

FLY LINES



October 2023

The October Auction

Members are reminded that our annual auction of fly fishing books and gear will take place at our October meeting on Thursday, October 19.

Auctioneer Hugh Maltby assures us that he and his team have been busy putting together the lots to be auctioned. It is anticipated there will be about 100 lots to go under the hammer, including books and items of tackle from members.

A catalogue of items to be sold will be available at the start of the auction.

Thursday, October 19,
6:00pm, at the
Kelvin Club

The date and time – Thursday, October 19, 6:00 pm for Dinner, and auction commencing at 7:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

We would encourage all members to join us for a meal beforehand, but PLEASE make a booking for dinner by 5:00pm on Tuesday, October 17, by emailing Terry Rogers at terryrogers@bigpond.com and leaving a message.



Peter Clayton and Hugh Maltby - an experienced team

THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Milton Zeuschner fishing a tight Victorian stream

Council's Report to the AGM 2023

... presented by David Hooke, our retiring president

It gives me great pleasure to present Council's report to the Annual General Meeting for the year to September 2023.

Membership

At a time when, according to data from the VFA, many fishing clubs are suffering a significant (30%) decline in membership, I am delighted to report only a minor excess of resignations and deaths over new members. There have been no deaths of members this year, and I encourage our older members to keep up the good work!

Unfortunately a few recalcitrants have to be reminded, or indeed briefly excommunicated, for late payment of the annual subscription, but very few are lost permanently!

The Kelvin Club

When the membership was surveyed some years ago regarding a venue for our meetings, one of the main pre-requisites was a central location. The Kelvin Club suits us very well and I'm pleased to report the catering issues from last year are now well behind us, as exemplified by the splendid Annual Dinner last month.

The Strategy Room remains a spiritual home for our Honour Boards, some of our Fly Displays and a rationalised Library. Council thanks our Honorary Librarian Bill Jeans and Peter Clayton for their ongoing attention to the Library. We are hoping to move one of our major display cabinets from the backroom to the Strategy Room to allow much of the memorabilia currently in storage to see the light of day. This remains a contentious issue and will be a work in progress for the new President.



Dr David Hooke

Meetings

The Annual Dinner in August was by far our best attended meeting since before the lockdown response to Covid. It was a splendid evening, with a wonderful atmosphere, good food, good wine, a great speaker, and a very successful fund-raising effort. Our thanks to the numerous contributors who brought it all together, particularly our sponsors, several of whom were extraordinarily generous, particularly in the face of difficult economic conditions.

Unfortunately attendances at our regular monthly meetings has been a bit dismal to say the least. Your Council puts in a lot of time and effort to arrange interesting speakers and it is quite disappointing when there is a poor turn out.

A couple of notable exceptions. The Christmas Dinner with Alan Pilkington was a memorable evening and very well attended. Alan speaks as well as he writes, and we were privileged to have him address us.

The October Auction last year was also very successful with Hugh Maltby once again the star of the show.

The November meeting originally scheduled Mark Turner from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, but major flooding in that area made it impossible for him to leave his responsibilities to the area, so instead he spoke to us in April. We used the opportunity at the November lunchtime meeting to canvass many of the issues facing the Association and the lively discussion that followed has helped to inform the decisions of your Council subsequently.

Prior to this lunch we were treated to a tour of the Shrine of Remembrance by Peter Whitelaw, who is a Life Governor; a memorable experience which we should repeat every couple of years.

The traditional Liar's night in February was an absolute highlight with Peter Whitelaw, Peter Clayton, John Spragg and Trevor Stow having us all in stitches for much of the evening; information, exaggeration, mishaps and outright distortions of the truth all giving us a fabulous evening!

The March meeting was a wake-up call by Dr Jarod Lyon, from the Arthur Rylah Institute, to take a holistic approach to our fisheries and look beyond angling species to the survival of non-angling species such as galaxias, and of course habitat.

A thought-provoking talk followed in April by Mark Turner from the GBCMA who also talked about the importance of waterway management including river flows, habitat and stock removal.

In May, James Norney from MountainFly spoke about strategies for targeting Murray Cod in the rivers of North East

Victoria, and he and Louise subsequently joined us as Instructors on our casting days and are now members of the VFFA. How good is that!

Both June and July were lunchtime meetings in response to members suggestions. June was a quiet lunch, as our guest speaker had cancelled due to ill health.

In July Bill Jeans regaled us with his adventures fly fishing and indeed surviving in Cuba ... very entertaining, but a trip not for the faint-hearted.

Bill is our Honorary Librarian, and, ably assisted by Peter Clayton, has put in many hours rationalising the Library and sorting through the innumerable publications which come into the hands of the VFFA.

Trips

Hayes on Brumby's last February was once again a great week. Much fishing is undertaken all over North and Central Tasmania, but the highlight is always the Thursday evening Dinner when we invite Tasmanian members and friends to join us.

This year we asked Charles Peck to address us and reminisce over his life of fly fishing. It was a fascinating talk and I refer you to the March 2023 edition of *Fly Lines* for the transcript.

A trip to Currawong Lakes followed in March; again a highly successful and enjoyable time was had by all. The hospitality and accommodation was second to none, and we are all disappointed to hear that Richard and Meryn are planning to sell the property after this summer.

In place of the trip to Currawong Lakes in March 2024, we are organising a trip to the Taupo region in New Zealand,

from March 3 to March 10. Rodger Muir, a VFFA member and local to Taupo is organising accommodation and guides in New Zealand and I encourage anyone interested to be in touch sooner rather than later.

The Annual Big River trip courtesy of John Pilkington was held as usual on the weekend before Easter, and as ever was thoroughly enjoyable. The trip was documented by first time attendee, Dr Peter Joseph, Patron of the SAFFA, member of the VFFA, and one time speaker, in the May edition of *Fly Lines*.

The Warrnambool trip in November last year was cancelled due to inclement weather, not to mention flooding, but we are looking forward to a full complement of attendees in November this year. The organiser is Hugh Maltby.

The Bruce Whitehead Challenge is a trip to the Western Victorian Lakes in winter. It is a competition initially designed to provide some friendly competitive fishing in conjunction with the Bairnsdale Fly Fishing Club, while the rivers around Omeo are closed. The Warrnambool Fly Fishers are encouraged to join us. The trip was held in November last year with several VFFA and Warrnambool club members attending, but only one member from Bairnsdale - Rob Morecroft, who proceeded to land an 8 pound fish and hence the Trophy!

There was little interest in the trip this year, as we had scheduled it after the rivers had opened, which rather negated the point of the exercise. The plan is to reinstate the trip in winter next year.

Our trips to the Thorpdale dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers are always enjoyable, and although the catching was hard this year, the fishing and the hospitality made up for it.

The quarterly trips to Millbrook remain very popular, although for some years now the January trip has been cancelled due to hot weather.

Conferences

The Ultimate Fishing Expo was held at Jeff's Shed in conjunction with the World Recreational Fishing Conference in February. The VFFA attended and shared a booth with our natural friends the Australian Trout Foundation. The event was far better attended, I think, than anybody anticipated and at one point there were substantial queues to get in. My thanks to those who volunteered to man the desk and discuss fly fishing with the visitors.

