

FLY LINES



OCTOBER 2021

The October Meeting with Tony Stewart

A love of photography and bush walking has nurtured Tony's appreciation of our natural environment, so when he started fly fishing (following a weekend introduction at Millbrook), it wasn't long before he was inspired to begin recording those trips into the bush in pictures and on video.

A number of trips to Tasmania's remote Central Plateau in pursuit of the fickle lake trout ensured he was hooked on fly fishing!

Thursday, October 21,
8:00pm and a
Zoom Meeting

He's travelled regularly to Tasmania, the Snowy Mountains, New Zealand and even Chile to fulfil his fly fishing aspirations. However, the nearby Otway Ranges with its many creeks and small rivers has been an attraction since his boyhood.



Those Otway streams are well-shaded

Over the past ten years he has made a particular effort to visit as many of these streams as possible in each season to come to understand the peculiarities of these discreet waterways. Catching resident brown trout whilst also capturing these exploits in picture and on video has been a challenge Tony have enjoyed now for many years.

Tony looks forward to sharing this information on six of the major rivers in the system through pictures and video clip highlights over a 'Season in The Otways' in his October presentation.

Because of covid lockdown restrictions Tony's talk will be a Zoom presentation. Website details for this will be given in an email from Terry Rogers just prior to October 21

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Retiring President Christopher Gray's Report to the AGM

It is with great pride I welcome you to the VFFA annual general meeting for 2021. This is my final meeting as President. It has been an absolute privilege to have worked with such talented colleagues and to have overseen this Association since being elected to the role in 2018.

The support I received from our councillors has been invaluable in the depth of knowledge, wisdom and encouragement in providing the multitude of member benefits across our



Retiring President Chris Gray

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broad church. I, along with Council, have had a great responsibility in working to maintain the strong legacy of passed VFFA councils whilst at the same time gearing for the future.

Thank you councillors for your three years of support. Councillors over these three years have included Mike Jarvis (Immediate Past President), Kevin Finn (Secretary), Tony Mitcham (Treasurer), John Pilkington (Librarian), Lyndon Webb (Editor), Hamish Hughes, Terry Rogers, Dermot O'Brien, Andrew McKenzie (from Sydney - our first interstate councillor), Joanne Dobson, Will Davidson, Marianne Wallace, Bill Fary, Neil Vincent and Alex Evans.

While on the annual Tasmanian trip in February last year there was some concern with the news of this new "Covid virus". Little did we realise at the time how this would impact our lives in so many ways. The Covid challenge required us to redefine both our offerings and our delivery to members. Lockdowns in fact enabled us, via Zoom, to bring guest speakers to the comfort of your kitchens, lounge rooms and any other room you joined with us in the last 18 months.

We were able to move our meetings (both Council & General) to Zoom and thus gained a new audience of members beyond our metropolitan boundary. We averaged 70+ members for each of our guest speakers, and while a general meeting at the Kelvin Club draws in our regular cohort of members, the Zoom facility enabled us to broadcast to the many of you who are unable to attend in person.

Despite the challenges, we managed to put together an extensive activity list of online, outdoor and Kelvin Club events during my time on council. It has been

a challenge for our editor Lyndon Webb to keep up with the changes prior to the release of *Fly Lines* issues and provide correct dates and times.

Our fly tyers have been fantastic in their flexibility in adapting to being in person at Aussie Angler or online via Zoom.

Along with the many events on our calendar each year we also enjoy representation on several bodies involved in fishing that promote a better environment for our Victorian trout fishery. Here is a summary of VFFA events in recent years, and the days involved each year:

Council Meetings – 11, General Meetings – 8, Annual Dinner – 1, Annual General Meeting – 1, Christmas Dinner – 1, President's casting day – 1, Winter Casting Days – 3, Big River weekend – 4, Tasmania Trip – 7, Donger Weekend with Bairnsdale FFC – 4, Dam Day with Latrobe Valley FFC – 1, Hatchery visit – 1, Bruce Whitehead Trophy – 3, Fly Tying – 5, Warrnambool Weekend – 4, Streamcraft day – 1, Nymph Technique days – 2, Millbrook Lake days – 4, State of Origin week at Millbrook Lakes – 7, End of Season BBQ – 1, North Island - New Zealand trip - (TBC) 7.

Other events the VFFA supports: Australian Trout Foundation Habitat days – 6, ATF Jordan Scotty boxes – 2, Talk Wild Trout Conference – 2.

Representation / Affiliation: Vic Fisheries Authority – 8, VFA Trout Advisory – 4, Snobs Creek Board – 4, ATF Council Meetings – 11, Trout Five Year Strategy – 8.

Over the past three years our members have participated in a range of external activities - planting trees, river and environmental surveys, advisory roles on Wild Trout Strategy, Trout Conference

guest speakers, and committee representation by several members (David Grisold, Cleola Anderiesz, Joanne Dobson, Terry George and Dermot O'Brien).

We have enhanced our brand by allowing non-members to access our Zoom guest speakers during the 19 months of Covid challenge.

The associated bodies that VFFA members are involved in include the Victorian Wild Trout Fish Reference Group (Dermot O'Brien, David Grisold and Terry George); the Australian Trout Foundation (Chris Gray, Joanne Dobson and Lyndon Webb); the Victorian Fisheries Authority (David Grisold, Joanne Dobson and Terry George); the Statewide Recreational Fishing Round Table (David Grisold and Terry George), The Trout Five Year Strategy (David Grisold, Joanne Dobson, Terry George, and Chris Gray); and Snobs Creek Board of Management (Dr Cleola Anderiesz). Other members involved in fisheries representative groups include Rick Dobson, Phillip Weigall, Trevor Hawkins and Trevor Stow.

Some significant personal highlights of the three years of my presidency include Tamie Fraser as guest speaker at our Annual Dinner in 2019, the Jack Ritchie Medal Award to Terry George, the many people I've fished with over the three years, the Tasmania trips in 2019 and 2020, dinners with our members and friends, the high quality guest speakers we've enjoyed over my tenure as president, the events involving fly fishers at Bairnsdale, the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers, the Warrnambool Fly Fishers, the various Australian Trout Foundation's environmental projects and Jordan Scotty trials, and of course the many opportunities to fish with members and

friends that have been special along the journey.

Our Council has had a healthy turnover of ideas whilst also preserving our character and long history. During my time as president, along with the current councillors we have had invaluable contributions from past councillors Bill Fary, Neil Vincent, Dr Marianne Wallace and Alex Evans.

There are new people joining the council in 2022. We had a broad mix of nominations from members who will support the council in maintaining the corporate knowledge we have as well as the dynamic environment that we enjoy.

Through the work Tony Mitcham has done as our treasurer our financial position remains strong, despite our limited ability to fill the coffers outside of the auctions and membership subscriptions. Our membership has continued to grow, with some younger members joining the ranks. I encourage you all to welcome our new members and cast a fly with them sometime.

Fly Lines continues to be ours and Australia's fly fishing flagship newsletter, providing members and industry colleagues wonderful insights into our fishing via the many contributors. Lyndon and Glenise Webb dedicate an enormous amount of time to compiling our monthly news and are to be commended for their work.

Whilst the VFFA is a great Victorian institution, it is the members, friends and businesses we work with who make it such a special organisation. It is their dedication, personal values, expertise and hard work that makes it so.

We have supported the ATF with volunteers to improve our fishery via the Wild Trout Five-Year

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Strategic plan (which will be released within the next two weeks), the Wild Trout Fishery Workshop, habitat restoration work, Steavenson River survey, and tree and habitat works.

Our members have also been involved with the VFA via the Trout Conferences in 2019 and 2020 and the Trout Reference Group.

We have also partnered with Casting for Recovery, Catchment Management Authorities across Victoria, and land holders and owners.

I would like to thank the following fabulous people for their support in bringing together the events throughout my term: David Grisold, Rhonda Grisold, Terry Rogers, Trevor Stow, Peter Boag, Mike and Julie Stevens, Hamish Hughes, Mark Weigall – Millbrook, the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Ray Brown, David Wakefield, Peter Hayes, Jim Jackman, Richard Garvey, Richard Kos, and Andrew Braithwaite.

