

# FLY LINES



OTCOTBER 2015

Jim Allen is the guest speaker at our October meeting. Jim is a past president and life member of the VFFA. He has spoken many times at our meetings and dinners, and while often a bit controversial, is always interesting, informative and entertaining. He is a fly fisher with decades of knowledge and skills gained from his angling in many countries. He is an acknowledged authority on the trout fishing in Tasmania's highland lakes.

Jim is also an experienced and very popular public speaker. The October meeting is one you won't want to miss.

Thursday, October 15, at 12 noon  
at the  
Celtic Club

PLEASE make a Dinner booking  
by 12 noon on Wednesday,  
October 14, by phoning  
0498 254 497 and leaving a message.

October Meeting  
with Jim Allen

(Photo courtesy of Brad Harris at  
*FlyLife* magazine)



# THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

**VOL. 63 NO.12 – OCTOBER 2015**

Organisation No. A0024750J

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# 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

# President's Message

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As this issue of *Fly Lines* goes to press, our president Hamish Hughes is in the United States visiting his son Christian. So he has asked me to step into the breach and prepare this month's Message from the President.

Well it has been quite a month for fly fishers in Victoria. First of all the local trout season opened at the beginning of the month and that set us all to thinking about getting out on a river and wetting a line. My son David, who lives in Geelong, persuaded me to spend a day with him exploring a few of the Otway Ranges' streams. We saw some nice water, albeit a little low, spotted a few smallish fish, and had a great day out together that included an excellent lunch at the pub in the small village of Forrest, complete with superb, locally-brewed craft beers. Make a point of calling in if you are in the area.

The second important day in September was the VFFA Annual General Meeting, which was very well attended. For those who couldn't make it, you'll be pleased to learn that the VFFA continues to remain comfortably financial, we have a new slightly revised Council which is set out earlier in this issue, and very importantly, there was an overwhelmingly positive vote to amend the Association's constitution so that from now on female fly fishers will be permitted to join the VFFA as members. We look forward to welcoming our first lady members and over time will encourage them to take an active role in the VFFA and its events.

Also at the AGM Richard Kos retired from Council and I would take this opportunity, on behalf of Hamish, to thank him for his valuable contribution to the VFFA. Although not continuing as a Councillor, he has volunteered his ex-officio services to assist in various areas.

Thanks Kossy!

We also have a new Council member, Ian Sambell, and all of us from the previous Council welcome Ian and look forward to working with him as we embark on a new year.

And what a year it promises to be. Apart from trips to fishing spots near and far and regular monthly meetings, we will hold a trial lunchtime gathering on October 15 when fly fishing luminary Jim Allen will be our guest speaker. I do hope it will be well-attended, and if it proves to be popular, we will consider further lunchtime meetings.

Our major priority for the year will be to take an in-depth look at plans for the long term future of the VFFA. During 2015 a small group of Dermot O'Brien, Rick Dugina and myself spent considerable time thinking and talking about our future and the ongoing role of the VFFA. That work has been developed into a thought-starter report called "VFFA – Beyond 2020", and during the coming months more work will be done to further develop the proposals and plans so that they can be shared with members for feedback and improvement. But more on that later.

Meanwhile, on behalf of Hamish, may I wish you all an enjoyable and productive new season.

*Mike Jarvis*  
*Senior Vice President*

## November Meeting with Malcolm Crosse

Malcolm's fishing career began in the UK in the late 1940s when was a very small lad. His family moved to South Australia in the 1950s and here he got involved in the saltwater fishing around Port Augusta.

Then in 1969 he moved to Tasmania to pursue a career in Communications Engineering. It was here that his passion for fly fishing was born. He fished Tassie's rivers and lakes and quickly developed as a skilled and knowledgeable trout fisher.

He also became heavily involved in the organisation of trout fishing, holding various committee positions in the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club. In 1988 he acted as a guide and host for the Welsh team competing in the World Fly Fishing Championships held in Tasmania. In 1990 he was a member of the Australian fly fishing team competing in the World Championships in the UK. In 1999 he was team captain, and from 1992 – 1999 was a board member and then President of Fly Fish Australia.

In 1998 he co-authored, with Rob Sloane, the very popular book *Australia's Best Trout Flies*. He was also awarded a Life Membership for Outstanding Service to Fly Fish Australia. From 2000 to 2010 he continued to be involved in World and Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships, both as team captain and as an administrator. During these years he also worked part-time as a trout guide with Peter Hayes.

In 2011 he was appointed to the Executive of Anglers Alliance Tasmania, and in 2012 was awarded Life Membership to the Tasmanian Fly Tyers



*Malcolm at home*

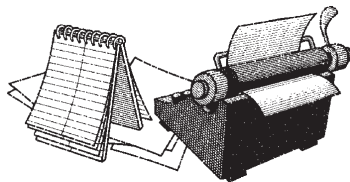
Club for outstanding service. He was also Chairman of the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships, and in 2014 was appointed Vice President of the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Association.

In 2013 he fished for trout in India and Kashmir, and on returning to Tasmania accepted the position of Executive Officer for Anglers' Alliance Tasmania (a body assisting in policy making with the Director and Minister for Inland Fisheries). Some of his work in this sphere can be seen at [www.anglersalliance.org.au](http://www.anglersalliance.org.au).

So Malcolm has enjoyed a rich life in fly fishing. His presentation at the November meeting accordingly is entitled 'The Adventure of Fly Fishing.'

Mark it in your diary – Thursday, November 19, 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club.

# From the EDITOR'S DESK



"I remember my first experience behind a fly tying vise. Excited, I pushed an old VHS tape into the VCR — squirming as it wound and whirred until the faded image of a smiling white-haired man appeared. He sat behind a desk with various odds and ends in front of him. I sat back anxiously waiting to determine whether or not I had the necessary tools to proceed to tie my first trout fly with him. Vise? Check. Bobbin? Check. Scissors? Check. Thread? Ummm... I looked around. Nope. Pressing the pause button, I ran downstairs to dig through my mum's sewing kit until I found a spool of black thread. Check.

I watched the man carefully, my finger hovering on the rewind button while he explained the basics of fly tying. I spent the morning pausing the tape, running around the house digging up old fur coats, toys and anything else that might suffice as reasonable substitutes for the materials he was using. It was the start of what would soon become a complete obsession with fly tying; its history, materials and possibilities."

(from April Vokey's July 2015 blog. April is possibly the best known of current female fly fishers. After discovering a passion for fly fishing in her teens, she dedicated her entire life to the pursuit, establishing herself as a respected authority in the sport and travelling the globe in pursuit of gamefish on a fly rod. She writes for a number of leading US fly

fishing publications and is in the process of authoring her first book. She is a popular TV personality and wrote and hosted her own exclusive series, *ShoreLines with April Vokey*, as shown on the World Fishing Network. She is a FFF certified casting instructor, a fly tying instructor, an active conservationist, and a very popular speaker.)

So there you go. April visits Australia regularly, and it may be a possibility for her to speak at a future VFFA meeting.

Of course the big news from this year's AGM was the very significant decision to change the rules to allow female fly fishers to join our ranks. It is interesting to pursue the history of our membership rules. Rick Keam, our authority on VFFA history, has offered the following outline:

"In 1906 the Victoria Fly Fishers' Association was formed. Nothing in its name or its Objects & Rules would have prevented women from joining, though it



April Vokey

may well be that this possibility just never occurred to anyone. Also, it was regarded as scandalous for 'respectable women' to enter pubs, which is where meetings were routinely held. By 1908, in a search for wider membership, the organisation had changed its name to the Victoria Trout-Fishers' Association. It then ran out of steam. Around 1912 the same core group of individuals re-created it, and it survived until 1929, though it too seems to have been largely inactive in its later years.