The Central Victorian Regional Insect Collection (CVRIC) is hosting the National Insect Expo this weekend (September 22 - 24), and the VFFA will be participating with a small fly tying and fly display. My thanks to the volunteers and particularly to Richard Kos who will be tying flies for three days!

Fly Lines

Our Newsletter goes from strength to strength under the assiduous editorship of Lyndon Webb. If you don't find the Newsletter entertaining and informative, you're not interested in fly fishing. Members of Council, and particularly the Editor, are eternally grateful for the many and varied contributions from all over the world, from government, from noted guides, from members and from friends. Despite having a passing familiarity with each issue prior to publication, I still look forward to its arrival with keen anticipation.

We are still seeking an Associate Editor with a view to assisting Lyndon.

The Website

Council sees an increasingly important role for the website in our interaction with members, including, but not limited to, administrative matters, calendar of events, articles of interest, archived issues of *Fly Lines* ... the potential is almost limitless.

We are in communication with website designers at the moment; it remains a work in progress.

Winter Activities

Casting days on the Sunday mornings after the General Meetings have generally been well attended. The weather gods have been mostly kind, and on the one morning they weren't, Chris Gray provided a huge portable shelter which saved the day! We have been blessed to have casting instructors (CCI) at each of our mornings, and my thanks to them for their participation.

The fly tying evenings have been most enjoyable but with limited attendances. Richard Kos has been the stalwart leader of the group and his teaching skills inestimable. Our thanks also to Jenny Phillips for allowing us to use the facilities of The Botanical Art School of Melbourne.

Council

Councillors put in many hours to place before the membership a smorgasbord of activities, many of which, in the interests of brevity, I have only touched upon above.

My thanks to all the Councillors for their efforts this year, and particularly to Chris Gray who will be slipping off Council after finishing his two years as Immediate Past President. Chris had three years as President, only the second President in our history to serve three years. David Grisold was the other, having taken over

from Bill Morgan-Payler who died early in his second year in office.

As you all know, Chris put in an amazing effort over the Covid years, which contributed greatly to the strong position the VFFA currently enjoys. He has been a wonderful support to me during my Presidency and between them, Chris and David have kept me mostly out of trouble. I have no doubt that Chris will continue to contribute significantly to the affairs of the VFFA, but I know Nicola will be particularly glad to see him taking a lesser role in the organisation and hence able to spend more time fishing.

Your new Council is a healthy mix of the new and the experienced and I feel sure will tackle the future with vigour and enthusiasm. I wish them all the best, and Simon Joel particularly as your incoming President. As Immediate Past President I will continue to be involved, *ex officio*.

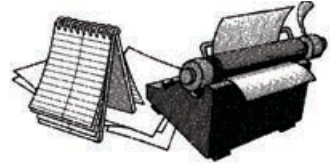
Finally

It has been an absolute privilege to serve as your President; thank you for the opportunity. I have enjoyed it immensely and have made many friends and fishing mates, which, when it is all boiled down, is the essence of an Association.

My final plea to you the members is to become more involved; come to the meetings; join in the trips; volunteer for some of the organisation. I can assure you, the rewards are manifest.

Thank you, David Hooke

From the EDITOR'S DESK



"The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable; a perpetual series of occasions for hope." (John Buchan)

"Of course, I talk to myself when I'm fishing. Sometimes I need expert advice."

"Procrastifishing: the art of going fishing when you should be doing something else."

"Fly fishing is an art, a sport, and a philosophy that awakens the senses and transforms the angler into a student of the natural world." (Leslie Clark)

Fly fishing is indeed many things, including a wonderful source of countless memories. And the longer we fish, the more memories we gather. I can recall lots of memorable times from my early fly fishing days when I was living in Warrnambool in Victoria's western district. We had four good trout streams in the area, and all provided us with stacks of fabulous memories.

Out near Panmure the delightful little Mt Emu Creek became a favourite destination of mine. One morning in late autumn I parked my car and waded up the section behind the Panmure hotel. The stream at this point was in a gully with high banks on both sides, and these banks were covered with an impenetrable jungle of blackberries. So wading upstream, as I was doing, was the only way to access some very pleasant water.

When I arrived at a point immediately behind the hotel I was somewhat surprised to see that some very energetic horticulturist had cleared an area of blackberries from the side of the stream and had planted several tomato plants. Well, they looked like tomatoes to me. The cultivated area was perhaps five metres by five metres, and it looked very neat and well cared for. When I arrived home I told my dear wife, who is a serious gardener, about this fascinating



Even your editor gets out occasionally

little patch of tomatoes growing behind the pub. She stared at me, raised her eyebrows, and simply said, "Well I hope you didn't light any fires there."

The Moyne River near Port Fairy was a rich source of memories. I recall on one occasion fishing the section upstream from the old railway track when I inadvertently put my foot on the rear end of a snake. The head shot up, the snake glared at me angrily, then pelted off upstream. I fished downstream for the rest of that day.

Another Moyne River memory is one I have mentioned before. I was fishing this

same section with fellow club member Jim Blakeslee, when Jim, who was a couple of pools upstream, yelled to tell me he had spotted two good fish in a pool he had just reached. I rushed to catch up with him and this involved scrambling over a rusty barbed wire fence. In my haste I caught my boot on the top strand of the fence and fell headlong into a concrete culvert. The good news was that I didn't break my rod. The bad news was that I dislocated my left elbow. And it was very painful.

So this finished our angling for the day. We reluctantly left Jim's two fish unmolested and he drove me to the Warrnambool hospital, then dropped my gear at home, telling my dear wife where I was. Which was in a waiting room at the hospital, where I sat feeling very disgruntled. A young nurse arrived and said: "Mr Webb, you're off now for some surgery to get your arm fixed, but first I have to take all your clothes off and dress you in this hospital gown." Now I happened to know this quite attractive young nurse - she had been a member of one of my classes at the local high school a year or two earlier. An awful day was deteriorating even more.

Some years earlier than this disaster Jim Blakeslee had just arrived in Warrnambool and I had taken him over to the Moyne to show him one of our more productive rivers. We hadn't been fishing very long when Jim connected. And it was a magnificent fish – a brown of just over 7½ pounds.

Jim kept it, as this particular evening was the Warrnambool Fly Fishers' Annual Dinner, and a number of Melbourne VFFA members had travelled to Warrnambool for the occasion. So as guests arrived at the Dinner they were confronted with Jim's magnificent trout, lying on display on a large plate

at the dining room entrance. And one of our local members, the incorrigible Arthur Hogan (known to everyone as Artie), explained at length to each of our Melbourne guests as they arrived that while they apparently spent their weekends at the Red Tag casting pools showing each other their new rods and their roll casting skills, us country members didn't waste our time on that nonsense: "We go out and catch fish, and Jim's seven and a half pounder is typical of what we get around here."

Artie was a well-known local identity, and a very competent fly fisher. His brother had an insurance business which was located in a shop at the bottom end of Liebig Street in Warrnambool's main shopping centre. Artie set up a table with his fly tying gear in the front window of his brother's shop and spent hours tying flies while fascinated spectators stood on the footpath watching as he put together some of his magnificent longtail patterns.