Our annual auctions have been run very effectively through the efforts of Hugh Maltby, Peter Clayton, Bill Jeans and Peter Boag.

Our Fly Tying nights and Flies as Dinner donations were also successful because of the efforts of Andrew Mossman, Hubert Reichelt, Wes Betts, Robert Bailey, Geoff Bloch, John Pilkington and Rick and Jo Dobson.

Our fabulous host for our wonderful Big River weekends was John Pilkington. Our Sunday fly casting days were well organised by Joe Haslauer, Hugh Maltby, Terry Rogers and Dermot O'Brien.

Richard Garvey provided the phone message service, and Hugh Maltby and

Gordon Baker were involved in the organisation of several events.

Sadly, during my time as President some very well-known and inspirational members passed away. These included Joe Singe, Don Urquhart, Arthur King, John Philbrick, George Gamble, Greig Foletta, Peter Campbell, Julian Newton-Brown, Robert Roles, Bruce Whitehead, Rick Keam, David Featherstone, Les Robertson and David Martin.

My greatest learning as President has not been improving my casting technique or fly tying skills. It's the friendships forged through our members and the trips we enjoy together. This is highlighted in a wonderfully personal moment the Pilkington brothers shared with those on the Big River trip this year – Alan writing a song about his brother John.

It's been a great journey and one that I've enjoyed immensely. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been given this opportunity, and whilst there is a tinge of sadness in departing, the overwhelming emotion is one of gratitude to have been President of the Victorian Fly Fishers' Association for the last three years.

I'm also delighted that the prospective Council structure for 2022 will continue to uphold our values, activities and friendships.

I look forward very much to seeing you all at our Christmas Dinner in December.

In conclusion I would congratulate David Hooke as our incoming President. Since I first met David in the 'good old days' we have forged a strong friendship and have fished together. I am confident we can be optimistic about the future of the VFFA and am excited about this next chapter.



President's Message

... David Hooke

"The only constant in life is change"-
Heraclitus.

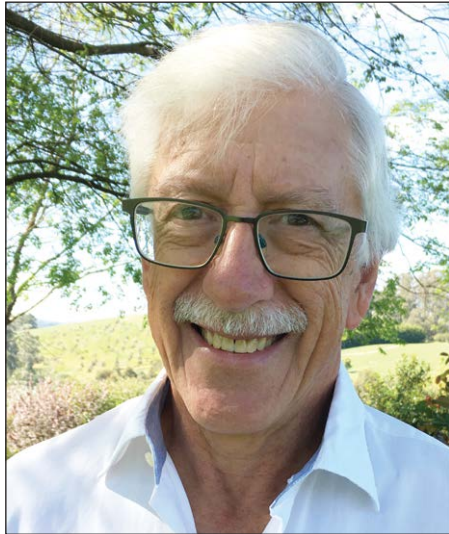
We live in turbulent times.

As I was starting to prepare this message the earth roared, the house shook and we had our worst earthquake in Victoria's history. The vision of demonstrators and police on the streets of Melbourne is reminiscent of scenes from Chinese Communist Party suppression of people in Hong Kong, rather than anything previously seen in Australia. Our Prime Minister is navigating turbulent international relations, to say the least!

And we have a new Council and a new president of the VFFA! Following on from Chris Gray who provided us with three years of capable, dependable and thoughtful leadership. His are big waders to fill and, to mix my metaphors, I hope I can do that without rocking the boat too much.

It is an absolute privilege for me to take on this position and, if I needed any reminding, it came from Jim Allen (who will be our guest speaker at the annual Christmas Dinner). At one point in a conversation I had with him he said, "When I was doing your job ..."

The distinguished past presidents of the VFFA have fostered a thriving Association, and none more so than Chris Gray, who has been at the helm through three of the most uncertain and difficult years. He leaves the presidency with the Association in a strong position. The finances are sound, the membership is growing, and there is increasing participation (when Covid allows, or on Zoom) in the smorgasbord of activities on offer.



Dr David Hooke

Recently retired, I'm now based in regional Victoria, which allowed me to spend a day at Millbrook after the regional lockdown was removed. I am hesitant to mention this to members, many of whom remain locked up in the city, but to mitigate the envy I do mention that we fished through howling gales, driving rain and a significant hail storm. Nonetheless, it was a splendid day.

I do encourage members to enrol in the VFFA Millbrook weekend scheduled for Wednesday, November 17. You will have the opportunity to fish four superb lakes, guided by a top guide. This day is excellent value.

The new Council is, I believe, a good balance of old and new; experience and a fresh perspective. We welcome Frank Gadea, Bill Jeans, Simon Joel and Daniel Lovecek and very much look forward to their input into council deliberations.

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Kevin Finn, Mike Jarvis, Dermot O'Brien, and John Pilkington are all retiring after many years of tireless service to the VFFA on council and in executive positions. The broad membership of the VFFA thanks them for their work and wise counsel over a prolonged period.

Andrew McKenzie, who has been a councillor for only a short time, is also unfortunately retiring from council due to work commitments. We wish him well and thank him for his contribution.

Tony Mitchem will soon become our longest serving Treasurer. My understanding is that he was shanghaied into the position by his uncle, Hugh Maltby. Tony accepted his fate with a good grace and has gone on to be a stalwart member of Council and guardian of our finances. Unbeknown to Tony, the rest of Council unanimously voted him an Honorary Life Member, and this was announced at the Annual General Meeting.

The Fly Tying demonstrations both at Aussie Angler and on Zoom have been enthusiastically embraced by members. Andrew Mossman gave us an absolute masterclass on Thursday, September 23. He videoed and edited his presentation beforehand, and the result was greatly appreciated by the 24 participants who logged in and watched. The flies demonstrated were the Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear, the Parachute Red Spinner, the Termite Parachute Hackle and a caddis pattern. Lively discussion ensued. Further details of these and other flies can be found in Andrew's book *My Fly-Fishing Life* available through the Association or directly from Andrew.

The government response to Covid has, as everybody is aware, caused chaos with our schedule of activities. The Annual Dinner, originally in August, was then postponed to October 1, and of course

that has now had to be cancelled. The plan now is to combine the Christmas and Annual Dinners on Friday, December 10, and our Guest Speaker, as I mentioned above, will be Jim Allen OAM. His topic will be 'Reflections on a Fly Fisherman's Fortunate Life'. As well that evening there will be presentations that would normally be part of the Annual General Meeting and, of course, the fundraising activities that would normally be part of the Annual Dinner. Covid willing, it should be a memorable evening. Don't miss it.

The October meeting will remain a Zoom meeting in compliance with the government restrictions. Our guest speaker will be Tony Stewart, who is well known to many of you. He will be taking us through his experiences fishing the Otways. These waters are renowned for being small streams in difficult country. The section on 'Barwon Catchment and Otways' in Philip Weigall's book, *Fly Fishing Western Victoria*, provides excellent background reading. This will be a Zoom Meeting on Thursday, October 21.

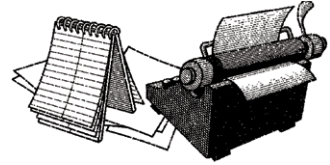
The new season barbecue at Acheron and the Red Tag Casting have both fallen foul of Covid, as has the trip to Gippsland hosted by Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers. However, we are hoping to resurrect a midweek trip to Thorpdale late in November or early December. This will be notified to members one to two weeks prior to the event, so keep a careful lookout for the friendly email from Terry Rogers.

Stay safe, get vaccinated, tie some flies, clean your lines, practise your casting and reach out to another member, particularly if you know they are navigating these turbulent times on their own.

David Hooke



From the EDITOR'S DESK



Thomas McGuane wrote a wonderful book on fly fishing called *The Longest Silence*. Here are some quotes from his introduction:

"We like to think of the idea of selective trout; it serves our anthropocentricity to believe that we are in a duel of wits with a fish, a sporting proposition. We would do well to understand that trout and other game fish are entirely lacking in sporting instincts. They would prefer to dine unmolested and without being eaten themselves."

"All salmonids must be saluted for bearing upon their collective shoulders the burden of generations of contradictory theorizing as to what they want to eat and how they are best persuaded to give up their lives and freedom."

