perseverance, a huge investment in time and money and the passion of a dedicated group of pioneering anglers. The first Tasmanian brown trout was born on May 4 1864 at the Salmon Ponds, the oldest trout hatchery in the Southern Hemisphere. To celebrate we have produce a series of limited edition commemorative items”.



The following items are for sale:

- Brown Trout Poster
- Coffee Mug
- Commemorative Medallion
- Commemorative Pin
- Drink Bottle
- Lowland Rivers
- Origins of Tasmanian Trout
- Shannon Lagoon Poster
- Trout Mug

## Opening Weekend in Omeo

... by Mrs Simpson

The opening of the trout season can be an interesting event in the high country. Weather and stream conditions can vary between good and horrible, snow and sunshine, floods and drought. I am pleased to report that this year's opening saw the rivers flowing in excellent condition and the sun shining brightly. Temperatures dropped to zero overnight but warmed to 18oC during the day.

Due to a delayed football grand final in the Omeo Football League in which the Omeo team played, the angler numbers were down quite a bit this year allowing us to fish just about anywhere we pleased. The Mitta River and its tributaries flow basically off the snowfields of Mt Hotham and Mt Bogong. This year was a good skiing year and there was plenty of snow still around the mountains in early September. As a result the rivers were quite cold - the Mitta was flowing at 2°C with the

Livingston a little warmer at 3oC. As a result there was never going to be much insect activity and the fish would not be very active.

Lake Dartmouth has been fairly high for quite some time now and is presently sitting at 95% capacity with a lot of snow run-off still to reach it. I took a drive to the southern end of the dam prior to the opening to have a look and found that the lake was up to Buckley's which is just downstream of Taylors Crossing. It is often difficult to launch a boat into the southern end of this dam, but at the moment it is quite easy. A short drive down the Quarry Road leads to a grassy bank with excellent boat access and a great spot to camp.

The Mitta itself was not running very fast above Blue Duck. It could be easily waded across and fished. The fishing in this section was fair, particularly in the Middle Creek area. However once the



*They were a bit small and slender, but they'll grow*



*Small but colourful. Typical high country early season trout*

Bundarra and Cobungra Rivers entered the Mitta the flow increased quite a bit, though in the Hinnomunjie Valley it was still possible to cross the river in a couple of places for those with an adventurous spirit. There was a reasonable number of fish taken in this section, particularly by the bait fishermen. Most of the fish taken were under a pound, with the odd one up to 1.5 pounds.

Livingston Creek looked fantastic. It was flowing well without being too high. A few fish were caught in the Cassillis area and these were mostly small browns under a pound. I had one ignore my nymph but came up and took my Royal Wulff instead. I thought this was pretty good for this time of the year. Like most of the fish caught, they were still recovering from winter and were not in great condition.

The upper Victoria River looked in good condition but I didn't hear of any fish coming out of it. The Cobungra was also

quiet. Possibly the best performer was the Bundarra. Most fishermen caught fish there and Colin Bellfield caught a nice brown of 1.5 pounds as well as a couple of smaller fish, all taken on a beadhead nymph under a Royal Wulff. Last year the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers Club took 11 members to Omeo for the opening. Not one fish was caught. This year, however, most of the members caught at least a fish or two, so I am hopeful that this will be a better season than last year's. I realise that I have not set the bar too high in comparing this year's opening with last year's. Last year was a dreadful season; perhaps the worst ever. We'll see what this year brings.



## In Trout Country - Fish Gossip and Bush Characters

... By D.F.L. (1898)

(Here is a delightful reconstruction of an article from *The Australasian*, dated Saturday January 15, 1898, courtesy of the National Library Australia. The article was reprinted in a recent issue of *eSplash 99*, a free online eMagazine advertising tourism in the State's north-east. John Pilkington found the article, and the publisher of eSplash, David Hibbert, very kindly gave permission for us to use it.)