When Artie headed out to do some fishing he invariably took a pile of gear with him. Always a couple rods (including a favourite cane rod), several reels, a huge collection of flies, and some fly tying gear, too – just in case. He argued that if he found fish feeding on something he didn't have in his fly boxes then he'd tie some replicas up on the spot.

Artie had a favourite section on the upper Merri that he visited often, but it presented a problem. There was a gnarled old tree at the top end of one of the better pools which all too often captured his back cast. So Artie headed up there with a tin of petrol and burned the tree to a stump. Sadly the property owner didn't share Artie's passion for a clear back cast, so Artie got kicked off.

In those days in the late 1970s (and I'm not sure whether it still happens) at the end of winter the bottom end of Warrnambool's fabulous Merri River used to flood, and sea run browns came running up into the flooded sections. They were often large fish. I have a photo of Jim Blakeslee holding up a 7 pounder, but Artie did better than this. He had a particularly good morning when he pulled five superb browns out of the lower Merri, the largest being well over 8 lb. We all got to read about it, as word had somehow reached the local newspaper, and the next day there was a photo of Artie in the Warrnambool Standard sitting on the riverbank surrounded by his fish.

In this case there was no doubting the truth of Artie's achievement, because he had gained a reputation for richly embellishing the accounts of his successes. He thoroughly enjoyed his trouting, and also enjoyed telling anyone prepared to listen about his considerable angling accomplishments. And the stories got bigger and better with each retelling.

In the late 1970s I came across one of my favourite Artie stories. I had driven to Melbourne to attend the VFFA Annual Dinner, and at the commencement of the event the President welcomed us all, and read out a list of apologies. One of these was Artie's apology, and according to the very well-informed President it went as follows.

A couple of days before the Dinner Artie had taken his boat to Camperdown to fish Lake Purrumbete. He put his boat in the water, motored quietly out to a favourite weed bed and soon connected with a fish. And according to Artie this one was a very large and very lively fish. He fought it all day, through the afternoon then right through the night. He was still battling with it strongly the next morning.



Jim Blakeslee catches a lot of fish in those streams around Warrnambool

The bad news was that because he was still struggling with this fish he wouldn't be able to get to the Dinner. But the good news was that he suspected that this mighty fish was starting to tire and he hoped he could finally land it by evening.

Artie was a wonderful local character. He died too young – in his late 50s, and this was so sad. He was generous, funny, skilled, and a good friend of all of us local fly fishers. We missed him. He certainly left us with a great collection of fabulous memories.

Yes - fly fishing rewards us with marvellous memories, and every outing adds to our collection. I trust that all of our readers enjoy a wealth of wonderful memories – of fish, magnificent encounters, places, rivers, lakes, and especially the companions who shared those occasions with us.

Lyndon

The September AGM

On September 21 the VFFA had its Annual General Meeting. This was a Zoom meeting, which enabled members from all parts to participate.

The retiring president David Hooke gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the Association over the past 12 months, his report being included in this issue. Our Treasurer, Tony Mitchem, provided a financial statement for the 12 months ending June 30, 2023.

Office bearers and councillors for the next 12 months were listed, these including Simon Joel as the new President, John Spragg as our new Senior Vice-President, Rod Hirst as Junior Vice-President, Beth Hourigan as Secretary, Tony Mitchem as Treasurer, Lyndon Webb as Newsletter Editor, Bill Jeans as Librarian, James Gray as Social Media Manager, Terry Rogers and Dan Lovecek as Councillors, and David Hooke as the Immediate Past President

One task of the Council at the AGM was to elect an Honorary Life Member if one was proposed, and it was with great pleasure that Hamish Hughes was elected as an Honorary Life Member. Hamish's

nomination was strongly supported by all councillors, as he has been a very active council member since 2006.

Hamish joined the VFFA in 2001 and in 2006 he was elected to Council where he served until 2022. In that time he served as Junior Vice-President in 2010 and 2011, Senior Vice-President in 2012 and 2013 and President for the years 2014 and 2015.

During this time he was heavily involved in reviewing the Association's Constitution and Rules. He produced a comprehensive document on Boating Safety and developed a new and better brochure to attract new members to join the VFFA.

For many years Hamish was the Co-ordinator of the VFFA Annual Trips to Peter Hayes' at Brumbies Creek Establishment. His efforts in this area were incredible in keeping costs to a minimum, especially in regard to Guiding Charges.

All members would congratulate Hamish on his election as an Honorary Life Member. His contribution to the VFFA over many years has been very significant.



Kristina Placko - a skilled New Zealand guide

September Millbrook Report

On Wednesday, September 27, a group of VFFA members made a visit to Millbrook Lakes. It was one of our best visits. The weather was kind to us, as we enjoyed a light breeze and alternating periods of overcast weather and sun. The fish were out and about and a lot were encountered. Over 30 fish were landed (and released, as Millbrook is all about catch and release) and probably an equal or larger number were hooked and subsequently lost. Every person in the group encountered and hooked fish at some stage. Some were particularly successful. Brad Wilson was off to a flyer – he had landed six within a few hours of starting.



Brad Wilson landed six by lunchtime



Dan Lovecek fished the Cabin Lake with some success

Craig Coltman was our excellent guide for the day, and he worked really hard right through the day to get everyone into fish. There were duns hatching in some lakes, and most fish caught were taken on nymphs or emergers or dry flies. The Brown Nymph and the Shaving Brush accounted for lots of fish.

Our next Millbrook visit is scheduled for January next year. Details of this visit will be advertised in the November or December newsletter.



John Spragg enjoyed a day in the delightful conditions



The arrival, and then some haste to get the waders on

Tasmanian Fishing Report

... from Chris Wisniewski (IFS)

The opening of the trout season on Saturday, August 5, was wet and blustery. Rivers in the north were flooded, thus providing good backwater fishing. Since then the weather has been warm, with below average rainfall.

Lake Echo is at its highest level in several years, and is still slowly rising. The trout have been in on the shore, tailing and providing good polaroid fishing on sunny days. The marsh areas at the northern end of the lake can be accessed by the Brown Marsh Road near London Lakes, or Brock Bay in the south-eastern corner of the lake, by driving across the dam wall. There will continue to be some good fishing there in coming months.

A lack of rain has seen a draw down of the level at Little Pine Lagoon. This has provided exciting visual fishing for shore-based anglers, with lots of tailing and cruising trout on the exposed weed beds around the edges. These fish are known to be "untouchables", but a small shrimp or snail pattern fished inert has worked at times. Alternatively it can be hung



Four Springs Lake fished well early

under a dry fly. Persistence is the key, and getting the fly directly in front of the fish as it noses along is critical. The fish are so focussed that they will not divert centimetres to take the fly. There has also been good fishing at Little Pine Lagoon from drifting boats pulling wet flies.

The water level has been holding steady at Lake Crescent through water being released from Lake Sorell. The irrigation



A great photo from Peter Broomhall's files



An early season brown



There are plenty of these around Tassie lakes and rivers

season has started in the downstream valley, so without any rain the water level will start to fall away. Big brown trout averaging 4 – 5+ kg are being caught fishing galaxia imitations. Some much bigger fish are also being caught. Large wet flies stripped slowly along either the rocky shores or marsh edges have been working.

Four Springs Lake has fished well from boats and for the shore anglers stripping wet flies. October is the month when the dun hatches begin in earnest, and this is when the fish start looking up. Fishing the dun hatch on this lake provides some of the best dry fly fishing you will find. Plan a trip!

