

FLY LINES



OCTOBER 2020

October Meeting with Andrew Fuller

We have to believe that these horrid restrictions will eventually be lifted. And the weather will be warmer. And us metropolitan members will be allowed to head off somewhere to wet a line. Where to? Of course we have our favourite haunts, but Andrew Fuller has some suggestions for us too.

Andrew is guest speaker at our October meeting, and has chosen to speak on the topic: "Why putting a pause on exotic overseas fly fishing travel isn't the end of the world."

So Andrew will tell us all about the fabulous trout fishing day trips we can make from Melbourne. He will also suggest some places we should think about visiting when domestic air travel finally happens again.

Andrew is the owner of *The Flyfisher* store in downtown Melbourne. He has worked in the fly fishing industry for over 15 years, and has been mentored by some of the best in the business. A self-confessed gear freak who justifies this because it's his job, we doubt there is anyone who knows more about fly fishing equipment than he does. So he will also tell us about the latest and best in fly fishing gear for 2020.

If after surviving the depressing restrictions of the past months you feel

Thursday, October 15,
8:00 pm,
via Zoom

that a new fly rod or vest or pair of waders is well and truly justified, then Andrew will tell you what to put on the Christmas gift list.

This will again be a Zoom meeting on Thursday, October 15, at 8:00 pm. So you'll be able to settle back at home with a mug of coffee close at hand and enjoy a top presentation by a highly experienced fly fisher and tackle expert.



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The October meeting with Andrew Fuller

As already detailed on page 1, the guest speaker for our October meeting is Andrew Fuller. After his presentation he will also be available to answer our questions.

This again is a Zoom meeting and members will be able to connect using Zoom. The simplest way to join us is to wait for Terry Roger's email just prior to the 15th giving us the invitation. Then you simply click on the Website link he will give inviting members to join in.

Alternatively, you can follow these steps:

1) Open your internet browser and type in <https://zoom.us/join>

2) Type these numbers - 873 6925 3537 - into the box labelled "Meeting ID or Personal Link Name"

3) Click on "Join"

4) A box will then open on your screen asking, "Do you want to allow this page to open zoom.us.app?" Click "Allow".

It is best to have your radio and television turned off if they are on in the same room as you are sitting for using Zoom.

It will take a little while for Zoom to open and then you will join the rest of the members for a very informative and enjoyable night.

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The VFFA Annual Program of Events

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Event	Number of days during the year	When	Where
Council Meetings	11	Each month	Kelvin Club and/or Zoom
General Meetings	8	Each month	Kelvin Club and/or Zoom
Annual Dinner	1	Third Friday in August	Kelvin Club
Annual General Meeting	1	September	Kelvin Club
Christmas Dinner	1	Friday of second week in December	Kelvin Club
President's casting day	1	The Sunday after the Annual Dinner	Red Tag Pool - Fairfield
Casting Days - Winter	2	Third Sunday of the month	Red Tag Pool - Fairfield
Big River weekend	4	In March or April	John Plikington's at Enochs Point
Tasmania Trip	7	Third week in February	Hayes on Brumbys – Cressy, Tas
Donger Weekend Baimsdale FF	4	Usually March	Mitta River
Dam Day Latrobe Valley FF	1	October – usually second weekend	Thorpdale
Hatchery visit	1	TBC	Ballarat
Bruce Whitehead Trophy	3	June or July	Western Lakes
Fly Tying	10	Early in each month	Zoom – various tiers presenting
Warrnambool Weekend	4	Usually a weekend in November	Warrnambool
Stream craft day	1	TBC	Flowerdale
Nymph technique day/s	2	TBC	Acheron River
Millbrook Lake days (3)	4	A day in Spring, Summer and Autumn	Millbrook Lakes
State of Origin (NSW-Vic)	7	May	Millbrook Lakes
End of Season BBQ	1	Previously held at Dobson's property	Previously held at Dobson's property
North Island - New Zealand	7	Rodger Muir to consider when & where Post Covid-19 restrictions	TBA
Other Events that the VFFA supports			
ATF - Habitat days	6		
ATF - Jordan Scotty boxes	2	TBC	Snobs Creek Hatchery
Talk Wild Trout Conference	2	November	Mansfield
Representation / Affiliation			
Vic Fisheries Authority	8	Members Involved	
VFA - Trout Advisory	4	David Grisold and Joanne Dobson	
Snobs Creek Board	4	Dermot O'Brien	
ATF Council Meetings	11	Dr Cleola Anderiesz	
Trout 5 Year Strategy	8	Lyndon Webb and Chris Gray	
		Dermot O'Brien and Chris Gray	

President's Message

It was pleasing to see a great attendance by members and friends to hear the presentations by Mark and Philip Weigall at our September Zoom meeting. They entertained us with their customary banter and then gave us two very informative presentations. Mark spoke about his recent visits to Patagonia and Chile, and Philip gave us some invaluable guidance on lake fishing related to his recently released book on Victoria's western lakes and rivers.

Congratulations to Barney Stephens who took out the prize for the evening – a dozen of each of our guest speakers' favourite flies - the Claret Carrot (Mark) and the Scintilla Stick Caddis (Philip).

Bob Roles has been elected this year as an Honorary Member of the VFFA, a decision unanimously supported by council members. Our heartiest congratulations to you, Bob, on being recognised in this way for your contribution to the VFFA over so many years.

We thank our members and friends who have been able to get out to fish and share photos and videos of their success. Hopefully it's not long before our Melbourne members can enjoy some fishing as well.

We (the Council) have reviewed the range of activities conducted during a normal year and continue to look for ways to bring them to you. In a normal year we have an extensive list of activities available to members, as well as supporting events run by affiliate clubs and associations. We also have representation on various governing groups. We endeavour to run as many of these activities and events as possible - when we can. The list is included in this issue following this report. Some dates have been tentatively



proposed for Hayes on Brumby's in Tasmania in February and the Big River weekend in March. As and when events can be held we will provide as much notice as possible.

A new event in May next year will be the VFFA Members 'State of Origin' competition at Millbrook Lakes. Andrew McKenzie is busy working through the details and will provide a Notice of Event (NOE) soon. It will be a wonderful week and great opportunity to test the competitive skills of our Victorian and New South Wales members.

Fly tying is back on a monthly basis, with Kossy first up taking us through the basic skills of fly tying. Thank you to Aussie Angler for jumping in at short notice to support the tying demonstrations with pre-made kits for purchase.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority has been continuing its programs in support of improved fishing for us when we

do finally get out. Since April this year they have stocked 1,300,000 fish into Victorian rivers, lakes and metropolitan impoundments, with a target of 8 million for the 2020/21 season.

An extensive refurbishment is underway at the Snobs Creek Hatchery as well as work on the new Native Fish Hatchery in central Victoria. A number of grants have been allocated to support further work across the region. Congratulations to the Australian Trout Foundation which has been successful in obtaining a grant to deliver Phase 3 of the Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program.

The VFA has called for comments on the draft regulations for camping access on Crown water frontage. It is expected that the legislation and regulations relating to camping will be in place by December 2020 (subject to Covid-19) and will include

reference to camping distance from the water, campfires, etc. Regulations are currently in place that govern recreational activities on crown land reserves, including environmental protections.

To identify Crown land abutting Victorian rivers and lakes go to MapShare Vic via the link - <https://bit.ly/3mT7fjN>. As it stands now the public can legally access licenced and unreserved Crown land, though leased Crown land is not accessible.

The VFFA will review the proposed regulations and put forward our suggestions and comments. Please feel free to pass on your comments to be included with ours.

Stay safe and in good health.



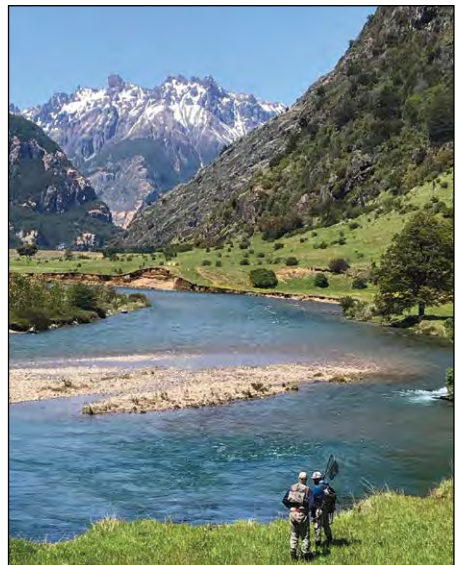
Mark Weigall – September Meeting

Thank you for having both Philip and myself here tonight. We know a lot of you personally.