"I tied on my favourite fly, the Adams, a pattern that exemplifies my indecisive nature. The Adams looks a little like all bugs. It's grey and speckly and a great salesman. My fly box is mainly Adamses in about eight different sizes. In the future, I mean to be a fine streamside entomologist. I'm going to start on that when I am much too old to do any of the two thousand other things I can think of that are more fun than screening insects in cold running water."

"We have reached the time in the life of the planet, and humanity's demands upon it, when every fisherman will have to be a riverkeeper, a steward of marine shallows, a watchman on the high seas. We are beyond having to put back what we have taken out. We must put back more than we take out. We must make holy war on the enemies of aquatic life as we have against gillnetters, polluters, and drainers of wetlands. Otherwise, as you have already learned, these creatures will continue to disappear at an accelerating rate. We will lose as much as we have lost already and there will be next to nothing, just remnant populations, put-and-take, dim bulbs following the tank truck."

In these days with the trout season now open and our favourite streams beckoning, we're stuck at home in lockdown. I've become so much aware that there are two categories of trout fishers in Victoria – those who live in the big city (most of us) and those fortunate enough to live in country towns where good trout streams flow nearby. In March earlier this year (a rare month when we weren't in lockdown) I helped with the ATF Ovens River Challenge at Myrtleford. After the event concluded I stayed on in Bright for a few days to fish the Ovens River and its tributary Morses

Creek. It was fabulous having such great fishing on very attractive streams just a short drive from our accommodation.

A highlight of this time was driving to Harrierville and spending an evening with VFFA Life Member Brian Eddy. Brian has the best possible fishing arrangement – the upper Ovens, loaded with trout, flows through his backyard. So, after a cup of coffee Brian and I wandered down his back lawn to the river and chucked caddis patterns at fish that were happily rising there.

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I also recall with some fondness the 10 years I lived in Warrnambool. Towards the end of winter there the sea run browns started moving up into the lower reaches of the Merri River. So on a typical Saturday the car would be washed, the groceries purchased, the lawns mowed and my daughter's netball game sorted, all by mid-afternoon. Then there were a couple of hours spare for a quick trip to the lower Merri. And the fish there were well worth the trip. My best was a touch over 5 lb, while Jim Blakeslee caught several between 6 and 7 lb, the venerable Artie Hogan landed plenty of 8 pounders, and one of our club members swore that he had hooked and subsequently lost one that was well over 10 lb (though of course fish hooked and lost can be any weight you nominate.) These were great days, and the fishing was all of 10 minutes' drive from home.

But I now live in Melbourne, like many of our members. The new river season has commenced, but we can't get to our favourite streams because of Covid driving restrictions. But as it happens my nearest trout fishing is actually quite close. Three ornamental lakes, Cogley, Hill and Suttons, are located on Stud Road in Rowville, just 5 km from where I live. Three times a year the VFA stocks these lakes with several hundred trout, and they also provide a home to roach, redfin and carp. The carp apparently run to massive sizes – up to 30 lb according to some of the serious carp anglers I've encountered there. There are also some teams of very keen redfin anglers, who are always eager to whip out their iPhones and show me pictures of their recent captures.

Both last year and this year at the opening of the trout season the VFA dropped in 20 of those monster 10 – 15 lb stonkers. There are some who are critical

of this practice, but be assured the locals love it and turn up in droves to try to land one. It's quite a spectator sport, and those connecting with one of these monsters are instant celebrities. The iPhones run hot capturing the action. According to reports one angler landed two of these stonkers last year, and fed his whole street. All the neighbours were provided with fillets.

While the lockdown this year has slowed me down, I have often headed off to these lakes and spent a half hour there. I rarely catch fish because I mostly don't bother tying on a fly. I'm there simply to grab a bit of casting practice, which I find relaxing and enjoyable in some very pleasant surrounds. But the current Covid travel restrictions have got me thinking that perhaps I should take this local fishery a lot more seriously.

So while the streams are currently inaccessible to us city folk, there are heaps of lakes, reservoirs and dams around Melbourne that are stocked with trout by the VFA. Fellow councillor Hamish Hughes tells how he recently checked out the lake at Caulfield Racecourse, and Barney Stephens admits to wetting a line at Albert Park Lake, which is well stocked. Now how close to Melbourne is that?

So in these lockdown days what trout fishing is available to us within our 15 km driving limitation? The Website link providing this information is here: <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/fish-stocking/school-holiday-trout-stocking>

Melbourne stillwaters that are stocked this year include Albert Park Lake, Casey Fields (Cranbourne), Caulfield Racecourse, Emerald Lake, Ferntree Gully Quarry, Karkarook Lake (Moorabbin), Lillydale Lake (Lilydale),

Pakenham Lake, Rowville Lakes, Roxburgh Park Lakes, Spavin Lake (Sunbury) and Yarrambat Lake.

So while it's not quite Eucumbene or those wonderful lakes near Ballarat or in Western Victoria, there are places around

Melbourne where we can still legally wet a line.

Tight lines then.

Take care and stay safe,

Lyndon



Suttons Lake at Rowville is popular with families



Report on the Annual General Meeting

Our AGM this year was again a Zoom meeting, and thus was well attended. In previous years the AGM typically saw the smallest meeting attendance for the year, but this year some 40 members logged in to see the changing of the guard.

The agenda was published in earlier issues of *Fly Lines*. Retiring President Chris Gray gave his report on the previous year's activities (published in this issue), and Treasurer Tony Mitchem gave a summation of the financial position of the Association and

recommended an Auditor for the next year.

Then there was the election of office bearers and councillors for the next 12 months. Dr David Hooke was elected as our new president, Will Davidson as our new secretary, and Bill Jeans our new librarian. We will have three other new members on Council, these being Simon Joel, Daniel Lovecek and Frank Gadea. Ongoing members include Chris Gray as Immediate Past President, Tony Mitchem as treasurer, Lyndon

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Webb as editor, and Joanne Dobson who will look after our social media. Also continuing are Terry Rogers, who does a fabulous job in his regular email notices to members, and Hamish Hughes, who has been a councillor now for many years and remains a rich source of wisdom and common sense.

Item 7 on the official AGM agenda is "To elect an Honorary Life Member if proposed". It is very pleasing to report that this year a member was proposed for Honorary Life Membership. Tony Mitchem, our long serving and very competent treasurer had been nominated. Tony has been our treasurer for close to 20 years and his Life Membership was thoroughly deserved and enthusiastically endorsed by everyone present.

Sadly five members of council, all having served for many years, have retired.

These councillors include our past secretary and web administrator Kevin Finn; past librarian John Pilkington; Mike Jarvis, who is a past president; Dermot O'Brien, whose long experience in journalism and the media has so often been extremely helpful; and Andrew McKenzie, who lives in Sydney yet despite living interstate still contributed much to our monthly council meetings.

It's somewhat concerning to see this wealth of skill and experience leaving the council. All of these retiring members have contributed consistently and incisively at meetings over many years, and their input will be missed. We all thank them for their continuous and significant contributions to the VFFA over their years on Council.



Bokspruit River in South Africa

November Meeting with Rick Dobson

The guest speaker for our November meeting will be Rick Dobson, a very loyal and supportive VFFA member, and the very friendly and approachable proprietor of the Aussie Angler tackle store.

Rick grew up on the banks of the Goulburn River and fished the Acheron and surrounds as a lad. He is now a highly skilled and experienced angler who has fished top locations all over the world.

Rick has been in the tackle trade for the past 45 years and has a passion for all fishing, though can most commonly be found wandering a creek or river with a fly rod in hand. As a fly fisher his approach is to keep it simple, from gear choice to fly design.

While he has been hosting trips around the globe for the past 30 years, our beautiful Victorian waters continue to draw his attention and passion.

Join Rick as he chats about “fishing stuff”.



Rick has encountered some magnificent fish

The Annual Thorpdale Trip

In October we usually have an annual trip to Thorpdale as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishing Club. The club stocks browns and rainbows into a number of dams on local farms, and the Latrobe Valley members act as our guides, showing us the best of what they have. Local members have caught browns up to 9 lb in some of the dams.