In August 1932, spurred by the urgent necessity to lobby for a licence fee to fund trout fishing during the Depression, a replacement organisation was formed. Its President 'Barney' Allen and Secretary Harry Lennox Ford had been inaugural members of the 1906 Victoria Fly Fisher's Association. To seek the wider backing of trout fishers rather than fly fishers alone, it was named the Victorian Trout Fishermen's Association. It is certainly possible that this first use of the word 'men' in the title was a deliberate move to exclude women, ironically at the very time when a few women in Victoria and Tasmania were emerging as good fly fishers. However, there is no surviving record of any actual debate or discussion about this. There is therefore no evidence that it was seen as a burning issue and it is probable that nobody even thought about it much. It is at least equally possible that the name was just chosen to distinguish the new body from its immediate predecessor, but that to avoid 'untidy possibilities' the new name then required for consistency the insertion of a constitutional clause restricting membership to men.

Having been successful in its attempts to have a trout licence introduced, the Victorian Trout Fishermen's Association quickly reverted to its true colours and in May 1933 adopted the present title of

Victorian Fly-Fishers' Association.

Despite this return to what was in fact a gender-inclusive name, the gender-restrictive anomaly in its Constitution survived until September 2015."

It's interesting to note that in the USA there is strong growth in the popularity of fly fishing among lady anglers, and the major companies are now advertising waders and vests and other fly fishing clothing and paraphernalia specifically for this market.

I read an article recently in an online New Zealand magazine (*NZ Trout Fisher*) written by Gary Scrimgeour, a Kiwi living in Canada who returned home earlier this year for a short visit. He was comparing his Lake Taupo angling experiences this year with what he remembered of them before he left in the late 1980s. One difference he mentions: 'Women anglers: who would have thought it?'

He couldn't recall ever seeing any women anglers back in the 1980s, "but that has all changed. And quite frankly, for the better. In March and April 2015, I had the absolute pleasure of fishing with several women at the Waitahanui rip. A local lady would typically arrive at the rip at 7:00 am and fish for about an hour before racing off — likely headed for work. She was a good angler — I mean really good and she casually out-fished me by a ratio of 2:1. What was different to most male anglers, she openly shared with me what she was using and the details of her leader and fly line. As a result, I caught more fish. Two other ladies also joined me at the rip. They often arrived at about noon. On two occasions, the noon time fishing gals arrived and although the fishing had been really slow immediately before they arrived, they promptly hooked into fish. On one occasion one of them hooked into

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a great rainbow on her second cast. They too shared flies with me. Women in waders, lots of them — now who would have predicted that 30 years ago?"

Indeed! And now that the VFFA welcomes female members the new Council needs to address issues such as

family memberships, which other Melbourne fly fishing clubs offer. So, some decisions ahead. We'll keep you informed.

Best wishes and tight lines,

Lyndon Webb



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## The September AGM

This year's AGM saw some 30 members in attendance. The business of the meeting followed the published agenda, with President Hamish Hughes using a PowerPoint presentation to outline the past year's activities. It was another busy year, with a number of significant highlights.

The election of office bearers saw Hamish continuing into the second year of his term as President. Mike Jarvis accepted the position of Senior Vice President and John Permewan as Junior Vice President. Tony Mitchem continues as treasurer, Lyndon Webb as editor, David Grisold as secretary, Rick Dugina as librarian and Kevin Finn as website administrator. Other continuing Councillors include Hugh Maltby, Peter Boag, Dermot O'Brien, and Terry Rogers (immediate Past President). Ian Sambell was warmly welcomed as a new member of Council, and retiring councillor Richard Kos was



*President Hamish Hughes giving his annual report*

thanked for his very significant contribution to VFFA activities over many years.

Of course the major item of interest at this year's AGM was the vote to change the constitution to allow for female members. A number of members unable to attend had submitted proxy votes, and

these with the votes of members present at the AGM gave overwhelming support for the change.

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm, and most present retired to the bar for a couple of refreshers and some relaxing discussion before departing.



## President's Report – 2015 AGM

Here is a summary of President Hamish Hughes' report on VFFA activities over the past year. The full visual of this report is on the home page of the VFFA website at <http://www.vffa.org.au> at the third link down.

Good evening gentlemen. Welcome to the 2015 AGM and thank you for coming. Your presence tonight is important. It proves that you are sincerely interested in the welfare of your association.

I am proud to report that it has been a very good year for the VFFA and for its 243 members. But, unfortunately, I must report that it has also been a very good year for the fish, as it seems not many have been caught either in Victoria or Tasmania this season.

Despite some early misgivings, we have settled into the Celtic Club well. The service, catering and wines have been very good, and certainly the Celtic Club offers excellent value. Attendances at most general meetings and all dinners have been pleasing and the esprit de corps is high.

I must thank the Council. I have had wonderful support from all Councillors throughout the year. Many of them work quietly behind the scenes organizing trips, general meetings, speakers, raffles, auctions and the library facilities. I thank them all.

Let's look at the year in detail.

At the last AGM, retiring President Terry Rogers reported on a most successful year. He particularly thanked Richard Garvey, who was retiring, and Lyndon Webb and Kevin Finn for their respective efforts with our outstanding *Fly Lines* newsletter and modern VFFA website. The highlight was the election of John Pilkington as an Honorary Life Member.

The Bullen Merri trip to Camperdown in October was the first event in the new season, with the highlight being the annual dinner at Dr John Menzies' glorious home. Unfortunately fish were sparse, although David Wakefield caught two good browns in Lake Purrumbete.

At the October general meeting Andrew Fuller from *The Flyfisher* was our guest speaker. He emphasized the importance of good preparation before every trip, with travel arrangements including insurance, medical requirements and suitable baggage. He touched on personal fitness and appropriate equipment as other requirements.

The Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers were our hosts the next weekend at their stocked dams around Thorpdale. We all had a great time and some excellent fish were caught.

In November nine VFFA members travelled to Warrnambool where they caught two fish, whereas the locals caught three. Perhaps this was an omen for the rest of the season. As always the hospitality of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers was much appreciated.

In November we had a very good turn up for the book and tackle auction. There were 122 lots and sales exceeded \$4,000. As always many members left with bargains.

In December the Christmas dinner was also well attended. An excellent meal was followed by a highly entertaining and hilarious talk by Rick Keam. His recital of *The Man from Showy River* bought the house down.

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Our first trip in 2015 was to Hayes on Brumbys in February. Sixteen of us had a great time together at the lodge, though unfortunately the fishing was very difficult. The Reptile Rescue Tasmania presentation and demonstration taught us how to be safer with snakes.

In February the attendance at the Liars' Night was disappointing for yet another year. As a result Council decided to change the General Meeting to a lunchtime meeting next February.

March was special. Simon Gawesworth, master casting instructor and Marketing Manager of Rio Fly Lines USA, visited Australia. He was our guest speaker at a well-attended special dinner at the Celtic Club on March 20. The next day Peter Morse joined Simon at a special casting demonstration at the Red Tag Pool. Again we had a large turn up of members and visitors.

At the end of March three of us travelled to the Bairnsdale Fly Fishers' lodge on the Mitta River in the vain attempt to win back the Donger trophy. Although the fish were scarce we had a wonderful time thanks to the hospitality of our hosts.