Take the early morning train to Healesville, breakfast there, and after breakfast seat yourself comfortably on the box of the Marysville coach, and you will enjoy one of the finest rides Victoria affords. Healesville itself is picturesque with its three rivers, the Yarra, Watts, and Graceburn, and its encircling mountains that hold it like a thing beloved in their bosom. But Healesville boasts of the advantages of civilisation, and may not be altogether satisfying to the tourist who loves nature best in its wild luxuriant solitudes. It lies on the borderland.

The mails are picked up, and to a crack of the whip away go the team. You soon lose sight of the pretty township and the homesteads, and the cultivated paddocks become few and far between as you find yourself being transported right into the heart of the mountains in an atmosphere laden with the scent of eucalyptus and shrub. At Marysville you are in what may be called the trout country, and if you are an angler you will throw your creel over your back, and in the early morning, when the dew is on the ground and the mist is still hanging on the mountain tops, go a-fishing.

For the best fishing you must walk or drive about two miles down the Alexandra road, and strike the river there. You can then wade up. Always throw your line up, and bring it round with the current. The trout lie with their heads upstream, as they must, otherwise the water would enter their gills. You

therefore approach them unobserved, and as they are timorous and cunning, this is necessary. The water in the Taggerty is not deep, and wading is easy. If you are not provided with "waders," and do not care to run the risk of rheumatism by going into the water without, you can fish from the bank. The growth is, however, so thick that this is difficult, and in places you have to fight your way through a tangle. Almost the only bait used at Marysville is the grasshopper, which can be caught on the roadside by the



*Petippo – a bush angler*

hundred. The local anglers say that the trout there will not take the artificial fly; and their statement has been amply confirmed. In any case, the grasshopper is a killing enough bait to satisfy anybody. Of the local anglers, the most enthusiastic are Mr Sparks, a retired schoolmaster, who is always glad to render assistance to visitors, and a French Canadian named Petippo. The latter, whose portrait I give, is a character and has a history.

He lives alone in a bush hut on the banks of the Taggerty. He was formerly a seaman. His vessel was captured by the Shenandoah. He was asked to join the crew, but he refused, and was held a prisoner. When the Shenandoah came into Australian waters he and a mate escaped. He found his way to Marysville, where he remained. Petippo and Sparks have many an interesting story to tell of

the cunning of the trout, and the sport they have in playing and landing 5 lb and 6 lb weight fish - the contest sometimes extending over hours. Mr Sparks is satisfied that some of the fish have more wit than any of the persons who seek to catch them, and in figurative language he described a big fellow rising, winking the "other eye," and extending the fingers of an imaginary hand to the weary angler, who has been industriously feeding him with grasshoppers.

Mr Petippo told us that his catch for the last season had been, I think, 240 fish. He had trout and potato in their jackets for dinner, and I had the pleasure of partaking of his bounty. He wades in an old pair of trousers, and pursues the sport with the skill and patience of a true angler. His equipment is rough, but he can catch

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*The Bishop's hut*



*The 'Bishop' of Marysville*

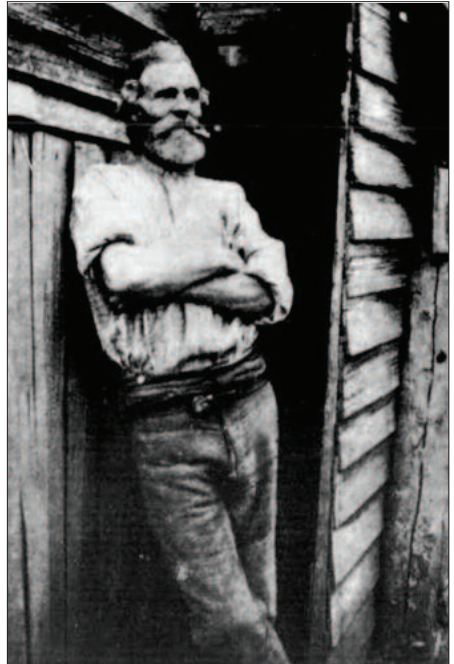
fish when the visitor, furnished with everything an angler could sigh for, or dream of, fails. Captain Neville, the late commandant of the Victorian Naval Forces, was the best-equipped trout fisherman I met at Marysville. He was also the most indefatigable and successful. He would start early in the morning and return late in the evening, and he had some fine catches, both in number and weight.