The Latrobe Valley members also provide a magnificent barbecue lunch for their visitors. If you haven't been before then

this really is a highly recommended day out.

Unfortunately, this year's October trip was cancelled because of Covid restrictions. But Hamish Hughes is negotiating with the Latrobe Valley members in an effort to find a possible alternative date sometime between now and Christmas. If this can be arranged then Terry Rogers will email members with details of an alternative date.



Frank Kappl connected with this superb brown in one of the Thorpdale dams

The Christmas Dinner with Jim Allen

This year's Annual Dinner was to be in August. But the Covid lockdown restrictions forced us to abandon this date. So our Annual Dinner, always a highlight in the VFFA program, was re-scheduled for October.

But again Covid intervened. Fortunately, our guest speaker Jim Allen has been very flexible and obliging and has agreed to be guest speaker at our December Christmas Dinner. Let's keep our fingers crossed for this date.

Jim has been a very popular and entertaining speaker on so many previous VFFA events. We can look forward to



Jim checking his fly box (FlyLife photo, used with permission)

hearing him now – in December, when he plans to speak on the topic: "Reflections on a Fly Fisherman's Fortunate Life"

This will be a fabulous opportunity to hear one of our best, so mark it in your diary – Friday, December 10.

The official invitation to attend, giving details on costs and times, will be emailed out in late October to all members by Terry Rogers.



Jim had a top day at Lake Fergus many years ago

Millbrook Lakes – November Visit

The VFFA has four visits to Millbrook Lakes each year, and many of our members have enjoyed this experience. The lakes we fish are very attractive and well-stocked, and our past visits have been thoroughly enjoyable. We are very grateful to Mark Weigall for arranging this opportunity for us.

The future dates for our current season's visits are November 17, January 12 (2022 - subject to no extreme weather), and March 9 (2022).



Jon Kenfield enjoyed success at Millbrook



Visitors at Millbrook have the opportunity to fish with some highly skilled guides

The popularity of these visits was amply demonstrated when Terry Rogers advertised the recent September visit. All available places were filled by applicants as soon as his email advertising the invitation was sent out.

Unfortunately the September visit was cancelled because of Covid restrictions.

However, depending on changes to Covid restrictions scheduled for November 5, the November visit may still go ahead. If this is the case then details will be emailed to members by Terry Rogers after November 5.

Young Talent Time

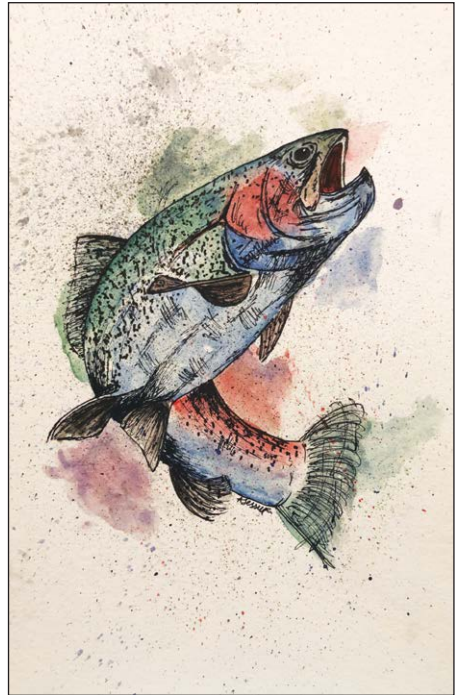
The artwork shown here was produced by Amber Jessup, the talented granddaughter of member James Carter. It was painted as a father's day gift for James earlier this year. As James says: "Naturally I think it's very good, but then I am unashamedly biased."

Amber has more than a little association with trout, as her other grandfather is the trout fishing guide, John Killip, from Nimmitabel in NSW. John is now retired and living in Cooma.

For those who have forgotten, Nimmitabel is a small town in the Monaro region in south-east New South Wales. It is on top of the range almost midway between Canberra and the coast. Many of our members will be familiar with John and Margaret Killip. They owned and ran the Nimmitabel Motel.

Both John and Margaret come from the Isle of Man. After arriving in Australia John worked for IBM in Sydney, but his love of fishing took over. So they moved to Nimmitabel where John did the trout guiding while Margaret and their two daughters, Jo and Chrissy, did the chores and cooking.

Chrissy is James Carter's Brisbane-based daughter-in-law, and her daughter Amber is the artist. James tells us, "she is a



Amber's magnificent artwork – a great gift for a fly fishing grandfather

charming and intelligent young lady, who loves horse riding, as does her mother."

John, though retired, spends a lot of his time on the Thredbo River these days.

Thank you Amber.

Two Fabulous Tassie Trips

There are two trips to Tasmania for members in February next year, which we advertise now in the hope that Covid restrictions in both Victoria and Tasmania will allow them to proceed.

Jon Kenfield has negotiated with the managers at Currawong Lakes private fishery for VFFA members to spend a week there from Sunday, February 6, to Saturday, February 12. Currawong is a stunning fishery not far from Lake Leake. There are three lakes there in delightful Tasmanian countryside, and all three lakes are well stocked with browns and rainbows and provide superb stillwater fishing. The price for this week will be about \$1,250 per person, and this includes accommodation in modern comfortable cabins.

More details will be published in future newsletters, but in the meantime

members interested in being included in the group (and numbers are limited) can email Jon at solutionist999@gmail.com.

Immediately following the week at Currawong we have our traditional week at Hayes on Brumby's. This week of fishing will commence on Saturday, February 12, and conclude on Saturday, February 19. This trip has been a fixture in our annual calendar for many years and remains very popular. The event co-ordinator for this event is Chris Gray. A number of members have already indicated their intention to join this trip, but there are a few places still available. Again, more details will be given in the November newsletter, but members keen to make inquiries about this traditional VFFA trip can email Chris on chris@graysmail.com.au.



Waiting for the evening rise



The top lake at Currawong offers fabulous fishing in great surroundings



The top end of this lake looks very fishy

Tasmanian Fishing Report

... from Chris Wisniewski, Tasmania Inland Fisheries Service

The rainbow trout spawning run started in line with Spring at Liawenee. The fish were trapped, counted, and 200 were weighed and measured. This has allowed the population to be monitored over time. The adult rainbows are then moved into the Zig Zag spawning channels developed by Dr Rob Sloane and Dr Peter Davies back in the early 1980's. These Zig Zag channels are designed to provide the ideal flow and spawning habitat away from where the earlier run of brown trout has occurred. This ensures that as the rainbow trout ova begin to hatch in November, the young fry are not competing with the more advanced brown trout fry. This approach has provided a stable population of wild rainbow trout in yingina/Great Lake.

For the second year we transferred 25 pairs of fecund adult rainbow trout to the upper Meander River, above Lake Huntsman, in an attempt to get them to spawn naturally and provide a population of wild rainbows in this water. This will provide not only a benefit to this fishery, but also another source of wild rainbow trout if they become established.



Wild adult rainbow trout were released into the Meander River above Huntsman Lake



Martin Droz with a Woods Lake brown trout

September has been a typically windy month. Rainfall has been about or above average, and lakes and streams are high. When I asked around IFS staff for fishing information the general response was "where isn't fishing well at the moment!"

Little Pine Lagoon was spilling over the dam for most of August, but dropped away to a fishable level in September. Despite being bleak at times, there have been lots of fish tailing on the back shore. A small green nymph or stick caddis fished inert has brought a few unstuck.

Bronte Lagoon has also been fishing well. Early and late in the day brown trout have been tailing in the flooded snow grass. There have been lots of small black 'corby' grubs drifting in the water from the grass and the trout have been eager to take either wet or dry imitations.

Woods Lake is rising slowly after a lot of water was released from it >>>

last summer. Fish have been tailing on the grassy edges. These fish are fat and some large fish have been caught.

Lake King William is filling quickly. It has now pushed through the three metre below full mark, and this puts the lake at the perfect level going into October for tailing fishing. Fish will move in onto the flat areas of the bays at the northern end of the lake near Derwent Bridge and will tail in dull light conditions. On overcast days this can happen all day. A small nymph will get some interest.