So, let's talk about Patagonia, Argentina, and Chile. These places have always been on my bucket list; always places I have been wanting to go to. I have now spent probably somewhere between seven or eight weeks there in the last few years, exploring the whole area.

We normally fly the direct 14-hour flight from Melbourne to Santiago and then head south to a place called Puerto Montt. Alternatively you can fly through to Buenos Aires and then head back into Argentina.

I think it is probably the most remote part of the world I have ever seen. You can drive a hundred kilometres along some of the roads and not see another car. You start right at the base of the Andes, which I think reach up some 6,000 metres high, and the number of rios (rivers) and lago



Typical Patagonian river in Chile. The mountain peak in the background is the geographical centre of the Andes



A local farmhand on 430,000 acre sheep property Tecka Estancia

(lakes) that flow out of all those glaciers is truly unbelievable. People ask what it is like and I suggest that it is similar to what the backcountry of New Zealand would have been in the 1960s.

I headed off there with my long-time fishing mate Adam Hill, who some of you know. He's a barrister in Melbourne. When we first went there we decided to try to make the experience as local as we could. We wanted to experience the real Patagonia, so stayed in cabins with local non-English-speaking hosts. This proved to be a highlight of the trip. The locals were such nice people, even if we couldn't understand each other. Hilly nailed the local language better than me and advised me he had the critical phrases sorted, such as "Where's the nearest hospital?" and "Please call the Australian Embassy." Best of all - "Dos cervezas por favour." (Two beers please.)

From Puerto Montt we headed across the border and drove south into northern Argentina. Every direction you look in Argentina is like looking at a postcard. It's the same vista of the Andes all the

way down the spine, with Chile on the green western side and the drier plains of Argentina on the eastern side.

We ended up chasing browns and rainbows and brook trout everywhere we went. Our plan was to pull up beside a river or a lake and if we didn't see a fish inside 5 or 10 minutes we would hop back in the car. In the smaller creeks we employed the 'five casts principle' where we got out of the car in our Blundstones with a Royal Wulff set up on our rods, and regardless of whether it was a small river or a big one we'd have perhaps a dozen casts and if we didn't catch or see a fish we would leave. And with the huge number of rivers and lakes in the area that was something we could quite easily do.

We stayed in these cabanas and they typically cost us about \$16 each per night. To put that in perspective, the peso 15 years ago was equivalent to one Australian dollar, but this year it was 48 - 50 pesos to one Australian dollar. So it's not doing too well.

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Adam fishing a remote spring creek in Argentina attracts the attention of a local gaucho

The Argentinians don't like the English much, which is possibly a response to the Falklands War, and they don't like North Americans much either because they feel a bit used by them. But as soon as they find that you are an Australian, well with our Merino sheep and rugby union, they just love us.

Cholila put us in range of the Los Alerces National Park, where we spent a few days fishing freestone and spring creeks. Besides trout, this area is also famous for being the last known location of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who headed to South America to avoid being executed.

Tecka was our base for the next few days in order to fish the Rio Tecka and Rio Corcovado. Back in Victoria a few years earlier I had met up with a young man of about 18 or 20 who was working on a property near Millbrook and who seemed a bit lonely living in a big house on his own.

So I took him shooting and fly fishing, and when he left he said to me, "If you ever come to Argentina you must look us up and visit us. My father manages a property there." It was a bit more than a property. It was 480,000 acres and had 150 km of two rivers running through the property and five lakes. So it truly was incredible. There were also three spring creeks flowing through the property. The young man that I had befriended took us

around, and we found this creek there. I asked him if there were any trout in it and he said he didn't know because no one ever fished it. Needless to say it proved quite extraordinary - we caught fish up to 4 and 5 lb.

We fished one of the lakes there and caught some 20 fish, both browns and rainbows from 3 lb up to 10 lb. It was a glacial lake and a big body of water which again no-one fished. We fished it with Olive Magoos and caught fish after fish. We also went to a small lagoon on the property which was weeded up but had the odd channel. We got the Claret Carrots out and had the most exceptional day. It was a perfect example of where to use this fly.

We drift-boated one of the two rivers that flowed through the property. The locals didn't fish it from the shore, though it would be very enjoyable fishing it from the shore and I think you might catch more fish that way.

The fishing generally included dry fly, swinging wets (very common in Patagonia), and insane polaroiding. The local wildlife included armadillos, skunks, rhea (like a small ostrich), guanaco (small llama) and pink flamingos!! The two great concerns over there, if we overlook the pumas, was our old mate the skunk and the leprosy-spreading armadillo

Once we left that area we headed down to a place called Rio Pico - the last frontier in the middle of nowhere. Beyond it lies 300 km of remote mountains, rivers and lakes until you hit the coast of Chile. Adam found this place there which I think it was \$20 a night, and the owner is someone we have gone to see twice. He built this remarkable place all by himself in the middle of nowhere, and it took him five years to complete it. He spends about six months of the year there by himself with probably three or four metres of snow outside. But a nicer person you could never meet. Very Argentinian, very welcoming, and, again because we are Australians, he loved us. He took us across the lake there in his fantastic zodiac.

From this place you can head west until you come to the Chilean-Argentina border where there is a boom gate. It is manned by five Argentinian soldiers who are there 24 hours a day all through the year. We were the first people to cross the border in 2½ weeks, so they were happy to do anything for us.

One thing you need to be aware of is that most of the land in Patagonia is private, owned by gauchos (farmers). Imagine this. You're on hands and knees stalking a large rising brown in an unnamed spring creek, when for no apparent reason the fish spooks! Then out of the thicket appears the local gaucho on a white horse with a 3-foot machete across his chest. A rather formidable sight!

And it actually happened. I was on my knees looking at this fish rising whilst making a back cast when this shape appeared over the top of me. He wasn't happy and was initially fairly aggressive with us. But we 'chatted' in broken Spanish and when I said we were from Australia his demeanour changed completely. He smiled, mentioned something about the Pumas beating the Wallabies, and said, "You are welcome to fish anywhere you like on my property!" (Well, we think that's what he said...) Then he rode off into the bush, never to be seen again.

I think that on the river that we fished that day we landed something like 30 or 40 fish.

There are some huge fish in the rivers in Argentina, and there are small fish there too. And the variety is extraordinary. We had lots of double hook-ups.

Basically anything that looked like it held water all year round had trout in it. We found a lake on the edge of the road so we walked in and saw fish rising from one end to the other. So we just worked our way along catching fish all the way along the shore.

We also discovered that they use very large flies. On both the rivers and the lakes they use these large black foam patterns – Chernobyl Ant type flies, even when the fish were sipping or were on damsel flies. It didn't matter what they were doing, the locals would tie on these huge flies and the fish would take them. This is something I'm going to try back here in Australia - to see what sort of difference it makes.

We caught a lot of brook trout, but mostly around the 1 lb mark. We didn't catch many bigger ones. All part of the learning curve of being there.

You wouldn't want to go to Argentina and be a vegetarian. They had meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and a lot of it. The places we stayed at were spectacular.

Anyway, my time is up. As you can see, Chile and Argentina are exceptional places to fly fish.



A 10 lb brown caught by Mark on a dry fly in a glacial lake at the base of the Andes



Philip Weigall – September Meeting

I know what you're thinking ... well, some of you at least. Lake fishing? Boo! Lake fishing in Victoria? Double boo!

Yes, I love my lake fishing. But I'm a realist, and I know that many of you haven't been dreaming of racing up to Newlyn or Tullaroop the moment lockdown ends. Maybe if it was midwinter and the streams were still closed I'd have a fighting chance. But as it stands, I bet you're gazing into the middle distance imagining Rubicon runs and Delatite drop-offs. Don't worry; I get

it. It won't be long before I, too, make a dash for a mountain stream.

But what if you could have both? All the fun of the fast-flowing streams, plus the option of a big one from the lakes? I've got about 15 minutes here tonight to persuade you that this really is possible.

Here's the possible reward – the photo on the left shows a sight-fished 5 pounder hooked at Hepburn on Tuesday.