There is not a stream at Marysville that does not contain trout. Even in the little creeks they can be caught by approaching the bank carefully and dropping your bait on to the water. You must be careful to conceal yourself, for the trout are as timorous and wary as a rabbit. My first trout, and a very nice fish it was, was taken in this way near the bridge in Marysville. As soon as the grasshopper

touched the surface it was snapped up, and the surprise of the sudden and unexpected capture added to the joy of it.

For a climb go to Bismarck if you can. It will entail a journey of two miles, but there is a bush hut on the top in which an interesting character lives alone, absolutely alone, with not even a dog, a cat, or a caged bird to relieve the tedium of the long, silent hours. He is said to have a history with an element of romance in it, but he is a somewhat taciturn, though good-hearted and intelligent Scotchman, and keeps his secrets to himself. I give you his photograph. He is an artist in the making of walking and whip sticks from sassafras and native hollyhock.

By removing portions of the bark of the sassafras at different times, and by the use of hot irons, he gets some curious effects in colouring, and some of his sticks



*The Man on the Mountain*

are unique in design. In his picturesque solitude the man of the mountain is monarch of all he surveys, but there have been times when he has felt the need of human sympathy. Illness has overtaken him, and he has found it difficult to even crawl to the creek alongside his hut to fill a billy with water. It was winter. The snow was on the ground, and all along he had to fight with a fever that prostrated him.

Marysville is rich in bush characters, and they are various in type. "The Bishop of Marysville", who is an Irishman, lives just round the corner from Keppel's Hotel in a hut that is a model of neatness. The interior of the hut is a curiosity. The walls are covered with cartoons that suggest Home Rule and Fenianism; but the portrait of the Queen forbids any suggestion of disloyalty. The Bishop has a large family of cats and fowls, but no other encumbrances. At one time the Bishop's establishment boasted, also, a pig named "Billy." He had trained this pig to follow him, and he assured me that it

would go down to the road alone, meet the coach, and bring back his newspaper. When I saw him last he was sitting smoking his pipe, clad in moleskin trousers, a striped shirt, and a broad-brimmed conical straw hat lined with green.

He is the son of an Irish clergyman; he was educated at Trinity College, Dublin; and he boasts of relationship with several church dignitaries, running up to a coadjutor-bishop to the Primate of All Ireland. He came to Australia with a wife and family. The ship was wrecked and the wife and one child drowned. The other child he saved, and she was placed in a convent in New South Wales. He has an assured income, and yet he is content to live in a hut with cats and fowls. We wonder at it, but prefer the taste of the Irishman to that of the Scotchman, who dwells on the mountain all alone. The Irishman is in snug quarters, with Keppel's Hotel just round the corner.



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## A Warm Welcome to a New Member

It is with great pleasure that we welcome John Spragg as a member of the VFFA. We trust that John's membership brings

many years of pleasure and enjoyment. Welcome aboard John.

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*Tichborne watercolour,  
Waiohine River*



# Casting 101

(Rick Dugina)

For those good folk, myself included, who thought they could cast a bit - at least well enough to catch fish - I have assembled a few instructions below that could be useful to practice in readiness for the new season. I will also get along to our VFFA Sunday Casting days as often as I can to help those interested in improving their casting.

I have recently returned from spending a few days of intensive casting training with "Master Caster" Peter Hayes and a bunch of great guys from around Australia who were being assessed for certification as IFFF (International Federation of Fly Fishers) Casting Instructors. Part of the process entailed being sworn to secrecy on some of the activities over this weekend. You know the saying: "What happens at IFFF Casting Certification, stays at IFFF Casting Certification". Some of my documentation has been taken and locked away, so if I am not entirely open or accurate you need to allow me some latitude.

Needless to say I haven't ever previously learned so much in such a short time. At times I became quite morose when I realized how much I didn't know and how slow I was in re-learning many of the things that I had taken for granted.