At the April meeting Neil Hyatt, Program Manager for Fish Production at Fisheries Victoria Snobs Creek Hatchery, told us about the hatchery's production and where most of the stocking in Victoria takes place. He invited us to visit the plant later in the year.

The month ended with another very happy weekend for many of our members at Chateau Pilkington on the Big River at Enoch's point. Apparently the fishing was also tough there this year. However the hospitality and catering was top shelf.

The May meeting was an auction of fishing equipment and books from the estate of Ross Jordan. Again many



*Tony Mitchem gave the treasurer's report*

members were pleased with their bargains. Whilst the evening was a success, the Committee later agreed that in future most items at the auction should be from current members who are happy to sell some of their gear to fellow members for a modest return.

Richard Kos arranged for eight members to stay at the Athone Country Cottages near Alexander for the closing weekend. Fishing in their two dams was fun prior to joining colleagues at Dobson's for the BBQ. The weather was awful but we did manage to finish just before the storm.

Sunday casting at the Red Tag Pool began in June. Again our jovial host and generous caterer was Joe Haslauer. Attendances were good and continued into July and August.

Our guest speaker at the June general meeting was Craig Coltman, who told us of his experiences fishing in Patagonia and Argentina. His stories and photos were truly amazing.

In July, Josh Bradshaw, experienced guide and Manager of Pumphouse Point Wilderness Retreat on Lake St Clair in Tasmania, was our guest speaker. For those of us who fish the Tasmanian lakes,

his presentation was particularly interesting. As the fish have been hard to find in recent seasons Josh explained how he changed his fishing ways. He fished in rough weather at the bottom of the wind with much more success.

At the end of July, Lyndon Webb, Bruce Houghton and Duncan Milenkovic represented the VFFA at the Warrambool Fly Fisher's Club annual dinner. As always they enjoyed the fabulous food and friendly company.

August was another good month for VFFA members. On Thursday August 13 nineteen members and guests visited the Snobs Creek Hatchery. Neil Hyatt gave us a very thorough briefing on its history and current responsibilities before showing us through the hatchery and tanks. It was most illuminating and very impressive.

We had 72 members and guests at the Annual Dinner at the end of August. Our guest speaker, Phillip Weigall, is always a drawcard. He gave us a most interesting presentation of his personal fishing experiences over the past 12 months in southeast Australia. The evening ended with the raffle of twelve wonderful prizes. The best way we can thank all the donors for their generosity is to support their businesses.

I am sure you will all agree that it has been a successful year. In ending I would like to thank Richard Kos for his many years of service on the Council. I am pleased that we will still be able to call on his support in the future.

During the year the Council has been reviewing our modus operandi. Dermot O'Brien, Rick Dugina and Mike Jarvis prepared a paper entitled "VFFA 2020 and beyond". It looks at what we offer VFFA members now and opens up discussion on what the VFFA should offer members in the future. In the coming year this will become the major project and I anticipate Council will be asking all members' input at a suitable time.

The Internet is an important part of the future. We are fortunate that Kevin Finn has been bringing us Luddites up to date with our wonderful website. It is significant that web visits have increased 20% in the last 12 months. We are now embracing Social Media. Facebook and Instagram will soon become part of the VFFA offer, helping us communicate with each other about activities and events.

Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.



*AGMs are serious work*

## Warrnambool Weekend & Dinner

The very popular annual trip to Warrnambool and District - from Friday, November 13, to Sunday, November 15, is on again.

Members will fish a number of local rivers including the Merri, Hopkins, Mt Emu and Moyne. These rivers offer a 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.

Those who are interested in participating should contact Hugh Maltby on 0423 283 079 or email: [redhtag@hotmail.com](mailto:redhtag@hotmail.com).



*A typical Mt Emu brown caught by Jim Blakeslee*

The NOE for this trip was included as an insert in last month's newsletter.



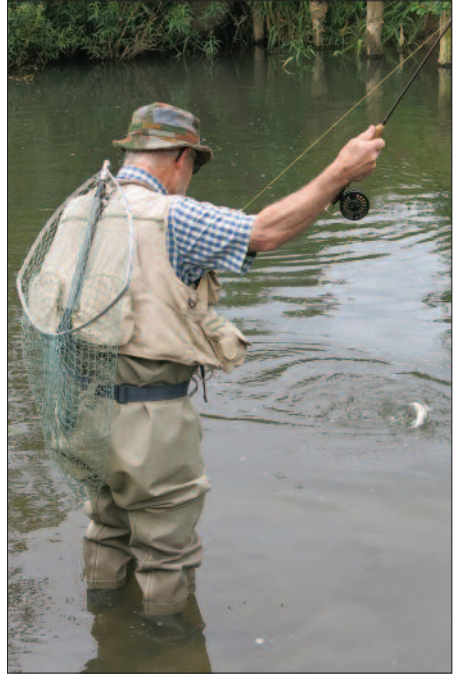
*Tichborne watercolour - Kauaeranga River*

## Fishing in Yorkshire on the River Rye, July 2015

(... Andrew Mossman)

Earlier this year an Irish friend of mine asked me where his brother-in-law could do a little fly fishing when he and his wife were visiting here in March. After much discussion I decided that it was just much easier, not to mention much more enjoyable, to take John to Enoch's Point for a few days fishing, staying in John Pilkington's palatial establishment. Everything happened as planned and John assured me he had really enjoyed his stay there, despite the fishing being poor. On the other hand, the displaying lyrebirds and other quintessentially Australian birds and animals, some very steep four wheel drive access tracks and the whole environment there were exciting and completely new to John. He is English, is a very keen fly fisher, is an academic and Government advisor, and lives near York.

In July my wife and I were visiting London, to see our third daughter Jane and her husband Jack. Knowing that we were coming to the UK John had kindly offered me some fishing in his club water on the river Rye, near York. As a result I had packed my fishing vest and some fly boxes, and John provided me with waders, boots and a rod and line. The rod was a 7 foot 3 weight, rather smaller and lighter than I am used to, but nevertheless well balanced and delightful to use. I had grabbed three boxes of flies, all tied for New Zealand conditions, and therefore the flies were small. We had left for England in rather a hurry, having discovered that 12:05am meant 5 minutes after midnight tonight and not tomorrow night. With 90 minutes notice we grabbed our bags, locked up the house and left for the airport, but sadly without the flies I would have taken if I had had a little more time.



*Andrew opening his account*

The Rye is an exquisite little river, which is full of ranunculus weed, and which was in flower. In the shallower sections it ran between banks of this weed where runnels and eddies provided excellent fish lies, and in the many deeper sections, which were mostly wadeable, there was much gliding and glassy water. The water was not gin clear but when standing in a metre of it the bottom was visible. In many places the river is overgrown with trees, mostly Alders, and one is either casting in under the low hanging branches or standing and fishing under them. In several places the trees are so big and thick that they meet overhead creating the impression of a tunnel. The tree cover therefore makes using small rods highly desirable. >>>

In many places there are high banks and getting in and out of the river is difficult. The river is fenced off from cattle and so there is much impenetrable jungle along the banks, not to mention the stinging nettles that always seem to find uncovered skin. In the places where it is especially difficult to enter or leave the river steel ladders have been installed. Unlike the chalk streams of Hampshire the banks have not been manicured, other than to make access to the water a little easier. It is club policy not to manure the banks. I suggested that a few less trees might be an improvement but the club prefers the less improved condition of the river.

The river is broken into two sections, the lower of approximately 2.5 miles, which is divided into five beats, and the top section, on the Nunnington Estate, which is about 2 miles and is divided into two beats.