Okay, so how do you get from here to there?

Planning – pick the right lake(s).

Hopefully my new book (*Fly Fishing Western Victoria*) will be a good start in this process; Step 1 if you like. If you've got it, I'd suggest reading it from cover to cover to familiarise yourself with everything out there; then use it to narrow down choices depending on time of year, travel time available, weather and so on. Then, look at the stocking history of the water you've chosen – at least for the last two years, and ideally the last three years from the VFA Fish Stocking Database:



Hooked up to a 5 pounder at Hepburn – photo by Kiel Jones

A screenshot of the Victorian Fisheries Authority website. The page displays search results for fish stocking data at Newlyn Reservoir from January 1, 2018, to September 16, 2020. The results show three entries for Brown trout, all stocked on different dates in July 2020. The table includes columns for Date stocked, Species, Number, Av. weight (g), Type, and Marking. The left sidebar contains navigation links for various fishing-related topics.

Date stocked	Species	Number	Av. weight (g)	Type	Marking
29th July 2020	Brown trout	3,200	50.0	Salmonid	Not Tagged
22nd July 2020	Brown trout	3,800	50.0	Salmonid	Not Tagged
24th July 2020	Brown trout	4,000	50.0	Salmonid	Not Tagged

Next, check the recent water history – at least for the last two years (there are numerous online resources for this – see the book). Basically, you’re looking here for over-summer survival; i.e. avoidance of extremely low levels. Then consider the current water conditions. (Avoid a fast fall in water level or extreme discolouration – the latter being often associated with a rapid rise in level.)

On the chosen day try to match your destination with expected conditions – e.g. shallow, clear lakes best when overcast, in shadow, or early or late in the day. Bright days are great for deep, clear lakes, etc. At least while you’re finding your lake feet, so to speak, go for offshore winds, and avoid strong winds period – permission then to go stream fishing!

Gear Right

I’m not asking, I’m begging: a reel with a decent drag, lots of backing, the best 8 lb tippet money can buy, a fly on a decent hook, good, pre-tested knots, and a BIG, easy-to-access landing net.



A decent net is essential for the large fish you are going to catch

The Fly

Hmmm, this bit is a bit tricky but not insurmountable. As always, just like on a river, I want you to invest heavily in fishing the fly well: getting it there fast and accurately; retrieve, depth, not attacking the fish with the fly, minimising the chances of the trout detecting you or your gear (your fly line for instance.)

But I concede you need a fly you’re going to have some faith in, so allowing for my fear

of overlooking something, here are a few flies which are really good, and which will (on their day) catch a western Victoria lake trout:

Woolly Buggers for rough, cloudy, low light, deep or discoloured water. Otherwise err towards small and sparse flies: baitfish like a BMS, Tom Jones, Wet’s Zonker. Or a Stick Caddis, or Buzzers (midge pupa).

You can add your favourite Tassie lake mayfly dun pattern for any dun hatches (along with slim dark nymphs), a Cubits Mudeye for after dark during the warmer months, and a Fulling Mill Living Damsel.

Of course there are countless other really good flies (including in the book), but the above list is a good start.

Mindset

Okay, this is the hard bit. You are on the right track if you choose your lake as above, and you’re geared up right. However, you need to be confident and excited from the moment you get out of the car, and you must sustain that attitude without the positive reinforcement of experiencing takes and spotting rises, etc, that you usually get on the Steavenson..

I know - this is chicken and egg, but you need to be focused, or you’ll miss the rare, vital moments when you can actually see (or hear) a fish, and you’ll miss those similarly rare takes.

To put it another way, you can daydream your way up the Ovens and you’ll still probably catch at least something, but on a western lake, the odds against that are about one in a million!

A Story

Okay, you’ve done your homework. You’ve read the book. You’ve picked a lake, checked the last two or three years of stocking data, you know the summer conditions were ‘survivable’, you’ve researched the latest lake levels and trends, and checked the forecast. You have some

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Looking hard for signs of a fish at Newlyn

idea what to expect, and you've geared up accordingly.

Maybe a Scintilla Stick Caddis isn't the perfect fly, but you must have something tied on and ready to go – who knows how many (if any) shots you're going to get. It's a bright day and the water is clear, so if you do see a fish, you want something subtle you can present more-or-less inert. And you know it's a rare western lake trout that will swim past a well-presented Scintilla Stick Caddis.

Often you'd skip this shallow, clear lake on a bright day – the trout can get a bit skittish when it's like this. But with the water level almost full, and the air and water brimming with early spring life, you reckon there's a chance a few fish won't be able to help themselves – and spotting conditions are perfect.

You walk a kilometre without seeing anything besides the little rises of a few stockies. BUT you don't give up; not even close. It looks good, it looks right. If you look – and listen – hard enough, any moment you'll find a beauty.

And then you do. A hundred metres away there's a powerful swirl on the edge of a dark weed-bed. No stocky that one! So you literally jog to the area, crouch on a pile of boulders, and scan. You see a dark smudge about a foot your side of the weed. Could just be weed... no, it's moving. One false

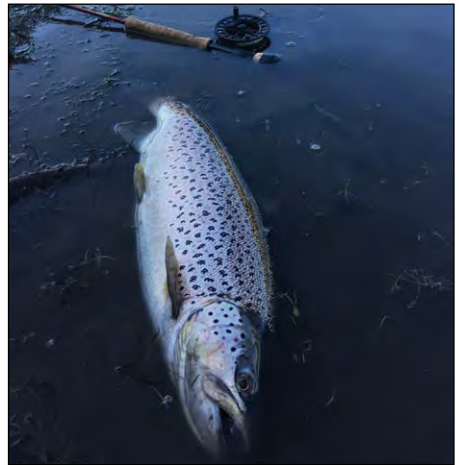
cast, one presentation cast and the Sticky lands two metres ahead of the smudge. The smudge moves over, the indicator dips, and all hell breaks loose.

Put and Grow

So you've caught your big western Vic lake trout, and the world is a beautiful place! Now, even at lakes like Hepburn, with a 45 cm size limit, you're technically allowed to keep it.

But let me put something to you: these wonderful lakes should not be thought of as put and TAKE fisheries. Tuki Trout Farm and Buxton Trout Farm are put and take. Instead, all these lakes should be treated by us as put and GROW fisheries, just like Botsford and Penstock in Tasmania. Within a few months of being stocked in western Victoria's lakes, surviving browns and rainbows are effectively wild fish, with the same growth potential – and deserving of the same respect.

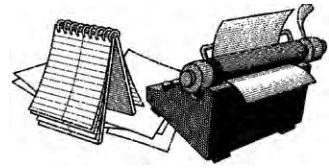
So the thought I want to finish with is this - if we all let most of our western Victoria lake trout go, I'll guarantee you there will be even more of them there for us next time.



Put and Grow potential – a world-class brown of 8 lb from Moorabool Reservoir which started life as a Snobs Creek Hatchery stockie



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"A man going to a pond (where it seems a pike had devoured all the fish) to water his mule, had a pike bite his mule by the lips, to which the pike hung so fast that the mule drew him out of the water and so by accident the owner of the mule also got the pike." (Izaak Walton: *The Compleat Angler*, 1653)

"The sporting qualities of a fish are dependent neither on its size nor its weight, but on the effort of concentration, the skill and mastery it demands from the fishermen." (Charles Ritz: *A Fly Fisher's Life*, 1959)

"My big fish must be somewhere." (Ernest Hemingway)

"In England David and I are big fish in a small pond. But in L.A., we are tiny, tiny, tiny fish in a big pond." (Victoria Beckham)

You're correct – big fish have captured my thinking in recent days. It all started a few weeks ago when I read an article in Philip Weigall's fabulous *FlyStream* digital magazine. Philip had been out fishing Moorabool Reservoir, a short drive from where he lives, and had caught a fish. The fish, a brown, weighed 8 lb. As trout go in Victoria that would be regarded as a very respectable capture.

Big fish always grab our interest and attention. We can all recall when we caught our largest fish, and how large it was. Last year, when a team from the VFFA Visited Thorpdale as guests of the Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers, our president,

Chris Gray, landed one of 7 lb! Indeed a very noteworthy capture.