The gate at Lake Augusta has been closed but should open any time. Those keen enough to walk or ride a bicycle beyond the gate have had some fantastic fishing in the Nineteen Lagoons area. There has been just enough water to keep the lagoons brim full without any flooding over their banks. The water is clear and with a bit of sunlight the fish can be seen lined up along the undercut banks and drop offs.

If the conditions are rougher blind fishing these same areas has been worthwhile. The fish have been taking wet flies very slowly due to the cold water, but this will change as the weather warms up and the fish become more active. Like for most waters around Tasmania there is an abundance of young healthy fish coming through after three good years of winter rain and strong recruitment. There are a few older fish around that are a bit lean after the winter, but this is a sign of a good health fishery.

After a good run of *lovetitia* (true whitebait) the fishing has slowed a little in the coastal rivers. The galaxia run should start soon, providing good visual fishing to sea run trout in the estuaries and lower reaches rivers through spring.



Dermot O'Brien landing a Four Springs Lake brown



A solid rainbow from the Liawenee Canal spawning run

The wild rainbow trout spawning run has been under way in Liawenee Canal from yingina/Great Lake since late August. The total count through the fish trap so far has been 2,204 and counting continues each day. A weigh and measure sample of 100 female and 100 male fish has been undertaken, and all the information gathered will be compiled in a report at

the end of the spawning run and will then be available on the IFS website.

The electronic Angler Diary is starting to build momentum and take up by anglers with information coming in from a diverse range of waters across the State. Not only is this tool a valuable record of your fishing in Tasmania, but also provides a valuable management tool. All information is private, and data is assessed in general terms. This will help the IFS make a wide range of decisions about the fishery, including bag and size limits, stocking, infrastructure development and access issues. Please consider signing up to the Infish App and providing your fishing data when you come to visit.

To get the Infish App log on to <https://www.ifs.tas.gov.au/infish>



Tasmania has a lot of fabulous lake fishing in magnificent surrounds

The Latest from the Australian Trout Foundation

Save the Date

Invitation

The Australian Trout Foundation extends to you an invitation to attend our upcoming Symposium to discuss the Wild Trout Strategic plan achievements and the future work of the ATF

When: Thursday 12th & Friday 13th October 2023

Where: Foothills Conference Centre,
48 Edinburgh Road, Mooroolbark Vic 3138

Accommodation: will be provided for all participants on Thursday night (arrive 5.30 pm), and Friday night for those who have long distances to travel and wish to stay until the Saturday.

The Agenda

- Progress of the Victorian Wild Trout Strategy
- Habitat restoration, current and future
- Waterway Health and continued maintenance
- Crown Land Licences and Access
- Future plans for the ATF
- Presentations and discussions led by ATF, VFA, ARI, DEECA & CMA's.

Further details and final Agenda forthcoming in the near future.

deeca.vic.gov.au

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March 2024 Taupo New Zealand Trip

... from Rodger Muir

Block out the first week of March next year to take part in the “2024 Taupo New Zealand trip”! This is early notification that the VFFA is organising a group event for up to 12 members to spend a week fishing the lakes and rivers around Taupo at the height of the brown trout season.

The group will be based at the Waitahanui Lodge, Waitahanui, on the shores of Lake Taupo, about 15 km south of Taupo. The lodge is run by Anthony and Bron Bell, themselves keen fly fishers. This location is perfectly placed to allow access to some of the North Island’s best trout waters. The Lodge is located on the lake front of Lake Taupo, and is 120 meters from the mouth of the Waitahanui River. Upstream of the river mouth this river offers some five to six kilometres of fishable waters, all readily accessible on well-defined tracks, with few sections of terrain more than ‘moderate’ in difficulty.

March is the time of year when the brown trout are in prime condition and are moving up the rivers from the lake to spawn. At times pools will hold a dozen

fish on which keen fly fishers can try their skill – and these fish can be a challenge! Given the clarity of the water, sight fishing is standard, and the general fly fishing style locally adopted is nymphing (increasingly Czech nymphing) or wet-lining (very effective for brown trout at night and at sunrise or sunset).

The photo here is of a cracking brown jack caught in late February this year by Bron Bell from the Bridge Pool on the Waitahanui River, only 150 metres from the Lodge.

There are also ‘freshies’ – rainbow trout in great condition that also move up the rivers, providing excellent sport when hooked. This second photo is of a rainbow trout taken by Anthony Bell that weighted in at 7.9 lb. It was caught in the lower reaches of the Waitahanui in February this year.

I was in Waitahanui for late March/ April this year and had a lot of success catching great rainbows on a sinking line. Very satisfying to be able to see the



A fine New Zealand brown caught by Bron Bell from the Waitahanui River



A magnificent 7.9 lb rainbow taken from the Waitahanui by Anthony Bell.

fish, 'swing' the line across in front of them, and have them nail the fly. I also scored an excellent brown just on dusk one evening – obviously not sight fishing, but just as satisfying to land one of these elusive fish.

Other well-known trout waters within a 30-minute drive include the Hinemaiaia River (12 kilometres south), the Tauranga-Taupo River (25 kilometres south), and the Tongariro River (40 kilometres south). For those wishing to travel a little further, Lake Rotorua (and associated waters) are 75 kilometres north, Lake Otamangakau is 65 kilometres south, the headwater of the Whanganui River (100 kilometres southwest), and the Rangitikei River (135 kilometres south).

Accommodation will be on a shared basis in cabins at Waitahanui Lodge, each with several bedrooms and 3 or 4 separate beds. A continental breakfast will be provided, and you will be expected to team up with another group member to

produce an evening meal one night of the week.

You will need to make your own travel arrangements to get to Taupo. There are daily flights from Auckland to Taupo (1 hour). You will also need to organise vehicle transport – possibly team up with one or more other participants and hire a vehicle, and it doesn't need to be 4WD.

I will be arranging for the services of a guide for participants who want to take advantage of deep local knowledge.

At this stage costs are likely to be about A\$975 per head for accommodation and food. All costs will be confirmed a little later in the year.

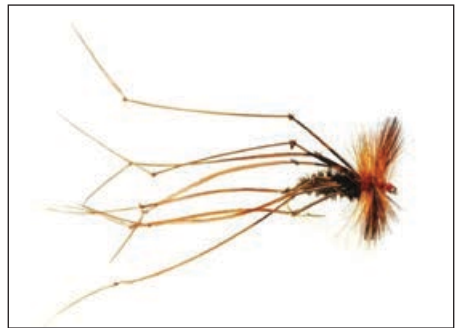
If you are keen to participate, please let the organiser (Rodger Muir – email: rodger-muir@bigpond.com, phone: 0414 253 890) know as soon as possible. Rodger is also happy to discuss any aspect of the trip – please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Fishing the Test River in the UK

... from our new president, Simon Joel

Members who attended last year's Christmas Dinner will recall we auctioned two days fishing on the River Test in the United Kingdom. This wonderful opportunity was donated by Dr Rodney Foale, a long-time member of the VFFA who has lived in London for many years. His generous gift was auctioned with all the proceeds going to the VFFA.