The rules of the club require that the day is divided into three parts, the first from 9am to 1pm, the second finishing at 5:30pm and the last finishing at 10pm or dark, whichever occurs first. Each member must register in the Beat Book on which beat he intends to fish. Fishing upstream only is allowed, using one fly, either dry fly or nymph, and barbless. I understand that backtracking is forbidden. At the end of each day each fisher returns to the club room and records in the Beat Book the number and species of fish caught, how many were killed (two being the daily bag limit, with a maximum of 5 per month), and the successful flies used. The minimum size for trout is 12 inches. I gathered that most members release all of the fish caught.



*Another lunker, but at least a wild trout*

Our first day was Tuesday July 21. It was a grey day with light rain forecast, was warm but with a cool breeze, which made casting with the 3 weight outfit a little difficult.

We called in at the club house, the old blacksmith's shop on the estate, and registered our fishing intentions. We then walked to the bottom of the beat and scrambled down the steep bank into the stream. Here the river was shallow with much weed with runnels between. One would swear the Rye was a chalk stream at this point. I started with a size 15 Parachute Adams and in the first good deeper corner caught a brown of almost 1 lb that had been rising there. There was not a general hatch underway but several "May Flies" had hatched and floated or flown past me. Being July it was far too late for mayflies but there they were. Green drakes, but they were not quite as I remembered the green drakes I had seen



*The river – weedy, but well populated with wild fish*

in Hampshire. I fished on and had one missed rise after another. Many of the rises were very splashy, and my line was drawn under and released by the fish before a well timed strike could set the hook. I quickened the strike as much as I was able, but 'me reflexes ain't what they used to be'. In time I caught a couple of small grayling. I fished on and by one o'clock I had 4 grayling and another smaller trout. The water was just marvellous, consisting of weedy sections and deeper gliding glassy reaches, often under trees. John had some club matters to attend to and did not fish as much as I did, catching only one trout for the morning session.

Odd mayflies came off all morning with a few other species of ephemeroptera and

some caddis. I saw one sulphur or pale watery dun and an odd grey and some light brown duns hatch. I think the fish were feeding on midge and a tiny black fly that was everywhere. There were also stonefly, which the English call "needle fly", hatching.

We then drove to another beat further up the river, had a sandwich, and after half an hour or so started fishing. This beat is still on the lower 2½ mile section.

Nothing much changed, and if anything the weather improved a little. The true mayflies kept hatching as did all the other insects, but there was not a general hatch. However the fish became more cooperative and rose a little more freely. I was still having difficulty hooking the splashy rises, little grayling I

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suspected, and it was necessary to adjust one's strike to each rise. However it was essential to strike much more slowly and deliberately to the bigger trout. As usual a high level of concentration was required.

In a glassy section the fish just refused my Para Adams and the size 17 upright Possum Emerger I had been using, so I put on a number 17 Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear and caught four nice trout from 10 inches to 1¼ pounds that had been quietly rising there. What delicious fishing I thought. The fish changed again so I went back to the Possum Emerger and in a longish gliding section caught two more nice fish. Just before the end of the afternoon session I came to a deep corner where a number of fish were sipping quietly and steadily in and around an eddy caused by a large tree stump that was in the water. I tied the #17 Para Adams back on and in 20 minutes caught four of the five fish that had been rising there. The one I missed took the fly well but for some reason did not hook up. All the fish were around one pound or a tiny bit more. More great fishing I thought, especially as the fish in the eddy could only be caught on a cast that allowed for drag. That is, thrown with an upstream bend in the line or with a pile of slack dropped on to the faster water.

In the final session we drove upstream to the Nunnington water and I fished beat number 2, the lower beat, for half an hour. I fished up from the bridge and in some lovely gliding water caught a nice fish of 1¼ lb on a Para Adams. I had some other offers but despite apparently good confident rises and well timed strikes the fish were not hooked. Clearly the fly was not quite right. I then walked up to the next pool and to a rise caught another, a little larger. "That's it!" we declared, "A fish on the last cast, and how good is that?" I exclaimed, when another fish

rose and after some stern persuading my host took the rod, had three casts and caught another, almost as big, and on his last cast also. "A first", I declared, "Both of us finishing with a fish on the last cast." And so off home to Wheldrake for a delicious meal.

The next day, Wednesday the 22nd, was if anything slightly milder than the previous day, mostly grey, with light breezes and otherwise excellent.

We had decided to fish the Nunnington water. When we arrived at about 10:30 there was another member already there and booking in. We agreed that we would fish the lower water in the morning and that he would fish the upper beat, and after lunch we would all just swap around and fish the other beat.



*The old blacksmith's shop –  
now the clubhouse*

When I got to the river there were three mayflies on the water and some more in the air. As you will remember I did not have my Kossie Dun emergers or the true English mayfly patterns that I had intended to bring. The biggest fly that I had was a #15 Para Adams, so I tied it on and offered it to the first fish that was rising and sipping in the glassy tail out. The cast was fine and a large head came over the fly. I paused to give the trout time to shut its mouth when just as I was about to tighten the fish "boofed". Ah, almost but not quite the right fly. Two more good fish were offered the Adams; one swirled under it and the other slashed at it, and both were missed of course.

Many more mayflies were hatching than yesterday, not a big hatch but certainly enough to bring the fish up. I saw one mayfly dun taken and several fish throwing themselves at flying duns. I was absolutely certain that with a good mayfly emerger imitation it would have been possible to catch masses of fish that day. But no, that was not a helpful thought and so without a good imitation I pressed on with what I had. The fish were not rising steadily and on many occasions would rise once or twice and then stop, making it very frustrating fishing. When fish are working well it is often possible to undo them by concentrating on individuals. Just keep dropping your fly on their nose at exactly the time of their next rise and they will often succumb.

By the end of the morning session I had three fish only, with two of them weighing 1 lb and 1½ lb and the other being much smaller.

For lunch we had a real treat. We went to the local 400-year-old pub, and with a pint of "best bitter" had a Whitby crab salad. How gloriously English is that?

After lunch we went to the top reach and walked down to the start of the beat. The mayflies kept hatching and I kept not catching the fish that I was certain would have been easily caught with a good fly. I fished up through a long section with both gliding and weedy water and could manage only two small fish. I had many fish swim up and inspect my fly or swirl under it, or even slash at it, but would just not take it. It is decades since I have been so frustrated at not having flies that have been tied specifically to solve just these problems.

We had to finish at 5:30 so that we could take our wives for a posh dinner in medieval York, so we only had half an hour in the top water of this beat where despite a reasonable rise to the mayflies I managed only two more small fish.

And so ended two days of exquisite fishing, with good and generous company, in beautiful water and in glorious English countryside. My host John had had a better second day catching six fish, including a two pounder and some other nice fish around the one pound mark. I know I was fishing on private water and some of the fish I caught were almost certainly released but they were not at all easy, and in fact they were quite the opposite. What my daughters would call "very picky". It was a great privilege to be there and I certainly appreciated John's kind invitation.



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## Fly Fishing Weipa

(... Jim Blakeslee and friends)

August 8. Bob Loch, Bill Hewett, Chris Beaton, Neil Martin, Peter Carman and I (all members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers') were finally flying to Weipa, a bauxite mining town on the north-west coast of the Cape York Peninsula. We were heading there to do a bit of salt-water fly fishing. It takes a long time to get to the far north of Queensland from Warrnambool – about as long as it takes for me to travel from Warrnambool to California (some 18 hours all up)!