Lake Echo continues to rise onto new ground and the browns are starting to move in on the grassy edges. The water is clear and the fish are easy to polaroid. As it warms through spring there will no doubt be plenty of backs and tails evident, particularly early and late in the day. The lake will continue to rise as the power station refurbishment work is planned to continue until the New Year.

The first mayflies have been spotted at Four Springs Lake. The lake is full to the brim and the fish are in around the

edges. Hatches should be in full swing in coming weeks. Let the fun begin.

With high levels the water has been quite murky at Lake Leake. This hasn't stopped the fish from grabbing a Woolly Buzzer fished blind. As would be expected the fish have been in close around the flooded edges. Fortunately the water is now beginning to clear in time for springtime dry fly action.

In between flood events the whitebait have provided some exciting fishing in the tidal zone of the bigger rivers. The River Derwent and Mersey River have both been fishing well, as have many of the smaller rivers. A bow wave and a shower of bait is the clear giveaway. The fish position themselves in prime ambush spots and wait for the bait to pass through. With patience and accurate, pinpoint casting anglers find that these fish will take an imitation stripped across their noses.

Most of the coastal rivers will fish well over the next couple of months as the weather settles.



Nick Taransky is now in New Zealand

Well, after talking about it for a few years now, Miri and I have finally made it to New Zealand. Contrary to most assumptions, the move was for love rather than fishing! Miri, a Taranaki girl by birth, decided that 35 years in Australia was enough, and that the time had come to return home. When I anxiously asked her if "I could come too", I was relieved to receive the reply in the affirmative.

Of course, no angler in their right mind would complain about a move to New Zealand. But I absolutely maintain that I love the Australian fishery just as much. I do hope to get back on a regular basis,

including running my rod-making classes on an annual basis from Peter Hayes's lodge in Tasmania.

Making it here was a relief, given the current world travel situation. Even more of a relief was to be re-united with my 250 culms of Tonkin and Madake bamboo, which made it through the NZ Customs/ quarantine process without a hitch. My fly tying materials endured a bit more of a rocky ride. Despite being in commercial packets, and clearly labelled, all my declared hackle capes and other materials were intercepted for fumigation. Plus some interesting questions such as: "What species of seal did my dubbing

come from... ?" Still a \$600 processing ransom got everything over the line and delivered here in good shape.

Our plan was to rent or just travel for a while on our arrival to determine exactly where to take root. We spent a few weeks in a Maui Camper, and purchased a 1967 Airstream Globetrotter Caravan (Christened "Nugget") that will be our "home away from home" for New Zealand adventures when it's fully restored.

It was a little sobering to see that the New Zealand house market was even more insane than back home in NSW. But in our travels we stumbled on a quirky property, directly overlooking the Hautapu River, on the edge of Taihape. Originally built as the local Deer Stalkers Hall, it was purchased and renovated by the Jehovah's Witnesses, and then converted to a Women's Gym by a local strongman celebrity. Like the caravan it's a bit of a project, being basically one large

room, with a kitchenette, two showers and no less than three toilets. (Yes, one may well become a fly fishing library). The Taihape community has been incredibly welcoming and we are already feeling very much at home here.

My workshop will be run from two shipping containers - one for storage of bamboo and other tools, and another as the workshop, complete with power, insulation and windows overlooking the river. I'm really excited about expanding my range of rods to suit local conditions here, including some longer, hollow built models and two-handed trout Speys. The plan is to clad the shipping containers to make them more presentable. I thought maybe a trout pattern theme, but Miri has something more stylish in mind I think.

The river itself here holds a good population of browns. Running though Papa it colours up after rain, but clears well enough to polaroid fish after a dry spell. The season is not yet open, but I've



The river view from the Taransky's kitchen window

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enjoyed watching fish while sipping on my morning lockdown coffee. I've grown quite attached to the home stretch "pets", so time will tell if I will be able to educate them once the season opens. Aside from Hautapu, the Rangitikei is only a few minutes down the road, plus all of the southern Ruapehu streams. And Turangi is only an hour up the road.

Believe it or not, as a dry fly stream angler I've never felt the call of the Tongariro or winter fishing. But that may change! So I don't think I'll need to spend too much time fishing on the back doorstep. It will make a great



*Kawatsura Rod and Reel from Fly Fish Craft Japan
– superb quality fly fishing gear*

laboratory though. The other week, local angler (and man of many talents) Angus Gordon, took me on an EPA sampling session, where we took and sent off a Hautapu water sample for DNA analysis. It will return a report on every animal, including insects, that lives or poops in the watershed. Fascinating stuff!

Lockdown has been a really good opportunity to get started on the renovation plans, the garden, and working on my website, which has needed an overhaul for some time. The new one is coming soon - www.taranskybamboo.com - same name as the old one but without the .au at the end).

I've also been working with my friend Tomonori Bill Higashi on a new website featuring Japanese Fly Tackle Artisans - Fly Fish Craft Japan www.ffcraftjapan.com

Hopefully though we are out of lockdown soon and after some time on the water I may have some actual fishing to report on!

Best Regards, Nick Taransky

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2021 Newsletter of the Kydra-Kybeyan Branch, Monaro Acclimatization Society

... from Rod Whiteway, Secretary

(This article is an excerpt of a much longer newsletter written by Rod. It is included here with permission.)

Hello once again friends, I hope this Newsletter finds you well. But if you are feeling at all low because of events out of our control, I hope that news of a recovering Monaro Fishery will lift your spirits.

Seasonal Conditions

The Monaro fishery is not back to its best yet, but rain, particularly over autumn and early winter, has finally broken the drought and there is some fishing in some streams. You will see that we had 1101

mm of rain in the year up until July this year, the highest annual amount that I have recorded at Kydra since the 1195 mm in the first year of recording, 1988-89. But rainfall over the previous four years was well below average, and this had a lingering effect on stream recovery. Rainfall was about the same in the first six months as the last, but most fell in late winter and early spring 2020, and a tapering off over summer saw streams struggling again.

Finally though, good rain this autumn and early winter, some as snow, accompanied by cooler temperatures, saw groundwater levels rise to the point where paddocks became saturated, allowing stream levels to be maintained high between rain events. Things can change quickly of course, and not always for the better, but a couple of things give me hope for an extended period of trout-friendly conditions. Firstly, the Bureau of Meteorology has forecast above average rainfall for spring/early summer in our region. Also, but less to be relied on, the other times we have had 1000 mm, the following four to five years have seen reasonable rainfall as well. Recent events also give cause for optimism. After a dry eight weeks from mid-June we received nearly 100 mm late August, and it is raining heavily as I write this in early September.

The other climate factor effecting trout is temperature. Last year, by my reckoning at least, we saw less debilitating heatwave conditions than in the previous drier years. Unfortunately, with climate change higher air and water temperatures will be the norm in future. The Monaro and its trout are resilient, but MAS recognises the threat posed by increased temperatures, and is working with NSW Fisheries to locate temperature loggers in Monaro streams. These were put out late last February, with two going into each

of the Kybeyan, Kydra, Maclaughlin and Bobundara rivers.

We downloaded data from them recently, and while six months data is of limited value it was enlightening to note how quickly water temperature responds to outside influences, for example how temperatures can vary from day to night, and how quickly a snow storm lowered temperatures. We have not yet had a chance to log air temperatures against water temperatures to see how responsive they are, but that will be interesting to see. We have been assured that the data collected will not be used to rule out streams as suitable for trout, but rather to allow us, in conjunction with our local knowledge, to adjust the timing and location of stocking in streams.

Stocking and Spawning

It is important to understand where and when fish have been stocked because it bears directly on where and when there will be fishable fish. While I covered the 2019-20 stockings in last year's newsletter, it is worthwhile reiterating that no fish went into the areas of the Bobundara or Maclaughlin that we normally stock. This means that at the start of last season there were, for practical purposes, no fish in these waters. Fisheries carried out the stocking in the Kybeyan and Kydra on our behalf in February, as they said that they had to get the fish out quickly because of the threat of high water temperatures in the hatchery. The brown trout fingerlings were all put around the Kydra bridge and the Kybeyan crossing. I believe that many of these have survived in the Kydra, and an electro-fishing survey by Fisheries in the Kybeyan last season found at least one of these fish already around 40 cm.