As it transpired my partner Beth (also a VFFA member) was the highest bidder and any alleged collusion between the auctioneer (myself) and the highest bidder (my partner) is strenuously denied.



The Robjent's Daddy Longlegs fly from Robjent's fishing shop in Stockbridge

We started planning our UK trip almost immediately, corresponding with Rodney about timing, travel and accommodation

options. Our itinerary was to kick off with lunch at the London Flyfishers' Club, as Rodney's guests, before travelling on to the Test. The plan was to arrive just after the end of the mayfly season, but when good fishing could still be had. So, with that plan in hand, in early July on a typical wet and wintery Melbourne afternoon Beth and I jetted off to sunny London.

On arrival we quickly settled into our Leicester Square Hotel and then headed off to a splendid fishing outfitters, Farlows (Royal Warrant – of course). It was such a treat chatting to staff about their own exploits on the Test; soaking up all the 'local knowledge' whilst indulging in one or two essential purchases.

On the agreed day Beth and I arrived at the Flyfishers' Club which is situated above the London Savage Club in Mayfair, and after ascending a rather grand staircase we entered the FFC's well-appointed club rooms. The walls were lined with bookshelves housing the club's extensive library, and above were glass cases containing a wonderful array of rods, fish and other flyfishing memorabilia. The sitting room leads into



The Boom-gate connection

a dining room with a large central dining table that easily seats sixteen diners.

On entering the club's sitting room we noted that the other occupants (all dark suited and blazered gentlemen members) stopped talking. Naturally we introduced ourselves and asked after our host. We were informed that he'd not yet arrived, so we settled into a quiet corner to wait, and to enjoy the visual feast of memorabilia. Unnervingly the silence prevailed. After an uncomfortable fifteen minutes (of furtive glances)



Our new President purchasing some vital requirements



Simon and Beth – our new VFFA president and secretary enjoying London



The Test River is well-equipped for anglers

Rodney finally arrived, full of apologise and telling us that “As ladies could not lunch at the FFC, he’d arranged to dine downstairs at the Savage Club”. Ah, I thought, odd behaviour explained!

At this point one of the suited gentlemen came over and introduced himself as Chris Boon, the current FFC President. He graciously put aside the ‘exclusion’ rule and invited us both to join him and his guests for lunch in the FFC dining room.

“Goodness,” I thought, “Was that tinkling sound yet another glass ceiling being smashed, or was it just the staff preparing aperitifs?”

Until that point I fancied that the frosty reception might have been on account of our Australian accents and the recent controversial run-out of the English wicket keeper Jonny Bairstow at Lords. But no, it was merely Beth’s presence and her impact on the long-standing FFC luncheon rules. Once we were all seated in the dining room the atmosphere warmed and conversation flowed over our common love of fly fishing and cricket. Beth, being an accomplished fly and saltwater fisher, engaged in convivial banter with a number members, while

Rodney, Chris Boon and I discussed the cricket and our impending Test River trip. We had a sensational lunch, and as we were leaving the vise was being set-up for a quick fly tying tutorial for the upcoming salmon fishing season in Scotland. Another world, and a truly memorable experience.

The next day we collected our hire car and drove west to Hampshire, where we stayed at Stockbridge, a charming village with tributaries of the river flowing through its centre. Strolling along the High Street you can watch trout of all sizes lazily swimming along the urban waterways.

Through Rodney we arranged a local gillie (guide) for our two days fishing. The gillie, Alex Martin, is a long-time friend of Rodney, and an experienced fly fisher with a vast knowledge of the Test River.

Day one was perfect, being overcast but fine with a very light breeze, and Alex arrived right on time to collect me and check my fishing gear. Beth had decided to pass on the first day, opting instead to explore the village. After sorting through our checklist, I jumped into my car and followed Alex up the Test River Valley through some of the most picturesque countryside I’ve ever seen. We were heading to Awbridge, a beat well known to Alex.

To get to the beat we left the main road and drove down a series of increasingly narrow lanes until just before reaching the river we needed to cross the main trainline from London to the West Country through a boom-gate. Quaintly, the process to move past the boom-gate and across the track involves seeking permission directly from the Controller via a telephone housed next to the boom-gate.

On our first trip permission was refused, as a train was due in about 30 seconds travelling at great speed. But when it did pass we were given permission to push the Button (yes, it is red!) to raise the boom-gate, and cross the trainline. After crossing, the phone on the other side of the track is used to inform the Controller of our safe crossing; and yes, thoughts of Thomas-the-tank-engine come the mind. The river is within a hundred metres of the track.

For those who do not know the River Test or any of the other chalk stream rivers let me explain: the river is divided into a series of beats or sections that are privately owned, with one beat on each bank of the river. The banks are manicured to the point that not even gumboots are necessary for fishing, and casting is from the bank, or from wooden landings strategically placed along the bank. Trees and undergrowth are pruned so the your back cast is not impeded, although a roll cast was useful

in some situations. The river weed is also managed by the gamekeeper (using a boat) to improve the fishing. There is a hut or cabin on the beat equipped with all the essentials for a picnic, BBQ, or overnight stay. There is no electricity to the hut, but the hut is very comfortable and well appointed.

When we got to our beat I rigged up my new (Farlows) Hardy 5 weight for nymph fishing, as it was now cold and there were no insects on the water. The fishing was done by sight, with the fish easily seen in the crystal-clear chalk stream water, and sight fishing with a nymph in a deep fast flowing stream was sensational, with the fish clearly seen watching the nymph or chasing it. After a refusal the nymph needed to be changed, as these well-educated trout were not fooled twice. Brown trout and rainbow trout are both stocked into the river, but there are also small wild brown trout and grayling too.



A view of the Test, one of the most famous of all trout streams

The fishing was fantastic, and I landed brown trout, grayling and rainbow trout. Alex, my gillie and my new best friend, was kept busy netting the fish, with the highlight for me happening early afternoon when I landed a big rainbow on a very nondescript grey-brown hairy nymph. Alex and I watched the fish look at the nymph, follow it, then open its mouth to take the bait. The fish fought well and Peter Hayes's Penny knot held securely, much to Alex's surprise.

As I always release my catch, this was my intention with the big rainbow, but I did want a photo. When setting up for the photo Alex suggested that the fish would be great smoked. I repeated that my policy was to catch and release my trout, and Alex repeated how good the fish would be smoked.

Alex prevailed. I got a photo and Alex had smoked rainbow trout for dinner - win-win (but not for the trout on that occasion).

I fished until late afternoon, but as it was getting cold and Alex was not confident about there being an evening rise we decided to pack up and go back to the pub for a reviving ale. The trip back was great as I reviewed the day's success. And we had to wait for three trains at the lane boom-gate. I love trains, what fun!

I slept the sleep of a very happy man and woke early the next morning to the sound of heavy rain on a nearby metal roof. As we travel only with hand-luggage our Aussie wet weather gear had not made the cut, so off we went in search of waterproof jackets and hats.



Waiting for a rise



Simon with his rainbow trout – at 5 lb 2 oz the largest fish caught that season on the beat he had fished

Walking along the village high street we soon spied a Robjent's Fishing Store (fly fishing Mecca) packed to the gills (pun intended) with everything a fly fisher could want: rods, reels, fishing lines, flies, fly tying equipment and, importantly for us, plenty of wet weather gear. We kitted ourselves out, getting back to the pub in time to meet Alex and head off in the pouring rain for day two.