We had a three-hour drive to Tullamarine airport, then the usual check-in and security clearance before the flight to Cairns. Then a layover for the night in Cairns until the next flight to Weipa around noon the next day, which takes about an hour and a half. (Fortunately the return flights coincided better, and we made it back to Victoria in a single, very long day).

So, why Weipa? Well, in the previous two years Bob Loch and Bill Hewett had enjoyed the hospitality and fantastic fly fishing offered by Alan (Fish) Philliskirk, who runs a fly-fishing charter business – [weipaflyfish.com.au](http://weipaflyfish.com.au). For two years Bob and Bill had teased us with their stories and photos of numerous species of huge fish they'd caught there: lots of them, great scenery, comfortable accommodation, and fine food and drink. The temptation was just too much, so we rationalized the \$cost and finally "took the bait."

Fish's charter business is so popular that we had to book and pay a deposit a year in advance to secure six days of food and accommodation, with five days of guided fishing. And since there were six of us, we needed three guides and three boats (two fishermen per boat).



*Jim with one of the 39 different species caught*



*Top transport*

With almost a year's lead time we had done plenty of reading and checking websites. We had scrutinised Bob's and Bill's fly boxes so knew what flies we should tie, and we listened to their advice. We had also researched the types of rods, reels, fly lines, backing, leader material and other gear that we would need. So when we landed at Weipa about 2:00 pm on August 9 we were ready to go, or at least we thought we were.

We were met there by "Fish" Philliskirk and his two assistants, "Owie" and Mark, who transported us to the lodge adjacent to the Weipa Campground on the waterfront. Fish introduced his guides and explained the timetable for the week. Each morning we were to be up for breakfast at 6:15 am, and waiting on the deck at 6:45 for the arrival of the guides with their 6 metre boats in tow. We would launch by 7:00 am, have a quick safety briefing, then be off to the fishing. We would be returned to the lodge by 6:30 each evening. Clear enough?

Clear enough! So we unpacked, rigged up our #8, #9 or #10 weight rods, then settled down on the deck for a drink or two whilst enjoying a stunning sunset, before heading inside for a superb steak dinner and a bottle of red. After our hours of travelling we made it an early night, retiring to our rooms for some much-needed sleep in preparation for the long days ahead.

The next day, August 10, was clear, sunny and cool as we launched the boats. A light jumper and Gortex jacket came in handy for the 1½ hour trip down the coast for our fishing. Peter Carman and I were in the boat piloted by Owie, who made a beeline for the beach and inshore reef area at Red Cliffs. It was low tide as we searched the shallows for our first fish of the day. I was using a 9 foot #10 Sage TCR loaded with an intermediate (slow sinking) line and a 6 foot leader - 2 foot of 40 lb line, 2 foot of 30 lb line, then 2 foot of 20 lb fluorocarbon.

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*A double hook-up*



*Dr Bob Loch with one of the many he caught*



*That's Jim hiding behind another magnificent fish*

The fly was a 1/0 white bucktail Clouser with red eyes. (Fish had advised us to “tie on any fly you want, as long as it’s a small white Clouser with a bit of red on it”). I don’t know whether you’ve ever tried to cast that sort of rig – big hook with chrome-plated lead dumbbell eyes – but it’s hard work. Still, it produced the goods. All that day, and for most of the four that followed, that’s all the fly I really needed, except when polaroiding the shallows for Blue Bastards (a type of sweetlips), as well as Tusk Fish and Permit. For these species a Crab Fly was the go.

With the Clouser you needed to spot a fish, cast the fly into its path, then rip it back as fast as possible. Inshore, and up the coastal rivers, the Clouser was hammered by Queenfish, Golden Trevalley, Tarpon, various cod - you name it, they would eat the Clouser. We ended up catching 39 different species, most on some version of a white Clouser.

When polaroiding the sand and silty flats with a bit of reef nearby, the Crab Fly had to be cast into the path of BB’s and Tusks and allowed to sink to the bottom. As the fish slowly approached a very slight pull, then pause, to give a little movement to the fly would get their interest. Often they spooked and were gone.

But sometimes they sucked the fly off the bottom, I would make a strip-strike, then all hell broke loose. The fish would bolt for the nearest reef before I could react. Owie, Mark and Fish would roll their eyes in dismay on the separate days I was with each of them. They exhorted repeatedly, “Hang on and don’t let them run!” I was letting them have a bit of line to get them on the reel. Very bad! After being sawn off the first six times I hooked one while in the boat with Mark. This time I just hung onto the line and hoped the leader wouldn’t break. End result – I stopped the fish before it got to the reef and landed a Tuskie! >>>



*Sunburn is a serious threat – thus the extravagant face coverings*



A little later it was a BB and I was obsessed, like many before me. I could have spent the rest of the trip polaroiding and trying to catch those fish.

But there were other species to catch. Offshore, a Clouser cast on top of a Manta Ray would interest Cobia swimming with them. One battle with a big Cobia was very memorable, made more so by watching it outrun a huge Bull Shark that was in hot pursuit after the Cobia jumped and attracted its attention.

And there were Longtail Tuna and Mackerel Tuna “busting up” in deeper water, with Spanish and Broad Bar Mackerel below. They were all there to be hooked, battled and caught – that is if they weren’t eaten by the ever-present sharks. But if we followed the urging of our guides to lean on them hard and get them in as quickly as possible, it was then usually a case of catch, quick photo and then release ... again and again and again. I had a fabulous time. We all did.

So, with the benefit of hindsight, if I was to plan the trip again, what would I have done in advance? I would have tied many more white Clousers in smaller sizes. #1 would do. I would have tied a lot more

Crab Flies - some in sizes as small as #2 or #1, and in a sandy-blond colour to match the bottom colouration better, though the BB’s and Tusks did seem partial to the greeny-grey crabs I tossed at them.

I would tie some small blood-worm flies to drift in front of the huge Milkfish that refused everything we offered. Maybe that would work. And I would do a bit of casting practice, even pump a bit of iron, to muscle up for the heavy work of making long, accurate casts with a #10 rod and lead-headed Clousers to those magnificent fish at Weipa.



*Jim quickly manufacturing some more of those Clousers*

# The Tasmania Season

Are you thinking of fishing Tassie this season? Here is a month by month roundup, starting with October, from top Tasmanian guide and member of the Australian fly fishing team, Chris Bassano. Chris is Owner/Manager/Guide at Rainbow Lodge, Tasmania, (website: [www.rainbowlodgetasmania.com.au](http://www.rainbowlodgetasmania.com.au)). He was an individual Gold Medallist at both the 2012 Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships and the 2014 Australian Fly Fishing Championships. He is also a FFF Certified Casting Instructor, and contributes regular articles to FlyStream and other angling periodicals. Chris can be contacted at P.O. Box 808, Kings Meadows, Tasmania, 7249. Phone 0428 376 484 or 03 6259 8090, or phone Krystal Bassano on 0400 567 646 or 03 6399 3378.

The following material, used with permission, was originally from an email written by Chris to VFFA secretary David Grisold

I hope that you are having an enjoyable winter and managing to get some fishing done. For years I have been meaning to send this email out, and finally it has happened. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send me an email and ask.

## Timing Your Trip in 2015 / 2016

Every season I am asked about various "fishing events" or hatches that occur through the year. Many people are surprised to hear about the different options that we have in Tasmania and I am getting more and more inquiries and bookings outside the traditional time slots. I thought I would simply send this email out to let people know what sort of fishing we have in Tasmania at various times of the year and what to expect. You may be surprised, as some of the very best fishing over the last seasons has NOT been during summer. Last season, for example, the early season was the best I have ever known and as a general rule, before Christmas was far better than the fishing after the New Year.