Last season stocking stepped up as water levels improved. Fisheries in October last year had a lot of >>>

rainbow yearlings left in the hatchery and offered them to us. They were around 15 cm and we stocked them right through the Golden Mile in the Kybeyan and downstream from Tracey's in the Kydra. By April they were around 40 cm long and provided good fishing in the late autumn.

In November 2,000 brown fry went into the top of the Kydra and another 2,000 into the mid-section of the Maclaughlin. These should reach catchable size later this coming season. Finally, we were able to carry out our annual stocking of 4,000 brown fingerlings in March spread fairly evenly over the four streams. These also should provide angling by the end of the coming season, maybe earlier in the Maclaughlin and Bobundara if they have survived.

I checked only the Kybeyan and Kydra for spawning. Flows were perfect, but spawning was poor, confirming low numbers of large fish. But I found four spawning redds in the Kydra (none in 2019-20) - three above my place and one on Rob Edwards place, confirming that some fish survived the drought. In the Kybeyan I could only find one possible redd in the usual spawning area above the TSR upstream of the causeway. This was not good and supported the need for restocking to restore the fishery.

What will be interesting this spring is whether any of the rainbows that were stocked last October spawn this spring. They will only be 2 years old, but I understand that it is possible for rainbows to spawn at this age. (Late news 15/8 - I found three new spawning redds in the Kydra above my home pool. A bit late for browns, so could they have been rainbows?)

Future Threats

The United Nations recently released their report outlining the accelerated rate of global warming. The threat from climate change is overwhelming, threatening humanity, or at least humanity as we know it. The report confirms all the fears I have harboured for many years, that even if the world gets serious about addressing warming it is probably too late to escape serious disruption. Unlike Covid there is no Australian political commitment and limited international commitment to addressing the issue. As anglers and outdoors recreators you know what is at stake here. The only way that Governments will seriously address climate change is if public concern is such that it affects the ballot box. I urge you all to take every opportunity to make your concerns known.

Fishing Tales

A memorable local outing last season was on the Kydra. I was lucky to be there just after a rain event, and the river was the perfect height, high and still clear. I could have fished a nymph but from experience I knew that a black Woolly Bugger fished across and down would do the trick. As I have mentioned before, when the river rises big fish move out of the major pools to feed in the runs upstream on items dislodged by the flood. The first run I fished is one that I have had a lot of success in before. Halfway down a small creek/soak comes in from the side opposite me. Just below this, the flow from the main stream and the creek compresses against the bank which has a shallow undercut.

The idea is to cast the Woolly Bugger just above the creek inflow, facilitate a natural drift and straighten the leader just as the fly hits the undercut. I was rewarded with a huge boil and a hook up. After a dogged fight I landed a fish closer to 6

lb than 5, a beautifully conditioned hook jawed male. I continued down and in the next run I landed one of the 40 cm rainbows and missed another good fish.

By know I was down to the main pool, and the run in has always been productive under these conditions. But it can be hard to fish downstream as the current comes to the caster's bank and it is hard to avoid drag out of the slower current further across. Yes, I could swap sides, but the other side is full of wombat holes and I am not getting any younger. There was nothing in the first 20 metres, but where the current slowed slightly I managed by some judicious mending to get a good drift, and as the fly straightened just 3 - 4 metres below me it was snatched by a good fish of around 3 lb which I saw roll on the surface. Unfortunately it came off.

Below this the flow slowed significantly and didn't look as promising, but I figured that there could be a fish lurking there where the food dropped out of the slowing current. And this proved to be the case as on the third cast I hooked up with another leviathan. This fish was in great condition and if anything, heavier than the first. This was a fantastic session and confirmed what I had suspected - the Kydra's capacity to retain fish during the worst of droughts.

Growing Old

Many of you know that growing old is not much fun. Apart from seeming to stumble over every tussock and falling into every wombat hole when fishing, more disturbing is the loss of fishing companions. This, sadly, is happening regularly to me now.

Just recently friend and fishing companion and Kydra/Kybeyan member Bob Roles died. Bob was one of the best anglers I have met and a Monaro

aficionado. He first visited the Monaro back in the late 1960s with his mate Jim Allen of Compleat Angler fame. They lived, according to Bob, on Mars Bars and potato chips. I find this amusing because later on Bob became a super cook, particularly around the campfire.

Anyway, while he had adventures in Tasmania and later in life New Zealand, the Monaro remained his first love and he visited regularly, often with a group of other Victorian anglers all of whom I knew or got to know. Bob loved visual fishing and working out difficult fish. Whereas other anglers might move on to something easier, Bob dug in and was usually successful in landing the fish.

He was a great caster and had superb intuitive trout spotting skills. He was also a keen communicator on piscatorial matters, and renowned for sorting someone out from the pack around the campfire after a few red wines and talking well into the morning. He also loved a long telephone conversation and was a great letter writer. I have kept many of his letters and will reread them. And I am still expecting the phone to ring and Bob to be on the other end with something to discuss about fishing or friends. Bob was well read in angling classics and very traditional, and also idiosyncratic, generous, and great company on the water or around the campfire. I extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife Murene and daughter Ella .

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Some Recent Reports

Rob Barford has been at Thornton

I fished the Goulburn a few weeks ago, Thursday to Saturday, then hit some twigwater with my new silk lines to cast through my new 5-weight cane stick. 'Heaven on a Stick' is a phrase already coined, but despite 10 mm hailstones falling I enjoyed a nice session, catching five trout in a 90 minute session before the rain became totally unpleasant.

I also caught five big rainbows, hatchery pigs (or stonkers), fishing the Goulburn. I met up with an acquaintance, Donovan Wilson, who had been fishing since 7:00 am and had already grassed nine such fish. They actually put up quite a tussle, so I can only imagine what it would have been like had they possessed full tails instead of the eroded ones they sport from having been raised in concrete channels.

They seem to exhibit typical hatchery behaviour - hanging around in pods and exhibiting strong competition for the fly (food). I was busted off on 6 lb, then 8 lb, then 10 lb tippet before tying on some 12 lb Maxima. Then I started netting them. I agonised for several minutes with the first one in the net release or kill? What would they taste like if I killed one, or all of them? Not so well I suspect, given their diet before entering the river.

I am at odds with the VFA over this issue - this annual dumping of seven tonnes of

ex-brood stock into the river, as it creates chaos for the wild trout. These huge fish bully wild trout out of the prime feeding and sheltering lies and basically out-compete them for available food. I watched as a group of a dozen of these fish chasing some sizeable browns away from where they usually sit. The browns fled of course, being far smaller than these monster rainbows which weighed nearly 10 lb (4.7 kg).

I have two more new silk lines en route from the maker in Western China. They should arrive in a couple of weeks. Double Taper lines in 4 and 5 weights. They sit nicely on my old Hardy LRH reels - almost as if the reels were made for them.

On Friday I was surprised at the number of grey stoneflies on the wing. There were plenty around. Then in the late afternoon I saw quite a few caddis on the wing. Very surprising to see them out this early in the season. I didn't see any trout responding to their presence, though I



Rod's fly tying bench – he's been busy recently



Well done Rod – a top rainbow

suspect a drifted pupa would have been a good bet.

After catching those big hatchery fish I needed some better fishing, so moved to some broken fast water to swing some wets. I was in wet fly mode, swinging an Alexandra and a Bloody Mary across the still turbid water. Two smallish browns hit the Alexandra hard. I caught the two browns on successive casts. Then my space was invaded by a group of very loud and ignorant hardware hurlers, so I retreated to my car for a hot cuppa.

Cheers, Rod B

John Douglas – a brief report on Thornton

Hi Lyndon, the fishing up here has been really good. The smaller streams have had decent early season flows and are fishing well. Nymphs are best but I still find fish are taking a dry. The Goulburn has cleared after the opening weekend rains and has been quite productive, especially on evening with a lot of fish up providing some excellent dry fly fishing.

There are also those larger recently released rainbows about for those who want to chase them. There are also plenty of brown and rainbows of various sizes about too.

John Douglas

Brian Eddy – reporting on the north-east

There is still not a lot to report up here. The Ovens is still too fast for anything other than odd isolated spots where I can sometimes encounter an old foe.