In pondering the reasons for writing this article I need to go back to a conversation I had with one of our Tassie members, Don Urquart, during our last trip there last February. I had learned that Don and young Lachie Hayes had completed and passed their casting instructor test and I was keen to find out what was required and what followed from that experience.



There are a few considerations I should also mention at this point. As some of you are aware, I have three grown sons who I hope will get involved in fly fishing. Secondly, during my term as President of the VFFA I underwent major surgery and it initially didn't go too well, but I survived - with a slightly altered attitude. The following year I managed to catch, photograph and release my trophy brown in New Zealand (it was 12 lb), and last year I was fortunate to spend two fantastic weeks in Alaska with my mate Hamish Hughes, where I caught a record 42 inch (23 inch girth) King Salmon. While there we had a great guide (Chad Bryson) who gave me some casting instruction and taught me to how to use his Switch Rod on those Alaskan



*Rick and Hamish with one of Rick's King Salmon*

rainbows. It was at this stage that I realized that I needed to learn a lot a whole lot more about the “dark arts” of casting.

After some discussion with Haysie I resolved that it would take too many one-day sessions to learn all the stuff I wanted to know in the time I had. As with all of you, I’m not getting any younger, and I would wish to pass on my love of this sport and the fabulous time you can have when you get your casts right. So I booked to go to “Hayes on Brumby’s” and spend some time with the experts there, setting my goal as learning it right and gaining certification.

There are many of us members who would benefit from proper training and spending a little more time at practice on Sunday mornings with their mates. I’m confident that I can help with this (including helping my own sons). As I go through this training I will write some

updates and handy hints that may help in your casting. Here are some final thoughts:

Slow down and think smooth. Loose lines do catch fish.

If you can’t afford the time or the cost of training then support Fanny Krieger by buying Mel’s videos and watch them over and over, and then do some practice.

My thanks to Peter Hayes, Peter Morse, Roy Wycroft, Don Urquart, David Wood and all the other guys that helped me to improve and rectify my faults.

*Rick Dugina (trainee caster)*



## Report From Way Out West – Lake Fyans Trip, September 2014

... a report from our regular Warrnambool correspondent Jim Blakeslee.

On Friday, September 5, seven members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Club arrived at the Lake Fyans Caravan Park for a "season opener" trip. We were full of hope. Our Treasurer, Peter Hussey, had called one of the locals the week before and was told that "the big ones had started to move." Conditions seemed perfect. The sky was clear, no wind, and the temperature was forecast to be in the mid to high teens for the weekend. The lake level was at 85% capacity and water was fairly clear. Just one concern – not much insect life could be seen.

After lunch we moved our gear into the two cabins we had rented, then launched the boats, rigged up our fly rods and headed out for a late afternoon of fishing. We drifted over sandy flats polaroiding for cruising fish. Nothing. We cast nymphs towards reed beds and the many dead trees in the lake. Not a sign. In the end, we dredged the depths of the lake with weighted Woolly Buggers and Matukas. Not a follow. That evening, as we barbecued our steaks and chops and sipped a drink or two, we pondered the day's lack of action. Where were the fish? There were large flocks of shags and a number of pelicans on the lake.



*Searching Lake Fyans*

Maybe the fish were all hiding in fear of their lives? In the end we guessed that the apparent scarcity of insect life above and below the surface of the water was a big factor. Maybe the fish were head down/tail up swimming along the bottom looking for snails and yabbies? Well, as Scarlet O'Hara used to say, "tomorrow is another day." As it turned out, on Saturday most of us DID manage to polaroid a few fish over the sandy flats and, eventually, we even had a couple fish follow the fly, but not a single take – that is, except for our President, Adrian Jacobs.