The timing of your trip may well be determined by when you can get off work, in which case the presence of tailing fish or sea trout or massive trout will not affect your fishing dates. For other people, the option of doing something different,

going somewhere totally new, or chasing a particular style of fly fishing or fish may require a change in their fishing schedule or the addition of another trip to their yearly plan. This is how the last two seasons have unfolded in Tasmania and what to expect at these times of year.

## OCTOBER

This has recently been the most productive of just about any month of the season. Mayflies in the lowlands are plentiful on the lakes and the large river mayflies are around from the middle of the month onwards. Wet fly fishing is superb but it really is the mayfly that excites everyone. Fish are very hungry for these morsels and dry and nymph fishing is outstanding. This has probably been my favourite month of the past few years.

Bright weather brings excellent polaroiding in the shallows and a lot of time can be spent out of the boat in the sunshine. This can be the most exciting fishing we get.

Caenids are also starting to hatch in many places (some places start in September), and if you would like an enjoyably frustrating time casting to rising fish, then these tiny ephemera will do it for you. Again, you need settled weather for this.

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*Chris Bassano with a superb Tassie brown*

For those wanting to chase trophy fish, the best months have past but we did catch a few in October last season. The river fishing is slowly improving, and if water levels are receding fish are normally very eager. The flatter lowland rivers can be at their best at this time but even the faster waters are beginning to kick in. With the correct water levels, we start to do some float fishing down some rivers at this time.

Going between the highlands and lowlands is a real option at this time. In all but the worst conditions the fishing is usually very good. Tailing trout are more prevalent than in previous months and given the right water levels and weather, this and the next month are perfect. In this month an average caster can do reasonably well in most circumstances. Distance is not as critical but accuracy becomes much more vital.

## **NOVEMBER**

This has always been a popular month and remains as such. In November 2015

we have Martin Droz, Czech superstar and multiple world fly fishing champion, coming to Tasmania to run some river fly fishing seminars. We also have the national fly fishing championships here towards the end of November, which makes our time quite precious. On top of that, two of our guides are representing Australia in the Oceania fly fishing championships in November and another is actually guiding the New Zealand team for the competition. Having said that, we still have some availability with a few of our guides.

Mayflies are hatching this month in the highlands and the fish are usually very active when they are. Nymph and dry fly fishing are coming into their own and all of the usual lakes are firing. This is the best time to fish some of the highland lakes for mayfly feeders.

"Shark fishing" in the highlands does not really start properly until next month but we have had some "shark fishing" in November on the odd rare good weather



*This one from the lakes*

day. Beetles can be found on some lakes in bright, hot weather which means that polaroiding is also possible. Wade polaroiding on some shores is exceptional as you cast to fish in a few inches of water.

Sea trout are still able to be caught in some parts of the state, and last season some of the best sea trout action occurred in November, even although this would traditionally be too late. Tailing trout are around (especially early in the month) and caenids are at their thickest on many rivers in the state. Caddis hatches are now underway and the rivers are in top condition.

More anglers are now present around Tasmania as locals and interstate fishermen like good weather (sometimes over good fishing). You can expect to be sharing the lakes with other fishermen, though sometimes the fishing is so good that you don't realise they are there.

Lowland stillwaters have now all but shut down and most of the best action on stillwaters is in the highlands. Most anglers do not have a problem catching

fish in November, but once again, the better you casting, the more fish you will land.

## **DECEMBER**

Bright weather means polaroiding, while overcast weather brings mayflies. Unless you are river fishing, the highlands is the best place to be. Although there is often a period of a few days in December where mayflies have slowed on some lakes and not yet kicked in on others, this month has traditionally been seen as the best time to fish for mayfly feeders. There are plenty of fishing options as beetles are also falling in warm weather and "shark fishing" starts in earnest. Nymph and dry fly fishing predominates, although you could fish dries all day on some locations.

Rivers are basically all good. The week between Christmas and New Year is always a brilliant period to fish the rivers, but basically the entire month is good, even though sometimes we can have a few days of bad weather in December and this can adversely affect the fishing. But overall this is a good time to fish in Tasmania and although it may not be >>>

as productive as November on the lakes, the rivers are always full of hungry fish. Again, the early weeks of the month are popular amongst anglers but as Christmas draws near, numbers decline.

## **JANUARY**

Traditionally the best polaroiding month, January is a month in which bright and warm weather produces the best fishing. Wind lanes, polaroiding and dry fly fishing predominate. Having said that, the fishing is rarely easy on the lakes. Good casting with a stealthy approach is best. The western lakes will be fishing well, and although they have received some pressure by now this month often has the right combination of good weather and water heights for fishing these lakes. Overcast weather is not common in January but mayflies are still around when conditions are good. This is the prime month for "shark fishing", too.

River fishing is excellent in January. Fish are basically looking up and dry fly fishing doesn't get much better than this month on the rivers. Nymphs, however, still play their role but fish are usually eager to rise and good casting is rewarded. A top angler can catch a lot of fish in the rivers in January. I can't think of one day in January when the river fishing has been bad. Float fishing using our raft is popular in January and remains so until the end of March.

When we think of January, we think of dry fly fishing. By this time of year we prefer not to fish wet flies, but that does not mean that they don't work. The number of fish caught in January is not normally as high as October, November and even December, because the weather is better and the fish are not as easily fooled by bad presentations. Low and clear water also contributes to this. It is a month on the lakes where quality usually overrides quantity.

## **FEBRUARY**

This is the hottest of the summer months. Beetles and polaroiding are what we strive for. Mayflies are still around but in diminishing numbers. Sometimes February can become too warm. This was not the case earlier this year as we had a cold snap that reduced water temperatures to the extent that they didn't get too high for the remainder of the season. Two decades ago this was the prime month as the beetles would fall in enormous numbers. In recent times however the beetle falls are more spread out across summer. In some lakes February is a little too late to get good fishing, but the clear and deep lakes fish well. Shark fishing is still going although the sun is beginning to get low in the sky late in the month.

Grasshoppers are on the menu for river trout, but really, the river fishing has been good for a few months now and it continues through February. The end of this month usually signals the end of the big caddis hatches, but daytime fishing still relies on terrestrials and this is why it remains good. As with the lake fishing, low and clear water means that presentation is all important (as it always is). Don't expect to catch fish if your presentation is sloppy. Dries are the main food item but, as always, nymphs are successful too.

## **MARCH**

For many years I have thought that this month is the hardest of every month to fish the lakes. After the heat of February, March provides another warm month which can send water temperatures too high for many waterways and shut some fishing down. This was not the case last season when we were blessed with excellent fishing in March due to an unusual cold snap earlier in the season.



*Another Tasmanian lake trout. Chris has a well-deserved reputation as one of Tasmania's top guides*

If temperatures do not get too warm the beetle feeders continue to impress and sometimes small mayfly can also keep trout feeding. The wade polaroiding is exceptional and probably the best of the season, whether it is a warm month or not. Fish are still spooky, though, due to the water height and clarity. Some fish start to make their way into spawning creeks at this time, which means they have become quite aggressive before heading up for their annual ritual.

Whenever possible, I like to be polaroiding this month and although fish numbers landed are not as high as some other months, the number seen is usually very high. If bad weather does come late in the month, it is possible to get mayflies starting up again on some lakes.

On the rivers, small mayfly are appearing and although many rivers are low, good anglers can expect to catch plenty of fish. Grasshoppers are normally still around until the first major frost. This is possibly

the most popular time to float some of the larger rivers. River fishing and lake polaroiding are the things we try and do a lot of at this time.