Down at the Hume there are some very big fish (6-7-8 lb) coming from below the spillway, which generally happens when the lake is full. Some very nice fish being caught in the lake as well, but virtually all are from trolling or very heavy (lead) lures below the wall.

Brian Eddy



Brian Eddy is very familiar with the Ovens River, and the photo below shows him connecting with a lively brown



Jim Blakeslee – a Western District report

One of our new Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club members, Graeme Hay, had a day on Purrumbete with me earlier this week. He caught a 1.5 kg Chinook and then a 3.33 kg brown on a Green Matuka – both were his first salmonids on a fly. He was very happy.

One of our other members, Kurt Nessler, sent a photo showing what can be done if you grow your own. He says, "Our rainbows have grown from fry to 1,100 gram and 39 cm in a little under 12 months. Really full as ticks and like steelhead - fast and furious." >>>



This photo, taken in 1977, shows Jim Blakeslee demonstrating his considerable fly tying skills to some very attentive Warrnambool club members

This week I hope to get the boat into the Gellibrand River to see if I can find a few Estuary Perch.

Cheers, Jimbo

Frank Kappl at Thorpdale is reporting on those Thorpdale dams

I hope all is well for you there in lockdown. I had my first outing yesterday after three weeks. The weather was fair and the water a bit dirty, but I still managed two fish, both rainbows. One was 4.5 lb and the other 4.0 lb. It must be very difficult for you there in Melbourne. As soon as you get the go give me a ring and we can organise a day. I will put your name on a couple of fish 🍷

Frank



Warrnambool member Graeme Hay with the 3.33 kg (7 lb) brown he caught at Purrumbete recently

Trout Regulations – a Timely Reminder

Philip Weigall emailed us recently. He is concerned that photos, particularly on Facebook, suggest that many anglers are not aware of the current trout regulations, or worse – just ignoring them.

Philip says, “I wonder if a little Vic fishing regulations reminder might be

timely as regional areas come out of lockdown and the stream season gets underway. Looking at pictures generally on Facebook, etc, indicate that perhaps not all anglers know some of the rules as well as they should.”

So here is Philip’s reminder:

For all streams, although the bag limit is generally 5 fish, only two of those can be over 35cm.

The limits are tighter on the Owens above Porepunkah, the Nariel above Colac Colac bridge, the Mitta above Lake Dartmouth, and the Rubicon. On these waters, the bag limit is three trout, with a minimum size of 25 cm, and only two of those can be over 35 cm.

And at Hepburn Lagoon, anglers must release any trout under 45 cm, and can only keep three over that length.

There are many more regulations, but with the general drift back towards catch & kill, I'm seeing the above regulations in particular being flouted. And these are enforceable regulations, not optional guidelines.

Details on all current regulations are here: Trout and salmon specific regulations - VFA

Take care and I hope Melbourne is set free soon!

Philip

Photographing Flies

... from Rick Wallace. Rick has recently confronted the challenge of taking better photos of flies. Here are some of his discoveries.

During the pandemic I have been doing more fly tying than usual, and I have had the time to take some photos of the flies I've tied. In the early phase the results were terrible. I was shooting pics with my iPhone, with no additional light sources, and getting dreadful results. Hardly a surprise!

So I did a bit of research and came with the following system to take presentable macro photos of my flies. I surprised myself by both the outcome and how enjoyable it is.

I will preface this piece by saying I am not a skilled photographer by any means. Secondly, it did involve the purchase of some gear, and thirdly, while I am happy with the results, the images I produced are not professional quality.

I think it is worth sharing what I learned though, as it generated a massive improvement for me (albeit off a low base) and it may be beneficial to other members.



The macro setup brings out the details and colors in this Parachute Adams

1. I made sure I had enough lights

I could see early on that taking pictures of the flies inside without additional light sources was going to hold me back. I tried using natural light by shooting near windows and during the day, but the results were poor. So I went and bought some relatively bright LED lights with a global head mounted on a >>>

flexible neck to aid with repositioning. I used two of these (one each side) as I was doing my photography under a down light. An obvious advantage of having good lighting is that I could take my photos at night, when I do a lot of my fly tying.

2. I made a lightbox

The lights helped a lot, but the images were still not what I wanted. The light was quite harsh, and sometimes reflections off the eye of the hook or bright materials would cause some flare in the images. So the next step was to use a lightbox.

I made the lightbox by taking a wine carton and cutting panels out of the right-hand and left-hand sides, as well as the top, and covering these with baking paper. I also lined the interior with white copy paper. (You can equally buy a lightbox for a relatively modest outlay).

You then need to position the three lights so they shine straight through the baking paper towards the centre of the lightbox. So again, one light shining down on the top and the two others from the sides.

The lightbox solved the issues I had with lighting - it ensured the fly as the focus of the image is bathed in a soft, diffused light emanating from a range of angles. The resulting images have the potential to be crystal clear as well as being smooth and balanced.

3. I got an appropriate colour/tone backdrop

I had been using blue and green backdrops as they are relatively common when you look through images of flies. I'd organised this by inserting cardboard in these colours resting against the back of the lightbox.

But I wasn't happy with the results. I found the brighter the green or blue,

the more it distracted the eye from the fly, and the real pastel shades looked anaemic. The answer for me was to use granular grey cardboard as the backdrop. I preferred this to pure white or any other colour.



The neutral gray backdrop helps make even a plain fly such as the Scintilla (or Antron) Stick Caddis look nice

4. I purchased a much better camera

While my results were improving, I had reached the limits of my "camera". I'd been using my trusty iPhone camera - not the greatest piece of kit in the iPhone 8.

So I did some research on cameras, looking at models with good macro capacity. However, all these involved expensive lenses and lacked versatility. If I am going to spend \$1,500 on a camera I want it to come fishing with me and take good medium and long-range shots as well as close-ups. After lots of back and forth on this, I settled on the Canon G1X Mark III. Why this choice?

It is compact, it has a decent zoom range with a single non-detachable lens (24-72mm). It shoots video, and allows you to record videos of yourself with the flip-out fully articulating LCD. You can mount

an external flash on it, and you can screw filters on to the lens.

The only feature that I really wanted and which it doesn't have is an external mic socket, but I find for video recording the built-in mic is good in quiet areas, and you can always use a lapel mic and your iPhone for recording separate audio, then splice the tracks together afterwards.

Using this camera took things up a notch, but off the bat the results were not good. I was still getting dull images that were slightly out of focus even with this great bit of kit. There was one more crucial step...

5. I bought a \$50 filter/lens set for macro images

This set of four Hoya filters allows you to apply magnification of between two and four times to make the camera work more effectively for macro work. I use the 4X filter, which screws on to the front of the retractable lens replacing the protective filter. That allows me to get much closer

to the fly without affecting the focus or the lighting of the image.

Taking photos with this set-up

a) Standard fly in vise shot:



Bright colors are particularly strong with a macro set up.

With the filter fitted I usually position the camera on my tripod at the mouth of the light box with the fly sitting in the vise towards the back of the light box. The distance between the lens and the fly is about 20 cm. With the lens zoomed



The filter itself makes for an attractive prop for some images

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out, the image of the fly fills the screen. The focus remains pin sharp and the colours look beautiful in front of the grey backdrop.



Sometimes just the angle the fly sits on makes for an interesting image



Having a long object in the image and using aperture priority helps narrow the depth of field and blur the background

With the basic method sorted, I experimented with some more artistic images of flies with the grey backdrop sitting on the bottom of the lightbox and flies sitting on it. Usually I use some sort of prop - either one of the spare filters, a bobbin, hair stacker or something else to make a pleasing visual arrangement.

Then I used aperture mode setting on the camera to reduce the depth of field and blur the background. The results here can be eye-catching images that are different to the usual pictures of flies.

With some flies I found that the way they sit naturally on the backdrop provides a plain image with no props that is more eye-catching. It is early days and I am still experimenting, but I am already thrilled with the improvement in image quality I am getting.

For those looking to improve the images they take of their flies, I'd really recommend this set up. If you already have a good camera then this set up can be put together very cheaply with an outlay of \$100 or so if you build the lightbox yourself.