That's when Alex told me that my rainbow trout was indeed the biggest fish caught on the beat that season, weighing 5 lb 2oz. Definitely a proud moment for this Aussie fly fisher.

Day two took us to Mill Lane Beat, downstream from day one's beat and just out of the village of Romsey. It was a short drive from Romsey through a gate with a combination lock. The banks of the river were as manicured as Awbridge, and it's small whitewashed hut was very pretty. It was set just back a little from the river with a lovely rose garden, with picnic and BBQ areas. Alex was most apologetic about the rose garden not being at its best (as it was during the mayfly hatch), because the heavy rain had battered the roses giving the garden a real autumnal look. It still looked beautiful to us.

Once again we set up for nymph fishing, this time in the pouring rain. While Alex was helping Beth set up her line, I cast a line in front of the hut and immediately caught a nice brown trout.

Alas, the day was wet and increasingly cold, with Beth at one stage retreating to the car to get out of the rain and wind. We had a few more takes, and Beth was broken off by a large fish sitting just under the bank, but no further fish were landed. By mid-afternoon the conditions were bleak, and we were cold and wet so called stumps and headed back to Stockbridge.

Alex and his partner joined us for dinner and we had a most enjoyable meal with some lively conversation and a few laughs. Of course, my rainbow record was fully discussed.

As the next day was dry but blowing a gale, and our fishing time was finished, we decided that a day in Portsmouth to see HMS Victory would do nicely. From there we drove back to London and flew onto Italy ... but that's another story.

Our fishing trip to the UK was a great success, providing us with some fabulous memories. We feel very fortunate to be the recipients of Rodney Foale's generosity and hospitality at the London Flyfishers' Club, whilst contributing to the VFFA coffers. The fact that Beth is now the first woman to lunch at the London FFC is also a happy-bragging-rights bonus.

On a personal note, Alex's expert guiding and companionship along with my landing the 5 lb 2oz rainbow are absolute highlights for me, and I would thoroughly recommend a trip to the Test should the opportunity arise for other VFFA fly fishers.

Simon Joel, September 2023

National Insect Expo

... from David Hooke

The VFFA were invited to participate in the National Insect Expo by the Central Victorian Regional Insect Collection (CVRIC), the organising body.

The Expo was held in the Buffalo Sports Stadium in Woodend over the weekend of September 22, 23 and 24.

It was a fascinating event, and as you can see the VFFA had a prominent display manned on all three days by the redoubtable Richard Kos, ably assisted at various times over the weekend by Peter Whitelaw, Peter Clayton, Jenny Singe, Bill Jeans, Jenny Hooke, and David Hooke.

Our stand received steady interest and discussion.

My thanks also to Peter Whitelaw and Judy Kos who both put together excellent posters explaining the nature of the VFFA and fly tying.

The Expo was comprised mostly of displays from commercial interests in the Insect Industry, some represented from as far away as Queensland. As well as live insects, there were mounted displays of preserved insects such as, but not limited to, amazingly complex butterflies. Insect-themed jewellery was also prominent.



A very lively bug

Jenny came home with a couple of stick insects which we hope will stay home and multiply. Their progeny, if born onto a stick covered with lichen, will develop camouflage matching the lichen! Absolutely amazing.

A new project for the botanical artists?



Richard Kos tied flies on our VFFA stand for three days – a superlative effort!



Jenny Singe helped out at our VFFA stand



Richard Kos had a number of assisting visitors, including Jenny Hooke

The November Warrnambool Trip

Again this year the Warrnambool Fly Fishers invite us to spend a few days fishing their local rivers and lakes and enjoying some of their fabulous hospitality. The date for this trip is Friday, November 10, to Sunday, November 12, with the program being similar to previous years.

Jim Blakeslee will book a VFFA table at Bojangles (restaurant) for the Friday evening, and on the Saturday VFFA members will be guided by Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club members on their local rivers and lakes.

On the Saturday night members will enjoy the traditional barbecue at Jim's fabulous property on the upper Merri River, commencing at 6:00pm. This is always a magnificent occasion.

A Notice of Event for this trip was given in last month's newsletter. This is a fabulous weekend – the Warrnambool members are great company and good guides, and the Saturday evening meal

at Jim Blakeslee's property on the Upper Merri is always stunning.

To be a participant members need to fill in an Event Registration Form (ERF) and return it to the Event Coordinator by Friday, October 27. You can obtain an ERF from www.vffa.org.au, and the Event Co-coordinator is Hugh Maltby – Mobile 0423 283 079, and email: redhtag@hotmail.com



Jim Blakeslee has been fishing the upper Merri for years and knows the river intimately. It catches a lot of fish from it.



The November trip to Warrnambool finishes at Jim and Trish Blakeslee's property on the Upper Merri, where both the food and the festivities are a delight



The lower Merri at Warrnambool – it doesn't look especially exciting, but when it floods the sea-run browns invade it in numbers

Fly Fishing from Jenny's Perspective

Writing to a friend, Jenny Singe said this:

You don't know enough about fly fishing. At its best, it is hunting in challenging circumstances with light tackle and tiny flies tied on gossamer. You walk searching for a rise. You watch. You wait. You cast your imitation accurately to a hungry rising fish.

Got him!

You play him until he is exhausted enough to surrender to your net. Treat him delicately. Disengage the tiny hook carefully, admire his beauty, then gently release him back to the water and watch him swim away whilst feeling a tad sad you've gained enjoyment from the cruelty of ripping him from his happy fishy home.

Then you hunt again.

More from Peter Hayes on Good Casting

I regard good body language as a necessity for effortless and graceful casting

Soft Hands

The right grip is perhaps the most important asset in achieving powerful yet graceful technique. So caress the cork and let the rod talk to you. Let the grip pivot in your palm, just like using a drumstick. A loose grip enables you to squeeze off the cast to a sudden stop. This is a great sensation when you first feel it.

Weight Transfer

Rock back and forward a little as you cast. In good casting both the back and forward casts should be initiated with body movement.

Bent Knees

Bent knees are an important element of weight transfer.

Light On Your Feet

When I'm casting well I'm slightly on my toes. Be light on your feet.

Bent Elbow

I often see people casting with their arm too straight. Wooden arm casters never make good casters. It's not possible to achieve a sudden but smooth stop, and there's no chance of feeling the wonderful throwing action that results from the straightening of a bent elbow. Think about throwing a ball. It's the straightening of the bent elbow that produces the fling.

Relaxed Wrist

The more relaxed your wrist can be, the more you can use it (within reason) the better. The important thing is you move the rod first then use your wrist at the latest possible moment. Many beginners

start the casting stroke with their wrist, and this is one a big fault. The correct sequence of movement for throwing or casting is body, then arm, then wrist.

Smooth!

Good casting is like ballet. It should not be aggressive, nor tiring or painful. Loops should flow smoothly out of the rod tip with power, speed and grace. You should feel at one with the rod. Good casting is actually effortless and anyone watching should really want to do it.

Try this. Do some false casting with 10 metres of line out. Get the loop reasonably tight and moving with nice tempo, then shut your eyes. Yes, shut them and continue to cast. What is the feeling in your hand? Loosen up everywhere. Breathe freely. It should feel sweet. It's a beautiful thing!