Out in my garage there resides a rainbow trout that weighed just a tad under 13 lb on the day it was caught in September 1997. Tragically I wasn't the angler. David Featherstone is one of our VFFA elder statesmen and he specialised in catching large fish. His largest was 17 lb, if my memory is correct, and he caught truckloads of other very big ones. Anything over 12 lb was kept and mounted in glass presentation cases and put on display in his house. Those of us who visited David at home found ourselves surrounded by this huge collection of monster trout.



A tad under 13 lb and great decoration in an otherwise quite uninteresting suburban garage

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David was a highly skilled angler, and was also prepared to pay the price. He frequently left home at 3 o'clock in the morning to be on a favourite lake at the crack of dawn "when the big ones cruise the edges."

But age catches up with us all, and David moved to Perth with his wife Alison a few years ago to live close to his two daughters. I spoke to him on the phone a short time ago. He was very keen to pass on his best wishes to all his VFFA friends, and also confessed that he doesn't fish any more. He turns 86 on his next birthday.

When David packed up and left he didn't take those big fish with him. Instead he gave them away as gifts to many of his friends. And so it was that I had a phone call and was invited to call in and take my pick. So in due course I made my selection and carried this magnificent almost 13 lb rainbow, beautifully mounted in a glass case, out to my car for the trip home. When I arrived home I proudly showed this wonderful new acquisition to my dear wife. "You're not putting that thing in the house!" Oh dear. So now David's magnificent trout resides happily in our garage, and I admire it every day.

This same fate happened to my great friend Peter Scott, who I met in 1981 when I taught in New Zealand for a year. Peter frequently fished the Tongariro, and late one evening in the 1970s he connected with a very strong fish that kept him occupied for some 40 minutes. He finally landed it – a magnificent 12 lb brown. It was the largest fish he had ever caught, so he, too, had it professionally mounted in a glass case. And he, too, then found that his excitement wasn't shared. So his fish also took pride of place out in the garage.

While most big fish come out of lakes, here in Victoria the rivers that consistently provide monsters are those out west in the Warrnambool district. A 3 lb trout from the little Taggerty would be celebrated as

an exceptional trophy; a 3 pounder from the Merri or Moyne wouldn't even draw a second look.

In April 1977 I drove Jim Blakeslee (then fairly new to Warrnambool) across to the Moyne at Port Fairy. We parked and then walked in along the old railway track to the river. I headed off downstream and Jim started fishing upstream from the railway bridge. A short time later I looked up the river and saw Jim with his rod doubled over. I assumed he'd got himself caught up in the copious reeds there so ignored him and went on fishing. But some 10 minutes later when I had another look I saw that Jim was pacing up and down the bank with his rod turned inside out.

The penny dropped. I scooted up the river to see what was happening. Jim was connected to a massive fish that was cruising up and down a long deep pool. He eventually netted it – a magnificent 7½ lb brown. That night just happened to be the Warrnambool Fly Fishing Club's annual dinner, and a number of Melbourne-based VFFA members had come down for the occasion. So Jim's fish was put on display on a table at the entrance to the dinner, and the villainous Arty Hogan spent most of the evening laying it on with a trowel - telling our Melbourne guests how while they spent their weekends fiddling around with their little rods at the Red Tag Casting Pool "us country anglers just head out and catch proper fish like this."

In November last year I returned to Warrnambool as part of the VFFA's annual visit, and David Coutts, a Warrnambool club member, offered to guide me for the day. He took me across to the Moyne and we parked at the Toolong Bridge. We organised our gear and clambered down to the riverbank, where David gave me some instructions and a fly he recommended, and we commenced fishing upstream. I went ahead, as instructed, and David fished up behind

me. We were no more than 40 metres upstream from the bridge when David yelled that he had connected. It was a brown and when finally landed the scales sank down to 6½ lb. Not as big as Jim's, but still a wonderful river fish. David, a true sportsman, was then full of apologies - apparently as the guest I was supposed to catch all the fish; he was just there as the guide. I was absolutely delighted for him and gratified to witness another fabulous capture.

Which does get me to a terrible confession. Over the years I have connected with some monsters, but sadly all of my really big ones have escaped. I remember a day in 1983 when I fished the Red Hut Pool on the Tongariro. I'd made a good start, landing three rainbows that were all about 4 lb. Then I hooked something that was clearly in another class. It felt very heavy, clearly lots bigger than my three earlier fish, and towed me all over the place for about 10 minutes before coming loose.

In January 2006 my wife and I stayed with friends at Hanmer Springs in New Zealand's South Island. I begged a loan of the family car for a morning and scooted up over the range to the Clarence River, where I parked, set up with a nymph

under an indicator, and fished upstream for about three hours. It was a glorious morning and I caught a number of rainbows about the 1 lb size and a brown about 3 lb. When I arrived back at the car I decided to have a final cast in the river right beside the car. I cast the nymph up along the edge of the river and as it came back downstream in the very clear water I saw a fish that looked like a small pig drift up from behind a rock and intercept the nymph. We connected, and this monstrous brute tore off downstream at huge velocity, threading his way around a number of nasty large boulders. Then he waved me goodbye and continued on his way. It was all over in maybe seven or eight seconds.

I could go on. There are more sorry tales like this. Just down the road from where I live are the Rowville Lakes. I met a serious carp angler there one morning who told me about the 30 lb carp that he and his mates had caught there. They had caught a few of them, in fact. I didn't get too excited though. I just prefer my fish with spots on the sides.

Take care and stay safe,

Lyndon



Our November meeting with John Billing from Mending Casts

Mending Casts Inc run free live-in weekend fly fishing retreats for Australians dealing with cancer. Most notably we host the internationally acclaimed programs "Casting for Recovery" in Victoria and "Reel Recovery" across Australia, as well as our planned "Casting for Kids" days. As a

registered non-profit organisation run solely by unpaid volunteers, we are entirely self-funded. These funds are obtained through donations from a broad range of fund-raising activities, supporters, sponsorships, corporate partnerships and government grants, with every dollar being >>>

invested back into our programs and the activities which support them.

Initially setup to implement the Casting for Recovery retreat program in Victoria, we have been operating since February 2019 and our first retreat was held in Eildon in September 2019. Many VFFA members will be aware of these activities through presentations or raffles held last year, and we remain grateful for the VFFA's ongoing support.

This year was to see the first ever Reel Recovery retreat held in Australia, but the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that this event has been postponed until circumstances allow us to run it again. However, let me take this opportunity to provide more information on the Reel Recovery program and encourage members to get involved.

Reel Recovery was founded in the USA in May 2003 by a group of avid fly fishers, who were inspired by their fishing buddy Stewart Brown's ongoing battle with brain cancer. Witnessing first-hand the beneficial impact fly fishing provided their friend, they created "Reel Recovery" to provide the same opportunity for other men battling the disease. Stuart dedicated his final months to the creation of Reel Recovery so that other men facing similar battles could experience the healing serenity that fly fishing offered him. He managed to attend that first retreat before he died, and whilst there inscribed in the dust on a friend's car window the motto that has come synonymous with the organisation: "Be Well – Fish On".

The program provides men dealing with all forms of cancer a unique opportunity to share their stories, learn a new skill, form lasting friendships and gain renewed hope as they confront the challenges of their disease. Retreats are conducted over a two-and-a-half day period at a venue with onsite or nearby fishing access. All meals, accommodation and fly fishing equipment

are provided at no cost. Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from the Retreat. Men at any stage of treatment, recovery or in full remission from any type of cancer are eligible to attend one Retreat each and no previous fishing experience is necessary. Medical clearance from a physician is required. The Retreats are designed to provide support and information regarding cancer and cancer recovery, and to provide introductory instruction in the sport of fly fishing.

Today, the program is well established and wide-spread throughout mainland USA and Canada, and there is even a retreat program operating in New Zealand. To date over 3,500 men have experienced it and so many have described it as "life changing". The first Australian Retreat was due to be held at Omeo in October 2020, but will be suspended until Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and it is safe to resume.

Should you be interested in attending our retreat or know of someone who could benefit, please email our secretary at admin@mendingcasts.org for more details. There is a limit of 12 places per event, but we have plans to run one Reel Recovery and one Casting for Recovery event each year assuming we can get the required funding.

More information is available at www.mendingcasts.org

A sincere "Thank You" again to the VFFA Committee and members for your continued support.