#### **APRIL**

This is my favourite river month for the entire season. The days are shorter, which is the down side, but the weather is normally postcard perfect and mayflies are hatching well on the rivers. It is all about the dry fly and gentleman's hours on the water. You can expect to get plenty of shots at rising fish on the rivers under clear blue sky days although temperatures are not high.

On the most perfect days, wade polaroiding is still possible in the lakes but you need to have keen eyes. Shark fishing is well and truly over but general dry fishing from a boat is very productive. In some locations, pre-spawning fish are not hard to locate and their aggressive nature means that they are receptive to a well placed fly. >>>

If you have missed out on the early season trophy fish hunting, April is your opportunity to get hold of them again. We had some very consistent fishing to large trout in April last season, probably due to their change in behavioural patterns. Bad weather is good for lake fishing while good weather is good for everything. Every year when the season closes we are left hoping that the IFS decides to keep it open for an extra month next year! The season almost seems to end when it is firing back up again.

### MAY

The fishing opportunities are limited this month but those that we have are still good. It would be hard to recommend a trip in May over one in April (I wouldn't), but if for some reason you were to be in Tasmania there are enough very good fly

fishing options to make it well worth while. Wet flies are more regularly used due to the locations that remain open for the month of May, but again, this would be quite different to the fishing throughout the more popular times of the season. May has produced some extremely memorable fishing for me over the years and is underrated.

### JUNE AND JULY

Yes, there are fishing options and sometimes they turn out to be very good, but I can't recommend anything at this time unless you are here and want to catch a fish! Dry fly... not likely!

Next season is already looking very busy and I can't wait for it to start. Take care and as I said, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about what I have written.



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## Alaska 2015

(... from Harry Robertson)

Every year usually in the month of July I host a group to visit the Alagnak Lodge in the legendary Bristol Bay region of Alaska. This year my planning had a bitter sweet cloak, as one of my best friends, who is the marketing manager, had left my home state of Virginia to move to Kuwait. His wife had accepted an offer to join a pediatric group there and he will continue to be the stay at home parent. He tried valiantly to arrange a schedule for our annual visit but at the last minute we had to give up on the plan.

This year's group now consisted of a father with adult daughter from Virginia and two friends from the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. One of these two guys owns Despedida Lodge. Trust me - that is a long ways to come to go fishing! I could only hope they would think their arduous several days of travel

was worth the effort!

I had completed the planning for the group to meet in Anchorage and travel from there to King Salmon, where we would board a chartered float plane for the half hour ride over the tundra to the lodge. All went well and we enjoyed a low calm flight during which we saw nesting swans and some groups of the young born earlier. Once at the lodge we were shown to our rooms, then were offered lunch and a brief introduction to the planned fishing periods.

After assembling our gear we gathered at the dock. We would be targeting Chum (Dog) Salmon during our week, a species known for its explosive strikes and strong, long runs. So we attached short four foot 20 lb fluorocarbon leaders to our floating fly lines. The guides provided their own



*Angler Danny Lajous, owner of Despedida Lodge, Tierra del Fuego (on the right) with his guide and a superb Chum Salmon*

versions of flies that were pink, purple and mylar-blend flash material, and tied them on with loop knots that allowed the flies to articulate.

We headed off to a sand bar the guide had selected, and anchored there. It was only a short distance from the dock and still in view of the lodge. Our Alagnak guide then gave us a brief but necessary boat safety explanation, then made suggestions about casting weighted flies in the company of others! This is one case when a tight loop is not proper! Anglers then had the choice of casting from the boat or wading on a hard sand bottom in three feet of water. The fish were constantly coming across the sand bar in waves ... wave, after wave, after wave. Great fun for the anglers that are paired there. Double hook-ups are very common.

Casts are made at 45 degrees downstream and the fly then allowed to swing in the current until below the angler, then left to sway in the current a bit before a slow erratic retrieve. Because our visit was in the third week of July, the King Salmon (Chinook) had mostly completed their

run, but anglers trolling the incoming tides using very stout boat rods with wobbling lures were still catching very large bright fish! Sockeye Salmon (Red Salmon) were still around too, but not in great numbers. An early Silver (Coho Salmon) was caught on the day we departed, certainly early for that run. All salmon species on the Alagnak are long and strong.

This river is legendary for supporting these species and good upriver rainbow trout fishing as well. Fly outs were available daily, but no one felt they were needed with the great fishing we were enjoying right at the lodge!

The steps (48) from the lodge to the river seemed a bit steeper this year, as I am dangerously close to eight decades of used life's calendar. I plan to be there next year and already have a few committed to the group. If all goes to plan I will be returning to Nicaragua for a demonstration to guides at the Rio Indio Lodge. The New Guinea trip for this November is ALMOST the bottom of my bucket list...we shall see!



# Early season Fishing at Marysville and the Acheron Valley

(... Bernard Holbery)

As a tradition I have always celebrated the opening of the trout season on the picturesque Steavenson River. After the months of the closed season I was very pleased to be back again on my beloved trout streams.

On the morning of trout opening I was on the Steavenson by 5:30am, keen to cast my first fly of the season. However it was still pitch black, so I did what I have done every other opening - and toasted the coming trout season with a single malt whisky as first light crept quietly into the valley. The Steavo was running high and fast so I decided to fish above the Taggerty River junction. The Taggerty River comes down a steep valley so anything below the junction is hard going early season, So I made the decision to fish smaller water up above.

I started with a small weighted nymph and had six trout by 7:30 before VFFA member Rex Hunt called me on my

mobile phone for a quick interview on the opening of trout season for his radio program "Off the Hook". After speaking briefly with Rex I fished my way through the rest of the morning using the nymph and catching more trout, though not big trout. But I did take a rainbow of around 2 lb on a dry fly – a small Whirling Dun. Overall, a very pleasant day fishing the Steavenson and some other little twig streams in the area.

Opening season conditions are always a bit tough going, but after the winter it is great to be on the streams again. Thursday September 17 saw the first warm day of the season with some thunderstorm activity, and late that afternoon, before the rain arrived, I witnessed the first termite fall. I quickly headed for one of the big pools I know on the Acheron River and started casting a termite pattern. The termite fall lasted about an hour but the fish were only feeding heavily for the last



*Bernard's 5 pound rainbow*

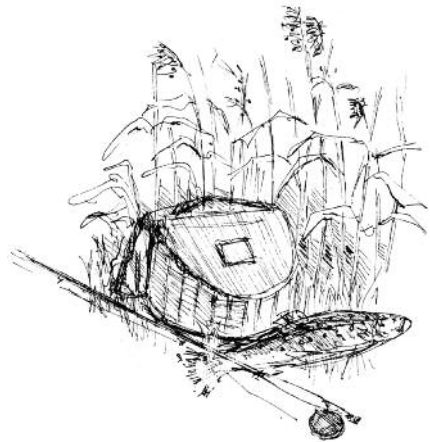


*Bernard fishes some bushy country*

15 minutes of it, when I was able to land a rainbow of 5 lb.

I have been noticing more mayfly on the streams this year and a little more insect activity. The best fishing has been in the middle of the day, with the height of insect activity over by 4 o'clock. But with a few more warm days as we move into October and November we will see the start of dun hatches and caddis hatches. And don't forget your beetle patterns, because there have been some beetles about already. We can also start fishing the evening rises as there will be good caddis hatches on dark.

Hopefully everyone has a great season. Tight lines as always.