It is not always necessary to buy a camera either. With more modern smart phones having far more capable cameras than my old iPhone you may be able to avoid the outlay of a new camera by using your phone's camera with some sort of tripod. Really the magic is in the lighting, and provided your phone can maintain focus with an image of a fly that fills the screen, you will still get great results.



The deep colors in a peacock feather show up nicely in the light box

Incidentally I made a quick YouTube video of how I set all equipment this up. (Editor: the YouTube video is very helpful and clarifies all that Rick has done. The link for the YouTube video is: <https://youtu.be/B1m6ywCwUzc>)



FLY OF THE MONTH

... Geoff Bloch's Reverse Hackle Parachute Dun



Reverse hackle flies are not new, as a quick check on Google reveals. However, we have not previously featured this style of fly in our Fly of the Month column, and Geoff Bloch's Zoom presentation on Thursday, August 26, showing how he ties his Reverse Hackle Dry Fly drew a large and clearly very interested audience.

Geoff showed us his fly box and it was packed tightly with countless examples of just this fly. It's certainly Geoff's favourite. He said: "Below you will find a photo of my fly box, which is really the only box I take with me on the stream. As you can see, this fly is the only pattern in my box".

But first, why depart from standard practice and tie flies with the tail fibres tied in at the eye of the hook and the wings and hackles tied in over the barb?

Geoff explains: "I fish the fly usually in sizes 12 and 14 (though it can obviously be tied in any size), and usually black, but sometimes brown or red. I think that it is the silhouette of the fly and its remarkable floating ability which are its most important characteristics. If I had to make an educated guess based on fishing this fly for almost 40 years, I would say that these are the significant advantages this fly has over a conventionally tied parachute dun:

First, the silhouette. From below the fish does not see an ugly heavy bit of curved metal and barb emerging from the slender abdomen of the fly, as is the case with a conventionally tied parachute hackle where the setae are tied in at the bend of the hook instead of at the eye (as I do).

Secondly – Flotation. Because the hackle is tied over the hook bend rather than over the eye, the heaviest part of the hook - the bend - has the most flotation support. This is not the case in a conventionally tied dry fly where most flotation support is at the eye, which is the lightest part of the hook.

This tie therefore also enables much more realistic, slender, setae to be tied in to mimic a natural fly, whereas a conventional parachute pattern often has a thick tail to aid in flotation of the heavy hook bend.

I only ever tie this pattern on an up-eye hook - for two reasons. First, because I think it looks more realistic as the hook eye does not protrude below the surface film, as is the case with a down-eye hook. Secondly, because the up-eye feature makes separating the tail fibres very easy, as it is a natural divider of these fibres (see the photo).

A subsidiary advantage of the pattern (which I admit is speculative) is that when cast upstream, the fly falls exactly as the natural usually sits on the water, namely head pointing upstream and the setae pointing downstream.

This fly is quick and easy to tie and extremely robust. Although the fly looks delicate, it can be tied with thicker tying silk which is used to construct the body as well as to tie in materials.

The only materials needed are setae material (I use elk mane or synthetic points); heavy tying silk; wing post material (I use polypropylene); and a reasonable quality hackle feather. Because the fly is supported by the length of the fibres rather than by the tips, grade #1 material is not essential.

Materials for Geoff's Reverse Hackle Dry Dun:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Hook: | An up-eye dry fly hook in sizes 12 or 14, with 12 the most popular size. (Up-eye hooks are now getting hard to obtain. However Kamasan 440 or Black Magic Upturned Eye Dry Fly hooks are still readily available). |
| Thread: | Black 6/0. (Though Geoff ties them in red and brown too) |
| Tail: | Elk Mane fibres or synthetic points – Tiewell Microfibetts in the appropriate colour. |
| Wing Post: | White polypropylene. |
| Body: | Tying thread. |
| Hackle: | Black or brown cock |

Tying Procedure:

1. Put the hook in the vice and run a line of tying thread down to the bend and back again to the eye.
2. Tie in the tail fibres so they are evenly spread on each side of the hook. (The up-eye hook helps this.) There are two extra techniques for facilitating this spread. Tie a small spherical knot of tying thread right behind the eye so that as the tail fibres are tied in with turns of thread progressively closer to the eye the tail fibres are forced out wide at an angle to the hook shank by this knot. Conversely, tie in the tail fibres so that they point more or less straight back and are parallel at the rear of the fly. Then take a loop of tying thread that goes down between the hook shank and the tail fibres on one side, then under the hook shank and back up on the other side between the shank and the other

side tail fibres. Pull this loop of thread back towards hook bend and it should force the tail fibres to spread. Tie the loop in with the tying thread, then cut away the waste.

3. Wind turns of the tying thread to build up the body, which should be a bit thicker towards the hook bend.
4. Tie in a white polypropylene wing that stands up vertically from the shank.
5. Prepare the hackle feather and tie in the cleared hackle feather stem so that it is tied in firmly up the wing a short distance. Add a drop of superglue at this point to strengthen the base of the wing and hackle feather.
6. Wind the feather down the wing in close turns, then make three or four firm turns of thread around the wing to tie in the hackle securely.
7. Cut off the waste hackle feather, then a few drops of super glue to about 2 cm of the tying thread and then make three or four more turns around the wing to finish the fly.
8. Cut the wing to the right length.

(A possible variation from the editor: Geoff recommends Elk Mane fibres or Microfibrets for the tail fibres. Your editor purchased a small good quality black paint brush from Bunnings. The fibres from the brush are great source of tail fibres.)

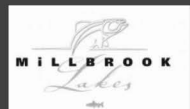


Geoff Bloch's regular fly box – filled with just one fly, the Reverse Hackle Dun

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FLY FISHING



VFFA 2021 meetings & other activities

(... all events subject to Covid restrictions)

October

- 10 Sunday This was to be the date for our annual trip to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley Club's stocked dams. However, Covid restrictions have forced the cancellation of this event on this date. Hamish Hughes is negotiating with the Latrobe Valley members to find a future date that will work, possibly in late November or early December.
- 14 Thursday Winter Fly Tying with Robert Bailey – a Zoom presentation commencing at 7:00 pm. Zoom connection details will be emailed out just prior to the 14th.
- 21 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm
Speaker: Tony Stewart, who will tell us about fishing the streams in the Otways. (This will be a Zoom presentation.)
- 27 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm. (Also a Zoom meeting.)

November

- 12 – 14 Annual Trip to Warrnambool.
(This will also depend on Covid restrictions and the changes to these scheduled for November 5. If we can go ahead with this event Jim Blakeslee at Warrnambool will provide necessary details after November 5.)
- 17 Wednesday Millbrook Lakes – 11:00 am till dark
(This again will depend on changes to Covid restrictions. Details of arrangements will be given in an email from Terry Rogers after November 5.)
- 18 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm
Speaker: Rick Dobson. We are hoping we will be back at the Kelvin Club for this event.
- 21 Sunday Streamcraft session by David Grisold and Nymph Techniques by Joanne and Rick Dobson. A 10:00 am start and barbecue lunch at 1:00 pm. More details will be given closer to the event.
- 24 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm – hopefully at the Kelvin Club
- 25 Thursday Winter Fly Tying at Aussie Angler, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm with John Pilkington as demonstrator.

December

- 10 Friday Annual Christmas Dinner at the Kelvin Club -
Speaker: Jim Allen, who will bring some 'Reflections on a Fly Fisherman's Fortunate Life'.

January 2022

- 12 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes, provided day summer temperatures are not too high.

February 2022

- 2 Wednesday First Council Meeting for 2022 – 6:30 pm at the Kelvin Club.
- 6 – 12 Trip to Currawong Lakes private fishery in Tasmania (subject to border crossing regulations). Event Co-ordinator – Jon Kenfield.
- 12 – 20 Tasmanian trip to Hayes on Brumby's (subject to border crossing regulations). Event Co-ordinator – Chris Gray (chris@graysmail.com.au.)
- 24 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
"Liars' Night" – reports from members on their summer fishing.
(Our president David Hooke is asking that members who have good stories to tell should contact him with the details.)

(VFFA events still to be finalised include Sunday Casting, casting tuition, winter fly tying, and classes on nymphing and river tuition on local streams. The date for this year's Donger Competition is also still to be settled.)