This Month's Yarn ...

"That Red Tag is a truly great fly," said Hamish. "I've caught bags of fish on it in New Zealand, and here in Victoria too, and especially down there in Tasmania. It's a true champion. One of the best, wouldn't you think."

Whilst pondering the sagacity of Hamish's opinion McTaggart tapped his glass on the bar whilst looking around to see who was likely to sponsor his third helping.

Tony relented, raised his eyebrows, reached deeply into a pocket and rescued a lobster which he dropped on the bar. McTaggart relaxed visibly and proceeded with his tale.

"It was some years ago," he commenced. "I was up in central Gippsland fishing the Mittabunga, and it had been a long, hard and very hot day. I'd fished for hours and hadn't seen a fish. The weather was getting progressively less friendly and a thunderstorm was brewing when I sat

down on a log at the end of a pool with my feet in the water."

"From my seated position I made a few half-hearted casts, more for the practice than for any other reason, because it all felt pretty futile and hopeless. After a while I stood up to move on and felt something pulling at my bootlace. I looked down and saw that the lace on my right boot had come undone and was swirling around in the current. And a sizeable trout, intrigued by all this, was nipping at my loose bootlace and trying to swallow it. So I whipped out my net and scooped it up. Two pounds the scale read – a very reasonable trout for this river, so in the creel it went."

"Now why did this happen? Well, I'd put some new laces in my boots and had used a pair that were a very bright red. So there you are - this would have to be the weirdest way that a Red Tag has taken a trout."

ATF Report

... from Terry George, ATF president

Our Vision:

The ATF seeks to ensure that all Australians can enjoy trout fishing now and for future generations to come.

Our Mission:

- a) The ATF's mission is to protect, build and promote Australia's trout fishery, and ...
- b) To protect, repair and regenerate inland waterways and riparian zones for better stream water quality, thus providing better environmental outcomes for both trout and native fish species.

Partners and supporters:

Our most valuable asset in accomplishing our vision and mission are the working relationships we have with our partners, members and supporters.

The VFA Grant:

The ATF has been given an RFL grant of \$110,000 to be used in enhancing our waterways and our trout fishery. In providing this grant the Victorian Fisheries Authority gave trout fishers a huge vote of confidence when it delegated responsibility to the Australian Trout Foundation to manage and administer this grant. These funds are essential for continuing the Wild Trout Management Program and other priority actions contained in Victorian Wild Trout Strategy. The significant advice and assistance provided by VFA's Inland Fisheries Managers to the ATF in the preparation of the grant submission was greatly appreciated. >>>





Stocking the Dargo River in Gippsland river – some 50,000 brown trout were released, so hopefully some fabulous fishing there in a year or two

The ATF is the recognized representative body for trout fishers and as such will be calling on its many passionate volunteers for assistance in carrying out a number of important priority actions being funded by the grant monies.

We work together with anglers, Angling Clubs and Associations, the Victorian Fisheries Authority, the Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning; the Catchment Management Authorities, Landcare Groups and Native Fish Australia Vic.

We also have representation on the following forums: the Victorian Freshwater Fish Habitat & Flows Forum, the Wild Trout Fishers Reference Group, and the Victorian Statewide Fishing Roundtable Forum.

Volunteers:

Volunteers have been the lifeblood of the ATF environmental projects and Jordan Scotty incubation trials in the last few years. This solid band of volunteers has turned up to assist in delivering projects up in such diverse locations as:

- The Snobs Creek Hatchery
- Ovens River
- Steavenson River

- Rubicon River
- Nariel Creek
- Buckland River
- Mitta Mitta River
- Macalister River
- Dargo River
- King River
- Jamieson River
- Delatite River
- Howqua River

Projects in these areas have included environmental repair including tree and vegetation planting, in-stream habitat installation, and the seeding of the Jordan Scotty in-stream incubators. In the Victorian Wild Trout survey data over 550 people responded, indicating that they would be willing to become involved in environmental and other works to assist in the development and sustainability of the wild trout fishery.

This is a remarkable response and as soon as Covid-19 restrictions ease the ATF will be calling on this magnificent volunteer army in the service of better stream and riparian health.

The ATF wishes to acknowledge the strong support that the VFFA and other member clubs have provided in our projects and events.



A quick release – fry were funnelled down the blue hose



VFFA Fly Tying Program

... A note from David Hooke

Many members I suspect have admired the creations of the skilled fly tiers in our midst and have thought "one day I'd like to try that". But where to start is the question ... it looks such an arcane art!

Your Council discussed this at our last meeting, and with the help of new councillor Jo Dobson we are putting together a program of tutorials on the first Tuesday of each month, and you will see them listed in our calendar in the newsletter.

Richard Kos will start proceedings in October with a session devoted to the basics, including a discussion of important equipment, materials and techniques. John Pilkington will follow in November with a demonstration of how to tie a Red Tag. Andrew Mossman will be our December demonstrator and he will show us how to tie a couple of very effective flies using possum fur.

Members will be asked to register for each event and a package of materials required for the month's chosen fly will be sent to them prior to the session. Aussie Angler store will make available a starter kit which will include a fly tying vice, basic tying tools and some essential materials at a very reasonable price. This will allow members



Richard Kos is one of our regular fly tying demonstrators

to test the water and upgrade as their skills progress, rather than outlaying a lot of money on something which may, or may not, develop into a lifelong passion.

We are starting with the basics and a fairly simple fly, but intend to gradually increase the complexity with succeeding months so there will be something of interest for everyone.

This is an exciting new initiative for the VFFA, and I urge all members who have dreamt of one day catching a fish on a fly of their own creation to join in.

These monthly fly tying tutorials will be Zoom presentations starting at 8:00 pm, so members involved will be able to remain at home whilst following the instructions. The introductory session will be on Tuesday, October 6, the second session on Tuesday, November 3, and the final session for this year on Tuesday, December 1. The program will continue on into next year.

>>>



John Philbrick at a VFFA fly tying evening demonstrating the best way to tie a Red Tag

Tasmania Report

... from Chris Wisniewski, Inland Fisheries Service

As the weather warms the fishing is starting to heat up as well here in Tasmania. Four Springs Lake went a bit quiet during late August and early September, as bright clear days made it difficult to drag the fish away from the plentiful food in the thick weed beds. Then in the third week of September the duns appeared and the fish came up on them. Overcast conditions proved best and some fantastic fishing was reported as the big browns came out to play. One of the biggest dun hatches ever seen on this lake occurred on Sunday, September 20, but the fish were difficult. Lots of midges early in the morning are also bringing fish up. In the next few weeks it can only get better as the trout focus on the duns.

Lake Leake? It just keeps getting better and better. Some cracking fish, both browns and rainbows, are being caught there up to 4 kg. Woolly Worms and Stick Caddis are the flies that are working, though no doubt the fish will start looking up as it continues to warm and the dry fly fishing comes into its own.

The rainbow trout spawning run is now underway at Liawenee and the fish appear to be in superb condition.

The water level in Little Pine Lagoon has been drawn down and fish are appearing in numbers around the edges. The giveaway is often the tiniest fin tip cutting the surface or a very subtle movement in the water surface. Small nymphs fished inert have been catching fish.

Whitebait have arrived in the lower reaches of the Mersey River, and so too have the trout. As a result there has been some fast and furious fishing to these big brownies as they smash the whitebait. The Mersey has also provided great nymph fishing further upstream as the flow has receded to a wadable level.

Some fabulous fish are also being caught in Arthurs. The browns are in close along the edges, though only in patches. Stripping small wets is attracting their attention. Gunns and Little Lake are other waters that have started fishing well. Polaroiding on the bright days and pulling dries when it is overcast are bringing fish up to the fly.

The gate into the Nineteen Lagoons is still closed but should open in coming weeks. Those keen enough to walk in have found



The rainbow trout spawning run is now well underway at Liawenee and the fish are in great condition.

fish tailing around the edges. Water levels aren't particularly high at present, but water will flood into the backwaters when we have some more spring rain.

The Tyenna River has been fishing well, producing lots of fish to weighted nymphs.

But then so, too, are many other streams around the state.

We look forward to the borders opening again so you can all come down and enjoy some of our wonderful fishing.

Some Help With Social Media?

Facebook? Twitter? Instagram? Bewildered?