The Tasmanian Anglers Access Program - Access for Anglers (published September 2023)

Neil Morrow has been part of the Inland Fisheries Service (IFS) Anglers Access Project since its inception in 2007, and in that time has helped gain access for anglers to over 350 kilometres of river, mostly on private land in some of the most beautiful areas of the state.

Readers should go to this Web address: <https://www.ifs.tas.gov.au> and then in the Search section type in "anglers-access-program"

"The process often started with cold-calling a landowner and asking if they were interested in allowing access for anglers onto their property," Neil said. "People were often going in without permission anyway, so we are solving an existing issue for them by managing the risk."

Gaining legal access involves negotiating non-binding licence agreements with the private landowners which sees IFS managing the access. Involvement is voluntary and entirely at the discretion



Angler Access in Tasmania

of landowners. Two of the primary responsibilities of the IFS are to 'Create, improve and maintain access to inland waters' and to 'provide facilities in respect of access to inland waters'.

"We have focused on the 10 most productive river fisheries and provided infrastructure including stiles over fences, paths and trails, footbridges, signage and riparian works," Neil added.

"The IFS is indebted to those who have embraced the project. Their generosity has provided diversity and new

opportunities for the 25,000 licensed anglers, 20 per cent of whom are from interstate and overseas. The Angler Access Program has proved a great and ongoing success, and nobody has yet withdrawn from a licence. It also includes lakes and dams, and access to angling spots on public land.

For more information about the program, and to download an extensive suite of Anglers Access Program Brochures, complete with detailed maps, readers can go to <https://www.ifs.tas.gov.au>

VFA Supporting Fish Stocking at the Crater Lakes

... from Taylor Hunt

Did you know that the Lake Purrumbete and Camperdown Angling clubs have been helping us stock fish into the Crater Lakes since 1928!

Yes, that's 95 years of volunteer efforts and the Crater Lakes remain premier fisheries today, partly because of the care club members take to help us stock 15 - 20 truckloads of fish a year.

To support the club members' ongoing dedicated volunteer efforts, we recently supplied them with purpose-built nets, large tubs, and buckets, for the careful



Camperdown Angling Club president Gary Cronin and Lake Purrumbete Angling Club President Stephen Hill with Taylor Hunt at Lake Purrumbete (Photo thanks to Clare Dunn)

release of fish into the best habitats in the lakes.

It's part of a trial to see if we can get even better outcomes from fish stocking at the Crater Lakes which annually includes brown trout, rainbow trout, tiger trout and Chinook salmon.

It just might help more anglers catch great fish like this stunning tiger trout (shown below) caught by Colby Lesko.



Colby Lesko with a cracking tiger trout from Lake Purrumbete

Penstock Lagoon

... an appraisal written in 1996 by John Philbrick, who fished Penstock every Christmas for many years.

Penstock Lagoon was constructed in about 1916 as part of the historic Great Lake/Waddamana Power Scheme. It lies in a small basin south-east of the Great Lake and was created by building three low rock filled walls around the basin. At the southern end water passed through the 'penstock' and raced in pipes down a steep escarpment to turn the turbines at the Waddamana Power Station. Penstock Lagoon used to receive a regular strong flow of clear cool water which was released from the Great Lake into Shannon lagoon where it was diverted to the Lagoon via a canal.

In its heyday Penstock provided magnificent fishing which has been described by many writers including Scholes and Wigram. In those days it was noted for its prolific hatches of a large brown mayfly, the dun of which was imitated by the Penstock Brown fly. As Polaroid glasses became readily available after the Second World War the shallow flat nature of its shoreline combined with its clear water meant that the few anglers who were adept at polaroiding, such as John Brookes, enjoyed great sport.

In the early 1960s the Hydro Electric Commission completed the construction of tunnels whereby water was diverted from the northern end of the Great Lake to a power station which was constructed on the edge of the Western Tiers at Poatina. Thereafter the water was channelled down into Brumbys Creek and eventually to reach the South Esk.

The implementation of this scheme heralded the end of the legendary Shannon Rise which took place annually each December in the short stretch of water between the Great Lake wall and



Penstock is a large and to some extent intimidating fishery. But those who know it well catch some magnificent fish.

the Shannon lagoon. It also meant that the character of the fishing in Penstock Lagoon was forever changed. For some years the lagoon was neglected by the Hydro Electric Commission to the stage that in 1964 it all but dried up. However, as time went by, small amounts of water were begrudgingly released annually into the lagoon by the authorities so as to keep it at a reasonable level and also to accommodate the spawning of rainbow trout in the canal each year. Over the next few years the Penstock Lagoon fishing started to recover.

When I came to know Penstock Lagoon intimately in the early 1970s it was still a magnificent water for the fly fisher. In those days the water would remain clear over most if not all of the summer period. Thus, it provided excellent polaroiding through the early and mid part of the summer.

I remember the first time I fished 'Jacks Point' on the southern side of Beginners Bay. This point was unofficially named after Jack Orr (father of the fishing guide, Ken Orr) who used to stand for hours

from dawn onwards bait fishing a large dry fly out off the point. Some days Jack would get a dozen trout to rise off the point, although he missed most of them on the strike, given that he could never tell when a trout would rise to the fly or not.

I have vivid memories of approaching the point for the first time and seeing large brown trout swimming at speed all around it. I must have seen ten or fifteen trout cruising around the point. At that time I didn't know what they were feeding on that day. But on catching a few fish in other parts of the lagoon on other days I found that their stomachs were crammed with hundreds of bug mudeyes.

As I came to know the water better I found that there was often a difference to be found when dissecting the stomach of a trout caught during the afternoon between the insects that it fed on in the earlier part of the morning and the mudeyes upon which the fish feasted

usually after 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning.

More often than not the predominant food in the trout's stomach up to the time when they commenced feeding on mudeyes were stick caddis.

After spending a season or two fishing this water I discovered that the fishing round the edges of Penstock generally reached its peak in early December to Christmas. The large brown trout would cruise confidently around the edges of the lagoon at 9 or 10 in the morning, at which time they would be generally feeding on stick caddis. I used a sparsely tied nymph with considerable success on such fish. As long as the nymph was cast in front of the fish and was not moved, more often than not the trout would be seen opening its mouth and the nymph would be taken. However at about 10 or 11 o'clock, or sometimes earlier depending upon the weather, the trout would start cruising at great speed around the edges. On some days where this occurred huge



The wall at Penstock – a very popular fishing location

disturbances and bow waves could be seen up and

down the shoreline of the lagoon where the fish were cruising and taking the mudeyes as they struggled up to the surface.

Over the next decade, I set up camp every year, at Penstock Lagoon for the week before Christmas and often had the luxury of having the whole of the eastern shore of the lagoon to myself in the middle of the day. The fishing that I enjoyed over this period was nothing short of magnificent.

I heard with interest John Brookes' account in his Christmas dinner speech as to how anglers these days tend to replace one form of stress with another form of stress when fishing.

This was not the case in those days at Penstock Lagoon. On a bright sunny day one could rise at 8 o'clock and eat an unhurried breakfast, wash and clean up and know that if you started fishing at around 10 o'clock you could have four or five hours of engrossing and difficult

fishing at the end of which you could spend the later afternoon relaxing.