He was in a boat with Peter and Glen at the West end of the lake when he felt the call of nature. They went ashore to stretch their legs and decided to have a walk along the rock wall to see if anything was cruising in close. Straight

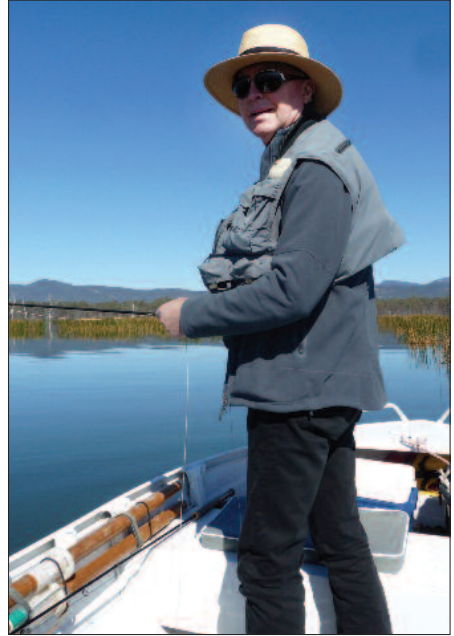
away they spooked a fat brown. The hunt was on. The threesome spent a couple hours spotting fish swimming their beats slowly in from the reeds, then along the sandy shallows by the wall before turning out again. They cast a variety of flies in the path of the cruisers only to be ignored. FRUSTRATION! Finally, Adrian cast a black and peacock in front of a brown that, amazingly, rushed the fly and scooped it down. Adrian struck and the battle was on! It rushed for the reeds and dead trees as Adrian applied side strain and pulled it back. It jumped. He dropped his rod-tip and "bowed to the fish." Eventually he landed a fat 4 pound brown. Adrian was a happy man.

Later that afternoon, as the rest of us stood around the BBQ nursing a bottle or two of suds and lamenting our bad luck,

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*Searching the edges of the weedbeds*



*Possibly too calm and sunny for good fishing*

Adrian told us that the stomach contents of that fish consisted mainly of a handful of “green mush” with one small minnow, a mud-eye, and a couple beetles. We figured that, with the apparent scarcity of bigger food, the main item on the trout’s menu was probably daphnia (e.g. green mush) which is pretty hard to represent with a fly pattern.

On the Sunday morning a few of us tried fishing the west end of the lake. We did see fish, but our flies were ignored. In the end we figured we were too early in the season. No midge, mayfly, caddis or mud-eyes about to get the fish going. If we try Fyans again next Spring we’ll wait until it’s a bit warmer. The hatches should be in full swing later in October or November. As they say “better luck next time.”

Back in Warmnambool, after a comparatively dry August and start to September, the river levels are lower and water starting to clear earlier than normal. As at Fyans, there is little sign of insect hatches, but a few fish are beginning to “swirl” along the edges. On the Merri I’ve covered a few of the fish that I’ve spotted, and caught a couple that took the #12 Green Bug (shrimp). Their stomachs have been full of shrimp. In the runs on the Hopkins, the fish have taken large black Woolly Buggers. Their stomachs have been jammed full of large, green-black yabbies. So there you have it.

We look forward to mid-November and our visitors from the VFFA. Until then, “tight lines.”

*Jim Blakeslee*



## **Notice of Event for VFFA February 2015 Tasmanian Trip**

**The Event.** A week with fellow VFFA members at Hayes on Brumbys Fly Fishing Lodge, Cressy, with the objectives of fishing in groups of 2 or more during the day and of sharing tales of the day's adventures over dinner. 14 positions are available. On Thursday February 19 fellow VFFA members living or visiting Tasmania, will be invited to join us all for drinks and dinner from 6.30 PM. Dress will be smart casual.

**Event Co-ordinator.** Hamish Hughes; mobile 0418 108 686, email: hthughes@bigpond.net.au Postal address: 22a Moorhouse Street, Armadale, Victoria 3143.

**Dates:** Arrive Saturday 14 February AM - depart Friday 20 February PM.

**Address:** Hayes on Brumbys, 1696 Cressy Road, Cressy, Tasmania 7302.

**Travel:** You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements to and from Tasmania. You are also responsible for arranging to share a car for the week. 4WD vehicles are not required. The lodge is about 20 minutes from Launceston and 2 hours from Devonport Ferry Terminal.