Yes, in this new age these 'social media' computer applications are pervasive, yet for many of us rather mysterious and confusing. The challenge is for us to come to terms with them, and we should. Lots of great information (Facebook) and fabulous photos (Instagram) can be accessed via these applications. So it would be very useful for us to know what to do with them and how to use them safely.

Fortunately for us bemused and confused members help is at hand. Will Davidson, a new member of our council, is highly skilled and knowledgeable in the use of these social media applications and is very keen to help those of us who could do with some instruction.

Will is offering a session for people of all levels of knowledge, from sworn luddites through to those looking to simply polish up their social media skills. He will run through how to set up and safely use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with a particular focus on connecting with the VFFA and other VFFA members.

Will is suggesting a first session on Tuesday, October 27, at 7:00 pm for those who would like some instruction on these social media applications. As we get closer to this date either Terry Rogers or Will Davidson will email us with the Zoom meeting details for those who would like to log in for this instruction. If preferred or if you have any further questions, feel free to contact Will on 0418 160 020 or by email on w.davidson151@gmail.com

Mallard and Claret – 100 Years of the Ballarat Fly Fishers

... a note from Gerard Richmond, Secretary, Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club (0417 336 675 and ballaratflyfishers@gmail.com)

Many of you would be aware the Ballarat Fly Fishers' Club has just come off its Centenary Year. A few years prior to this it was decided to produce a book to celebrate the milestone. The 'masterpiece' is now at the printers. Pre-delivery sales have been open to members of the club and it is now time to open up the sales to other fly fishing groups and their members.

The book is titled "**Mallard and Claret – 100 Years of the Ballarat Fly Fishers**", and copies are now available in two formats: a buckram bound book limited to just 80 copies (numbered from 1 to 80) and costing

\$135/copy, and a colour hard cover bound book costing \$55. There is a purchase limit of one book per transaction and all books will be available for pick up from the Ballarat Fly Fishers' clubrooms (or an alternate should Covid-19 restrictions still be in force) following delivery. We expect delivery to be around the end of September 2020.

All sales are being conducted on the Try booking platform available at the following link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BKQCT>

VFFA and Millbrook Lakes

Members will be very pleased to hear that Mark Weigall is again offering VFFA members the opportunity to fish Millbrook Lakes on three occasions in the next year. (We were originally offered a day in August, but this was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.)

The three remaining days available are Wednesday, November 25 (2020), Wednesday, January 20 (2021), and Wednesday, March 3 (2021).

Provided the Covid-19 restrictions make it permissible for us to fish Millbrook in November, members will be notified in the November newsletter and invited by an email in November (from Terry Rogers) to apply to join those wishing to fish this fabulous fishery.

We can also report that new council member Andrew McKenzie has been busy organizing a 'State of Origin' friendly

competition between teams of VFFA members representing Victoria and NSW. Each state will have six competitors in their team, and Andrew is keen to report that he has already enlisted his team of NSW representatives.

We Victorians will have a distinct home-ground advantage because the venue for this great interstate battle will be Millbrook Lakes. Andrew has been in touch with Mark Weigall, and while it is early days and details are yet to be confirmed the tentative arrangements are as follows:

The tentative date for this event is May 2021. According to Mark the month of May is a peak Mayfly / dry fly time at Millbrook so the fishing should be superb.

The two teams will have exclusive access to five of the Millbrook lakes for five days of fishing, six nights of accommodation and some guiding.



One of the lakes at Millbrook, with Richard Kos connected to a lively rainbow

The program is as follows:

Arrive Sunday, May 16, and depart Sunday, May 23.

On Sunday, May 16, the NSW team arrive, perhaps the Victorian team too. On the Monday and Tuesday the two teams practice, with some help from guides. Then on the Wednesday and Thursday the competition ensues, with two three-hour sessions each day. On the Friday there is one final three-hour session, to be followed by the totalling of points and an Awards Dinner. Saturday might offer for those interested a relaxed no-pressure day of fishing. On the Sunday the teams head for home.

Catering – team members will self-cater for breakfast and dinner, with lunches included in the package.

Mark has put together a very attractive package which involves six nights of accommodation, five days fishing five fabulous lakes, and some guiding thrown in. The price per angler is still being finalized but Mark has been very generous, and the package he is proposing for a week at Millbrook Lakes with accommodation will be a lot cheaper than a week in New Zealand or Tassie. Well worth thinking about.

Our Victorian Fishing – the Goulburn River and the Warrnambool District

This year's trout season on the rivers opened some weeks ago and John Douglas, Rod Barford and Jim Blakeslee have provided notes on their experiences:

John Douglas's report on the Goulburn:

What a difference a week makes. Trout opening saw the Goulburn at 400 Megalitre/day and the feeder streams running high and cold. While that's still the case for the tributaries with their best still to come, the Goulburn is the place to be and has been fishing quite well.

As is typical with the Goulburn, its flow rates are up and down. It rose to 1,250 ML/day just after the trout opening and then dropped back to 400 ML/day. But that hasn't upset the fishing. The river has some colour to it around Alexandra and the Breakaway, but it clears above the junction with the Rubicon.

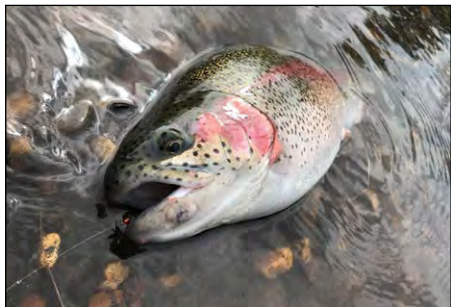
In terms of the fishing, swinging streamers through the runs during the day has been productive for both browns and natural rainbows. There are also the odd sporadic 'oncers' rising throughout the day for anglers to target as well.



John Douglas's son Scott shows it can still be done in Covid conditions

The river upstream of the Rubicon junction has also seen some light evening hatches. These hatches have been very weak, but there is enough of it happening to see fish rising that can be targeted with dries.

For anglers contemplating fishing the Goulburn - be warned. The Victorian Fisheries Authority has again >>>



The business end of one of those large rainbows released in the Goulburn at the season opening

released some very large rainbows into the river and these are now spread out. These fish are quick to pounce on any streamers, so some heavier tippet needs to be used.

Rod Barford's experiences on the Goulburn:

The other day I ended up at the Thornton bridge and fished the Goulburn downstream. After spending an hour failing to interest a couple of risers I sat on the bank to change my leader and fly. Geoff Hall came along so we sat and chatted for a while, then he headed further down to the next big bend.

I again failed to get a rise to the half-dozen flies I tried to tempt rising fish with. There were plenty of longhorn caddis about, some laying eggs while they bounced over the water and others got taken by the trout, but even though I threw all my best egg-laying caddis patterns at them I couldn't get a touch.

So I tried to frighten them into submission with a size 6 Green Matuka. No luck, so I changed down to a size 10 and got a couple of tail nips but no solid takes. Time to try a Bob Wyatt Deerhair Emerger. A thousand casts later I was still defeated, so skulked down to the next piece of water where I saw more rising fish. Basically - a repeat of the first two pools.

Geoff crossed back from the other side so we had another yarn. This very experienced and knowledgeable local angler had suffered a similar fate to me, bar one small

rainbow that managed to impale itself on his Caddis Pupa. All the while there was a variety of airborne insects to tease the trout into mostly fruitless leaps, but I did witness two beautiful airborne interceptions of dragonflies.

The trout were definitely looking up, which is somewhat unusual this early in the season. In my experience September is nearly always a wet fly month, with the first tentative hatches occurring in early October.

Back at the car I pulled out my roll-up insect sieve and spent nearly an hour trying to see what I could find. Lots of almost mature nymphs with half a dozen Kozzy nymphs among them. The rest were mostly Baetidae and Caenidae, with a healthy roll-call of caddis larvae across a multitude of species.

It rained for much of Saturday night, beginning at 1:30 am and continuing till 10:00 am. I was wakened when the main storm arrived by a steady drip, drip, drip ... on my face. That leak in the roof that I had forgotten to fix! I just pulled up the flap of my swag and went back to sleep. Once the front moved through it became a lovely day, ideal for enjoying some more time on the Goulburn River.