I found that a large size 8-10 red tag, dressed with three hackles was the best fly when the fish were feeding exclusively on mudeyes. Having made this discovery, Bob Roles and I landed fourteen large brown trout one bright sunny day on this fly.

Unfortunately Penstock Lagoon has now entered another sadder phase. In the mid 1980s the HEC started running a substantial flow of water down the canal from early summer so as to provide water to riparian land owners on the Ouse River below Waddamana. Over a period of time this water, drawn off from the shallow and discoloured Shannon Lagoon, resulted in Penstock becoming turbid. These days this once great and historic flyfishing water is now virtually permanently discoloured. I can only express the hope that it will improve and once again recover its position as one of Tasmania's premier flyfishing lakes.

Red Tag or Greenwell?

... a classic piece from David Scholes's *Trout Quest* from 1968

Whatever I say—before the pen even touches the paper—I know that I'm going to have trouble. People will disagree with me. I may get stopped in the street. Some will undoubtedly write. A few might ring up. But I know what I know and that's that.

Let me tell you that for ordinary everyday fishing on ordinary rippling rivers, you might just as well put up a Red Tag to start with as any fly made. Mind you, I have definite ideas on its dressing. The hook, whatever its size, I prefer with a

turned-down eye. The herl body should be fresh and full, its durability being greatly increased if a fine gold wire is wound through it. Floss silk makes an excellent tag, while the hackle should be of equal parts green and red.

Clipping the hackle assists in floatation, especially when fishing rough water, when the size can be increased too. On the average I use a size 12. So there you have it, easy to see and a fine floater. What more could you ask?



The Red Tag and Greenwell's Glory

Even so there are occasions, I must say, when the Red Tag is hopeless, such times, however, being more usually associated with special conditions, selective feeding being the most common. Sometimes an alternative is quite easily found, but sometimes your whole box is no better. The fact remains that on rivers all over the country, and others, the Red Tag has won me some thousands of trout. Great are its virtues and great my esteem.

And what of the Greenwell? Saints, what a fly! Is there a nondescript like it? There are many more colourful, many more fair, but none has a history as great. So fish on, O brother, fish on with heart. Even on those horrible days, frustrating and terrible days, when the trout peer and squint and stare at your offering as they follow it so slowly down - or ignore it entirely, without even a glance - then tie on a Greenwell, small and light hackled, and cast it with confidence and care. Hats off to the Greenwell it's amongst the elite, so here's a few lines in its praise:

When the water is low and depleted of flow,

When the trout are so cunning and shy,

Then put on a Greenwell, you'll be glad that you did;

It's a very remarkable fly!

Of course, even on days when either of these champions works wonders, before you are done you are likely to encounter that proud, arrogant, idiotic type of trout that will have none of you. So what do you do? You either persevere with the dry, try the beetle or nymph, walk past or pelt something at him. They're all much the same these fish, out and out testers that's all.

Come briefly with Fred Stewart and me to the Liffey and I'll show you.

The pool was long and rather attractive with a good bubbly flow entering at its head. This flow swept gently down the left bank along which there were several rocky outcrops. Above this bank young tea-trees overhung thickly. The right side was shallow and clear and the sun shone directly across, brightly illuminating the deeper flow. At the tail of the pool, against the rocky background, I could plainly see two nice trout, one behind the other, lying some two yards apart. The first took my Red Tag gladly and very soon finished on the shore. Fred bagged the next just as quickly, an absolute twin of the first. The Red Tag again.

FLY OF THE MONTH

From Richard Kos - the DLT (Damsel Leech Thing)



Richard Kos, our current very proficient fly tying instructor, discovered this fly and tied up a few samples to try. He found it very effective when fished on some of his local stillwaters. It's tempting for your editor to suggest that all the flies we feature in this section of our newsletter are successful trout catchers, and hopefully they are.

But this pattern, according to Richard, has proven to be particularly attractive to the trout in the reservoirs and dams near where he lives. He thinks that part of the appeal is due to the hook used and the tungsten bead. The fly might look like just another olive or green streamer or damsel nymph pattern (and there are heaps of these), but Richard found that when he casts the fly out and retrieves it at the right speed the hook and tungsten bead combination causes the fly to dip and rise in the water – behaviour that his local trout find very appealing. He does suggest that tying the fly onto the end of your tippet using a loop knot connection also helps.

Richard found this pattern when searching around in Brian Chan's Canadian web pages. Fly tyers keen to see the origins of this pattern should type into Google "brian chan DLT damsel leech thing" or just go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SF0W3zra7_g

Brian Chan's tying of the fly is well worth watching.

Materials needed:

- Hook:** Hanak H450BL in size 12
- Thread:** Olive or Brown-Olive thread in size UTC 70 Denier (i.e. 8/0)
- Bead:** Copper or Gold Tungsten bead in size 3.3 mm
- Tail:** Olive Marabou
- Tail Flash:** Two strands of Olive Crystal Flash – one strand on each side.
- Body:** Semperfli UV Straggle String – pale olive (number 6200)

Tying Procedure:

1. Slide the bead onto the hook and then place the hook in the vice.
2. Take a suitable quantity of olive marabou for the tail and wet it or dampen it (marabou for tails being much easier to handle and tie in if it is damp). Tie it in along the hook shank so that the marabou is part of the body. The length of the tail beyond the end of the hook needs to be about two - three times the length of the hook shank.
3. Tie in a strand of olive crystal flash on each side of the hook so that the length of each piece of crystal flash is slightly shorter than the marabou tail.
4. Tie in a length of pale olive Straggle String behind the bead and tie turns of the Straggle String down the hook shank to the end then back to the back of the bead to form the body. Trim off the Straggle String to complete the fly.



Three DLTs all ready to be fished



Richard Kos with just one of the several fish he has caught recently on our Fly of the Month DLT



VFFA fly tying classes – Richard Kos showing David Hooke how to tie in a hackle

VFFA 2023 meetings & other activities

October

- 8 Sunday Annual trip to Thorpdale to fish the Latrobe Valley Club's stocked dams as guests of the Latrobe Valley members.
Convenor: Hamish Hughes.
- 19 Thursday General Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Annual Auction of equipment and books
(Meal at 6:00 pm and auction commencing at 7:00 pm)
- 25 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm on Zoom

November 2023

- 10 Fri – 12 Sun Annual trip to Warrnambool
- 16 Thursday General Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Speaker – Dr John Morrongiello (topic to be confirmed)
- 29 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club

December 2023

- 15 Friday Christmas Dinner at the Kelvin Club
Speaker: Tom Jarman (topic to be confirmed)

January 2024

- 31 Wednesday First Council Meeting for 2024 – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.

February 2024

- 3 Sat - 11 Sun Tasmanian trip to Hayes on Brumby's. Event Co-ordinator – Chris Gray (chris@graysmail.com.au.)
- 22 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
"Liars' Night" – reports from members on their summer fishing.
- 28 Wednesday Council Meeting – 7:00 pm on Zoom.

March 2024

- March 3 – 10 VFFA trip to Taupo in the North Island of New Zealand
- 21 Thursday General Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club:
Speaker – TBC
- 27 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:00 pm at the Kelvin Club.