**Cost:** \$650 for twin shared accommodation, linen including towel and face washer, breakfast, dinner, evening drinks, including beer and wine. \$350 deposit is to be paid by December 12 2014 and the remaining \$300 by January 16 2015. Direct debit BSB 182512, account 960547289 include your name and TAS 2015 or post cheque to Tony Mitchem, VFFA Honorary Treasurer, PO Box 185, Toorak, Victoria 3142.

Guiding with a Peter Hayes' guide on a river, weir or lake is \$450 per person per day based on twin share. Peter has kindly heavily discounted the rate for VFFA members so payment must be in cash.

**Fishing locations:** Mainly in the North and Midlands for streams and the Central Plateau for lakes. You can select from a wide range of streams from small creeks to large rivers, local weirs, and small to very large lakes. Some are in Remote Locations for which you must be properly prepared. Some locations can be quiet physically challenging.

**Fishing license:** A current Tasmania license is required. Well before departure to Tasmania you may purchase one by the Internet on [www.ifs.tas.gov.au](http://www.ifs.tas.gov.au)

**Mobile phone:** Coverage is patchy. Good in most townships and on major highways but poor or non-existent in many angling areas.

**Strongly recommended personal equipment:** Waders/wading boots, gaiters for wet waders, brimmed hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, wet weather gear, warm clothes, insect repellent, wading staff, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), torch at dusk onwards, mobile phone in waterproof container, handheld UHF radio.

**Essential equipment if intending to fish out of direct sight of other participants:** UHF handheld radio.

**Essential equipment for Remote Locations:** Compression bandage, UHF handheld radio, water, prescribed medicines for those with a medical condition which could re-occur, mobile phone if coverage available.

**Weather:** Can vary from very hot to very cold, windy and wet. Latest forecast will be available at the lodge every morning.

**Guiding:** All Peter Hayes guides are fully qualified and members of their professional body. Drift boats on Brumbys, the Macquarie and other rivers are a speciality. Depending on weather, opportunities exist to be guided on one of the many highland lakes including "shark fishing" on the Great Lake. And those who love wading rivers and creeks will be well looked after.

**Event Registration Form (ERF):** Register by sending the Event Co-ordinator a completed and signed copy of the ERF by email as an attachment or a hard copy via the post. "First in best dressed". Obtain your ERF from the VFFA website [www.vffa.org.au](http://www.vffa.org.au) or pick up one at a General Meeting.

**Date of this Note of Event:** September 18, 2014

## This Month's Yarn

"There's no doubt about it," declared McTaggart. "A moving bait always out-fishes a stationary bait. That's how we used to get into fly fishing, y'know—casting hoppers and mudeyes, or a worm, on a fly outfit."

"Those rods were soft as custard," Alf said. "It'd be different today. Your bait would keep moving all right—straight off the hook and into the bushes."

"That could be so," agreed McTaggart. "It does have a few problems, the moving bait. Also, you have to catch it. They don't make reflexes like they used to. Course, you can always breed your bait instead of chasing after it. I had an uncle once with a thing or two to say about that. He could've written a book about it. In fact, he wrote several."

"Which uncle was that? Not the mad one from Bandiwallop?"

"That was the Coogan side of the family—the Irish mob. No, I'm talking about Aunty Myrtle's half-brother Cyril. A very hard life to begin with, but didn't he show 'em all up in the end!"

"What's the story?"

"Well, it was very tough times on the land. The seasons went crook on him and they were living on rabbit stew and bread and dripping. Anyway, Cyril reckoned he could make a few bob from breeding fishing bait for sale. Trouble is, you might say, it was a runaway success."

McTaggart paused, waiting for Alf to pick up his well-cast bait.

"Runaway success?" Alf asked. "What's the problem with a runaway success?"

"The bait always ended up shooting through. He didn't have enough water in the tanks to keep the worm farm damp, and they all burrowed out and disappeared. Then the yabbies climbed out and took off for who knows where. Then he gave mudeyes a go, but there was a freak spell of hot spring weather and they all hatched into dragonflies overnight. But the worst of it all was the centipedes."

"The centipedes? They got away too, did they?"