# FLY OF THE MONTH

## *Snails*



Snails are apparently popular tucker for trout. A quick check with our well-informed online know-all Mr Google produces a number of snail patterns. They abound.

The Black & Peacock Spider, a fairly simple fly to tie, is often mentioned as a snail imitation. Any similarity of this pattern to real snails stretches my imagination, but then again, perhaps trout have more lurid imaginations. And the Black & Peacock Spider is oval-shaped and dark; perhaps that's enough.

The book *In Season – Tasmania*, by Daniel Hackett and Brad Harris, describes a pattern called Simon's Snail. And for those who subscribe to *FlyLife* magazine, issue 75 gives details for tying a very realistic snail pattern, and issue 48 describes a simple 'Beady Snail'. This same Beady Snail also appears in the very helpful *Tasmanian Fly Box* collection compiled by Tony Dell, who offers the following information:

"In a practical sense, it is often hard to know whether snails are important on a particular water unless you have fished it for some time and caught fish with the tell-tale distended gut which feels like a bag of beads. As a devotee of Lake Sorell in its glory days I can vouch that snails form a very important part of the trout's diet in that water, particularly early season around the rocky shores.

Tony Ritchie, on pages 20 and 21 of his book *Finding Feeding Trout* notes that snails figure more highly in trout diets where waters have a high PH. He particularly notes Lake Sorell as one of those with both high alkalinity and snails accounting for

a significant proportion of diet in up to 25% of trout. In relation to rivers, he notes that slow, weed-rich sections of Brumbys Creek, the Macquarie, Meander and Break- O-Day Rivers also provide important percentages of snails in trout diet. Importantly, Ritchie notes that snails form part of the trout's diet in many still waters over the whole season whereas on the rivers there is a clear early and late season concentration on them by the fish.

David Scholes in his *Fly Fisher in Tasmania* talks about the importance of snails in the trout's diet but also about the irregularity of occurrence, which he implies is largely the result of man-induced level changes on waters such as Little Pine Lagoon. He does say, however, that snails occur more regularly in the Western Lakes, and talks particularly about his experience at Lake Dudley where he failed to get a cast at a 'monster' snailing in the shallows.

The interesting thing about snails is that they can be available to the trout both on the bottom and at the surface. Certainly early and late in the season they are sub-surface prey, but in warm, still conditions in early summer and early autumn they can rise to the surface in numbers and provide some exciting surface fishing if you can identify the phenomenon.

Usual patterns for the floating snail are a cork-bodied conical fly covered with either peacock or pheasant tail herl, a fat peacock herl-bodied fly with fore and aft black hackle or a greased up Black and Peacock Spider fished to 'rising' fish, although I find that a better strategy is to cast the fly in the vicinity of rising fish and leave it for the fish to find. For sub-surface snail feeders, the usual patterns are generally non-specific with small black Yeti-style flies, and wet Black Beetles being the usual choice. There are not many specific sunken snail patterns although Daniel Hackett's use of a bead head Black and Peacock Spider (see *FlyLife* magazine, volume 45) comes close."

The pattern described here comes from the September 2015 issue of the UK magazine *Trout Fisherman*. The main material is a small piece of cylindrical foam.

### **Materials for the Foam Snail**

**Hook:** Sizes 8 – 12, short shank preferred

**Thread:** Olive or black 6/0

**Tentacles:** Monofilament (0.30 mm diameter or thereabouts)

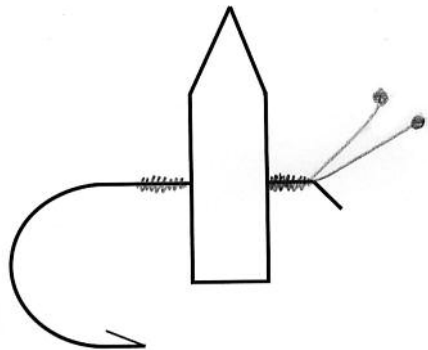
**Body:** Cylindrical 5 - 7 mm diameter foam ('Booby' foam), cut to shape then coloured with a dark olive waterproof marker pen, then coated with clear varnish

### **Tying Procedure:**

1. The first part involves preparing a couple of tentacles. It's not difficult, and I suspect is also optional. I'm sure the pattern would work without the two tentacles sticking out the front.

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2. Take a short length of monofilament line and hold it in the jaws of some pliers with just 3 or 4 mm sticking out. Then use a cigarette lighter to ignite this short end so that it burns back to the plier jaws forming a small lump (which will represent an eye at the end of a tentacle). Repeat this process at the other end of the length of monofilament so that you now have a length of monofilament with an eye at each end. Cut the length of monofilament in half.
3. Place the hook in the vise and add a few wraps of thread. Then tie in the two tentacles and eyes – one each side of the hook shank and sticking forward past the hook eye for about 8 – 10 mm. Use more turns of thread to spread them out and cock them up a bit.
4. Wrap 6 – 8 turns of fine lead wire around the shank just behind the eye, then cover these turns with thread. Cast off the thread with a whip finish and add a drop of superglue to keep it all in place.
5. While the superglue is setting take a short length of the foam (say 3 cm) and trim one centimetre of one end to a fine point (so it looks a bit like the end of a sharpened pencil).
6. Now take the hook out of the vise and carefully poke the hook point through the foam about 2 cm from the sharpened end. Place the hook back in the vise and spin the foam around so that it points upwards as shown here in the sketch. Re-attach the tying thread behind the foam and add a few turns.
7. Now fold the pointed end of the foam down so that it lies along the hook shank towards the bend and make two thread turns to hold it in place. Then make a few more turns along the shank, then tie it over the foam again to create a second but smaller segment.
8. Add a third segment right on the bend, then bind down the end of the foam with the thread. Finish off with a couple of firm half hitches or a whip finish. Then cut the thread.
9. Trim the foam off under the hook shank about 2 cm below the hook shank.
10. To complete the fly apply several dabs of dark olive (or dark brown) colour using a waterproof marker pen. Then add a couple of coats of clear nail varnish to give a smooth glossy finish.





# 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 2015 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Andrew Braithwaite Fishing Gear • Armadale Angling •
- Australian Fishing Network • Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Publishing •
- FlyFinz Fishing Tackle and Books • Gavin Hurley's Fly Fishing Pro-Angler •
- Hayes On Brumbys • J.M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Mick Hall • Millbrook  
Lakes Lodge • Mountain Stream Company • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies •
- Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Compleat Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle  
Store Melbourne • Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle •

## VFFA Meetings at the Celtic Club & other activities.

### October

- 11 Dam Day with Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers' at Thorpdale
- 15 Lunchtime General Meeting – 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm; first floor restaurant  
Speaker: Jim Allen
- 19 (Note - **Monday**) First meeting of the new Council - 7:30 pm

### November

- 13 - 15 Warrnambool Trip  
Event Co-ordinator - Hugh Maltby
- 19 General Meeting - 8:00 pm  
Speaker: Malcolm Crosse
- 23 (Monday) Council Meeting - 7:30 pm

### December

- 17 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 for 7:00 pm  
Speaker: Rick Wallace – Journalist with *The Australian* and a keen fly fisher

### February 2016

- 8 First Council for 2016 - 7:30 pm
- 13 – 19 Tasmanian Trip at Hayes on Brumbys  
Event co-ordinator - Hamish Hughes
- 25 First general meeting for 2016 – A Lunch Gathering (Details TBC)

### March 2016

- 19 General Meeting - 8:00 pm  
Speaker: Clinton Isaac – Queensland fly fishing guide
- 23 Council Meeting - 7:30 pm