Jim Blakeslee's Report from 'Way Out West' - Fishing through the Covid-19 Pandemic

How many times could it jump? That's 11, now 12, 13, 14 ... In the end it leapt - tail thrashing, head shaking and body twisting - 15 times before I netted it! Unreal. Is it



Jim's magnificent five pounder from the Moyne a few weeks ago



Two is better than one. Jim with another couple of magnificent browns from those fabulous Warrnambool rivers

because of the cold, oxygenated water in wintertime? Maybe the feeling of release after the spawning season has finished?

The water has cleared up earlier than most years and this fish, like all the others I have caught recently, was about 5 lb and in prime condition. There is obviously plenty of food for Warrnambool district trout and this year the fish aren't having any trouble finding it, either. After cleaning this one the autopsy revealed a handful of stick caddis, as well as shrimp and a few galaxias minnows in the gut of this fat brown. So, plenty of food to build muscle mass and "fuel" to power the fish's valiant, but ultimately futile, effort to shake loose that irritating fly stuck in its upper jaw. Not much to look at really – a simple #12 yellow-headed stick caddis pattern that has fooled most of the trout I've caught in the last few months. A Philbrick nymph would probably work just as well.

The brown I landed half an hour earlier had taken the same fly and put on an impressive display, too, pulling hard and jumping seven times, as witnessed by a mob of sheep grazing on the bank opposite me. After netting it I had gently released it back into the Moyne River so some other angler can try her/his hand catching it another time.

The second brown wasn't so lucky. I had kept it and as I rode my bike back to the

car along the Rail-Trail I thought about how the fish could be prepared. Back home it was destined for 24 hours brining, then an hour in the smoker, Cryovac bagging and refrigerating overnight before finally reaching the dinner table. The bright orange flesh was a great entrée when it finally made its debut at the dinner table, garnished with a sprig of parsley, a twist of cracked pepper, a wedge of lime, and accompanied by a slice of extra sour dough baguette and a chilled glass of chardonnay. The next night my wife prepared a smoked trout fettuccini. Heaven! In the end, it featured in four meals and the leftovers made several ramekins of smoked trout pâté that were popped in the freezer for hors d'oeuvres some other time..

I keep thinking of family and friends in Melbourne and America, hoping that the Covid-19 lockdown will ease soon. I tease the fly fishers among them in emails with a fishy photo or two attached. But I would prefer they were once again free to travel, to have them here, to have the pleasure of their company, to share a meal with them, to talk about the art of fly fishing that we love and to share an outing with them, their comradery. Maybe it could be on one of the rivers – the Merri, Moyne, Hopkins, Mt Emu – or the lakes – Gilliear, Purrumbete, Bullen Merri or Elingamite. It would be grand to share their excitement as they stalked, hooked, battled and eventually landed one of these fish. I hope it happens sometime soon.



... and another. Jim knows his local rivers really well, and this photo confirms again that those Warrnambool rivers consistently produce large fish

Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area – the Halls Island Development Proposal

... by Andrew McKenzie. (Most of our members will be aware of the proposal by Tasmanian guide Daniel Hackett to take over and develop Halls Island in the Tasmania Highlands. This proposal has proven to be very controversial for a number of reasons. Thus far the VFFA council has been wary of expressing a view as we are aware that while many of our members are strongly opposed to Daniel Hackett's proposal others are supporters of Daniel and his plan. In any case, the issue is progressing, so Andrew McKenzie, a member of council, has prepared an account of what has transpired thus far, and given reasons perhaps why we ought to be interested and concerned.)

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area encompasses the four largest National Parks in Tasmania with an area of over 1.5 million hectares. It is the only World Heritage listed area with "wilderness" in its name. Interestingly, as a result of widespread agricultural and recreational use from much earlier times, there remain a number of small lease hold sites within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

One of those small lease hold areas is Halls Island. Halls Island sits in Lake Malbena. The lease on Halls Island was first granted to Reg Hall from Launceston. Reg built a hut on the island, keeping it maintained and open for use by all who visited the area. When Reg died the lease was taken over by his daughter.

On one of his many walks into the area Greg French introduced his friend and fellow guide Daniel Hackett to Lake Malbena and the Halls Island hut. Mr Hackett operates a walk in "glamping" site at Lake Ina on the edge of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. In 2016 Reg's daughter, believing Mr Hackett would maintain and preserve her Father's hut, transferred the lease to him.

The Tasmanian Government recently called for "Expressions of Interest"

for tourism developments across the State, including development in its National Parks. Mr Hackett, through his company Wild Drake Pty Ltd, submitted a development proposal to Government to build a permanent "camp" on Halls Island. Access would be by helicopter, with the landing pad built on public land alongside Lake Malbena and the proposed flying route going over some of the most iconic lakes in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area – Lakes Ina, Nive, Leone and Ingrid.

Any development in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area requires approval from all three levels of Government – Federal, State and Local. In addition, under the community endorsed management plan agreed for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in 1999, it also requires preparation of comprehensive environmental management plans to be made available to the public for comment by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

In August 2018 the State Government changed the zoning of Lake Malbena from "Wilderness" to "Self-Reliant Recreation" to assist the development approval process. This change was made without consultation or process. It then ordered a Reserved Activity Assessment be completed by the Parks and Wildlife Service for the proposed

development. This Reserved Activity Assessment process did not allow for public submissions, thus basically ignoring protocols agreed in the 1999 Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

The Parks and Wildlife Service's Reserved Activity Assessment of the impacts of the proposal on wilderness value stated: "Likely Impact: Low level impact. Wilderness qualities may be improved by eliminating seasonal tree (firewood) harvesting by unauthorised users of the existing Halls Hut". There was no mention whatsoever of the impact on wilderness values. Based on this Reserved Activity Assessment the State Government approved development.

For its part the Federal Government determined that approval under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 was not required. It instead relied on the Parks and Wildlife Service's prepared Reserved Activity Assessment in approving development. This decision ignored professional advice from UNESCO, expert government advisers, indigenous groups, environmentalists and users of the area. And this approval cannot be legally challenged.

The Wilderness Society, however, challenged the process by which approval was made. The case went before the Federal Court in Melbourne in March 2019 where the judge determined that the original approval be set aside and reissued with conditions to be negotiated between the State and Federal Governments. At this point in time these conditions are yet to be finalised.

There remained one level of approval to be obtained, that being a Development Approval from Local government. The Central Highlands Council is required to issue a Development Approval for the

building component of the development. So The Central Highlands Council called for public representations and held a special meeting in the Bothwell town hall. There were 1346 representations to this meeting; three in support of development, the rest opposed. The Central Highlands Council rejected the Development Approval, citing a failure of process on the part of Federal and State Governments and stating that a small rural council should never have to be required to make key decisions about impacts on World Heritage values.

Wild Drake Pty Ltd appealed the Council's decision to refuse approval in the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal. Cases that go to the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal are the equivalent of court cases. Parties in the action are represented by barristers. The Central Highlands Council was supported by the Tasmanian National Parks Association, the Wilderness Society and two independent individuals. The partners were represented by the Environmental Defenders Office.

In a final decision handed down in December 2019 the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal found that it did not have to assess the proposal against the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan. Instead all that is required is that a management plan exist and a Reserved Activity Assessment has been completed by Parks and Wildlife Service. It required that the Central Highlands Council's refusal to issue a Development Approval be set aside and replaced with an approval subject to conditions as the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal had set out.

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The Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal's decision has again been appealed to the Supreme Court by the same group of partners as before, the contention being that the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal had improperly delegated its assessment of the proposal to the Parks and Wildlife Service and not referred to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area management plan in making its decision. The Court handed down its decision in July 2020 and neither of these grounds for appeal were upheld.

The parties decided to go the final step and have now lodged an appeal to the Full Court. The time frame for this appeal is yet to be determined. In addition, the required changes to the Federal Government's permit conditions resulting from the Wilderness Society's Federal Court challenge are still pending.

There is still some way to go in this saga so why should we even be concerned? The Halls Island proposal decision, once finalised one way or the other, will set a national legal precedent that will govern how the use of public land set aside in trust for all of us to enjoy is determined. It represents the "thin edge of the wedge" for development in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and indeed any other crown or public land in Tasmania. There are several proposals in National Parks going through the Tasmanian Government's "Expressions of Interest" process currently. If this case is lost it will be open slather for development with the only arbitrator being the State Government.