"No, not the centipedes—they were happy just hanging round under his bark and mulch. But they ended up the worst disaster of the lot. You wouldn't believe his bad luck—the footrot got into 'em. Terrible business. Just about broke him in every way."

"But then he got to thinking laterally, y'see. After the War when things were on the up again, he started writing how-to-do-its. Used to sell 'em through railway station kiosks, country newsagents, ads in the Weekly Times and that sort of thing. *How To Breed Earthworms For Fun And Profit*. *How To Breed Mudeyes For Fun And Profit*, and so on. They sold like hot cakes, too. Old Cyril reckoned it proved there was money in bait after all. You just had to present the right one in the right way to a receptive target. D'you follow my drift?"

# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *David Featherstone's Red Tip Nymph*



David Featherstone developed this fly about 50 years in consultation with his father. He assures us that it works in both stillwaters and rivers, and is a good winter fly. It doesn't represent any particular bug, but looks buggy and attractive and has caught a lot of fine trout. David often fishes it about 20 cm under a dry fly indicator, with a Royal Wulff usually the chosen dry. When fishing this rig in stillwaters David is adamant that the retrieve must be really slow – so slow that there is no obvious movement of the dry fly.

And David's final piece of advice – never cast the fly to the fish; always let the fish find the fly.

## Materials for David's Red Tip Nymph

Hook: Size 14 wet fly hook

Thread: Black 8/0

Bead: Gold bead, 2.8 mm for a size 14 hook

Tail: Golden Pheasant tippets with a red tag (eg Wapsi egg yarn – fluorescent fire orange).

Body: A few turns of copper wire as weight, then a black hen feather twisted around the black tying thread.

Hackle: A couple of turns of hen hackle

## Tying the Red Tip Nymph

1. Slide the bead onto the hook and move it around to the eye. Then place the hook in the vise and wrap 6 - 8 turns of fine copper wire behind the bead to keep it in place and add some extra weight to the fly.
2. Start the tying thread behind the bead, tying it over the copper wire and wrapping turns along the shank to just before the bend.
3. Tie in some Golden Pheasant tippets as a short tail (5 - 7 mm in length) and then tie in a very short tag of the egg yarn that is wrapped around and over the Golden Pheasant tippets.
4. Take a black hen hackle feather about 5 - 7 centimetres long and tie it in by the tip close to where the tail is tied in. Carefully wrap the feather around the thread to make a type of rope, then wind this rope along the shank towards the eye to form the body. Tie it off behind the bead, then trim away the excess hen feather.
5. Take another small hen feather, strip all the fibres from one side and tie the feather in just behind the bead.
6. Make three or four turns of the hackle (to represent some legs), then tie off the excess hackle, trim away the waste, and finish the fly by whip finishing behind the bead with three or four turns.

*Tichborne watercolour,  
Tukituki River.*





# 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 2014 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Publishing • FlyFinz • Hayes on Brumbys
- 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 Complet Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne
- Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

## VFFA Meetings & Activities

### October 2014

- 1 Council – 6:30 pm
- 3 – 5 Bullen Merri trip (Camperdown) – EC: Hugh Maltby
- 16 General meeting - 8:00 pm: Speaker – Andrew Fuller, The Flyfisher

### November 2014

- 14 - 16 Warrnambool trip –EC: Hugh Maltby
- 20 General meeting - 8:00 pm: Books & equipment auction
- 26 Council – 7:30 pm

### December 2014

- 12 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm: Speaker - Rick Keam

### February 2015

- 11 Council – 7:30 pm
- 14 – 20 Tasmanian trip (Hayes on Brumby's) – EC: Hamish Hughes
- 26 General meeting – 8:00 pm – Liar's night

### March 2015

- 20\* General meeting, (NB Friday) – 8:00 pm: Speaker –Simon Gawesworth, British Casting Champion, Manager at Rio, USA
- 21\* Casting demonstration by Simon Gawesworth at Red Tag Pool

### Pending

Donger weekend (Bairnsdale) trip –possibly February or March in 2015

\* (to be confirmed)