The case will also have implications nationally with similar development proposals in National Parks on the books in Queensland (Hinchinbrook), Western Australia (Ningaloo) and the Northern Territory (Ayers Rock and Olgas).

It should be remembered that these parks were often established after hard fought battles with State Governments being waged by members of the public determined to save special places for future generations. Now, with true "wilderness" such a rare commodity worldwide, its value is abundantly apparent and it is being prepped to be sold off in the name of development and jobs for access by a wealthy few rather than the "people" who really own and value it.

TNPA has opened a donate page on their website, <https://tnpa.org.au/donate/>, which provides two options for donating to support the Malbena appeal. Both are tax deductible. The simplest is option 1: TNPA Lake Malbena Appeal Fund which utilises GiveNow. More information can also be found on the Fly Life forum <https://flylife.com.au/forum/topic/why-can-t-wilderness-just-be-sacred-lake-malbena> - the posts start in May 2018 so you might want to skip forward a few pages.

Another website with helpful information is here:

https://www.examiner.com.au/story/6929665/minister-orders-assessment-of-lake-malbena-proposal/?fbclid=IwAR105v1kIPX0WLxgaqixxT-DCFcvWghMy2mJ2jGPZR0n9_6nsHO2ixYQcyU



Patagonia Lake District

... by Greg French. (Earlier this year Greg visited the Patagonia Lake District, and even encountered some of their mice.)

We delayed our 2020 trip to the Patagonia Lake District because of an unexpected mass-flowering of *Nothofagus* trees in New Zealand. As far as I knew, New Zealand's mouse plagues (triggered by the flowering) were unique in the trout-fishing world, and since this was the biggest even in living memory I didn't want to miss out.

Bariloche

It ended up being mid-February before Frances and I got to Bariloche in Argentina.

These days everything about travel in the Patagonia Lake District is easy. For example, the roads are mostly sealed so we could make do with a small sedan. Also, Argentina is culturally similar to home – camping is a national obsession, and sight-fishing techniques are similar to those used in Tasmania and New Zealand. There's no real need to hire a guide either, though it's always nice to treat yourself to a drift or two.



Typical brook trout from Lago Hess, Argentina.

Bariloche (population 125,000) sprawls along the southern shore of the massive Lago Nahuel Huapi. It's a tourist town – full of chocolate shops, souvenir shops and 'adventure tourism' services – but it seems gentler than most. Perhaps I feel that way because the locals are happy to indulge me with my Spanish (even though most speak good English).

When we arrived the streets were swarming with Argentinean tourists, but February is



Hunting rainbow trout along the shores of Lago Futalaufquen sets the heart apace.

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shoulder season so there were fewer than there might have been. Our timing was good in another way too – the lakes and rivers were low. Earlier in the season, rain and snowmelt can make for difficult access along lakeshores and riverbanks, especially in the heavily forested Andean foothills.

Patagonian rainforests are remarkably similar to the rainforests in Tasmania and New Zealand. The dominant trees are *Nothofagus* species, though there are no mass-seeding events on the scale you see in New Zealand. Another difference is that the *caña colihue* (bamboo) understory can make off-track bushwalking very difficult.

Generally in Andean national parks you can't camp in non-designated areas, not even when bushwalking. On the other hand, designated camping grounds abound. Libre sites have no facilities and are uncommon. *Agreste* sites generally have manicured tent-sites, fireplaces, toilets, piped water and sometimes a *proveeduría* (small kiosk). *Organizado* sites often have hot water, electricity, lighting and shower blocks. Some also have the option of domos (large modular tents complete with beds and mod-cons) or even *cabañas* (cabins).

If things had been unseasonably wet, our fallback would have been to head to drier country east of the Andes. We wouldn't have had to go far. By the time you get to the eastern end of Lago Nahuel Huapí, the land has already transitioned to steppe. Go much further and it's almost desert.

In the steppe, access along riverbanks is a doddle. In fact, although we had primarily come for rainforest fishing, the steppe is so good that we still earmarked time for fishing the Limay (the outflow of Nahuel Huapí) and lower Río Malleo (on a Mapuche reservation north of Junín de los Andes).

Lago Nahuel Huapí holds good stocks of trout but can be frustrating because of katabatic winds and huge waves. So we headed north along Ruta de los Siete Lagos and fished smaller forested lakes, including Trafal and Falkner. They were fantastic but really I was itching to go well south of Bariloche to Parque Nacional los Alerces in the headwaters of Futaleufú system.

Lago Hess

To get to los Alerces from Bariloche we drove along the sealed roads flanking Lago



Patagonian barbecue, Chimalfe Lodge, Lago Yelcho, Chile.



Río Frey downstream of Lago Krugger teems with three-pound rainbows.

Gutiérrez and Lago Mascardi. The endless beaches featured large cobbles of jagged white granite, but were as densely packed as Bondi. Most people were lazing about in deck chairs, sharing yerba-maté. Others were casually swimming or spin fishing. But no one walked far from their car, so we found plenty of secluded spots for sight fishing and caught lots of 1-2 kg rainbows.

For *libre* camping we took a gravel side-route to Lago Hess, stopping at a glade with plenty of grassy tent-sites. As we set up, a bunch of boisterous, inquisitive cattle burst out of the forest. Shooting them away was a bit of a comedy, and the only other campers nearby, Jose and Rodrigo, came over to help. 'The cattle won't do you any harm,' Jose assured us. 'You get used to them in our national parks. And you'll find that they make convenient tunnels through the caña.'

'Looks like they're killing the caña,' I said.

'That's not because of the cattle, that's because of the mass-seeding event.'

We soon learned that the caña seeds every 60–70 years then dies, and that over the last few years an unprecedented percentage of the Argentinean rainforest had bloomed all at once. At one stage there were five tonnes of seed per hectare, and the rodent population went nuts. The mice just didn't stop breeding, not even through autumn and winter. They ate so much that when they went to the water to drink, the seeds swelled up in their bellies and they exploded. The good thing was that the trout fed on the mice and grew big. The bad thing was that the mice carried the deadly hantavirus. The locals set fire to the dead caña to kill the mice, and the fires have destroyed a lot of rainforest.

'Of course,' added Rodrigo, 'the fires are nothing compared to what just happened in Australia. You know, we could see the smoke here, not as a haze but as ominous dark plumes.'

'What's that sound – thunder?' Frances asked.

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'Cerro Tronador,' said Jose. 'You're hearing the groans of its icecap and glaciers. Tronador means *thunderer*.'

Frances and I walked out of the forest to take a look. From the grassy foreshore the mountain was spectacular. We also discovered that, at normal low levels, Hess becomes two basins connected by a weedy stream. Numerous brookies and some rainbows were sitting in station, and most weighed 1.0–1.5 kg. These fish, and the rainbows in the outflowing Rio Manso, ended up keeping us entertained for days.

Esquel

Before continuing on to Parque Nacional los Alerces, we took time out in Esquel (population 36,000), a dusty rural hub where no one spoke much English – the perfect antidote to Bariloche.

I loved how the streets were littered with family-run shops: *mercaditos*, *parrillas*, *pollerías*, *famarcías* and *tiendas de mascotas*. I loved how the kids played in the streets until dark. I loved how everyone dearly

cared for the street dogs. I loved using Spanish.

We liked Esquel so much that we stayed for days, undertaking daytrips to desert rivers like the famed Arroyo Pescado, the full-on Río Chubut and the under-appreciated Río Percey. We even saw armadillos.

Lago Verde

Unaware of the timing, we ended up driving to Parque Nacional los Alerces the evening before a long weekend, along with everyone else from Esquel. The section from Ruta 40 to Lago Verde was rough and serpentine, and the endless traffic kicked up persistent clouds of choking dust. It was slow going, and the *campamento* agreste at the northern end of Lago Verde was already full by the time we arrived at dusk. Luckily a stranger allowed us to share their ample *parcela* (tent-site).

Early next morning I walked to the inlet, where a vast silt-flat teemed with cruising rainbows. They were feeding on snails and midge larvae, and therefore difficult to



When Lago Hess is at typically low levels a marvellous 'spring stream' is exposed, providing fast fishing for big brookies and a few rainbows.



Plenty of rainbow trout cruise the eastern shore of Lago Krugger, providing first-class polaroiding.

fool, but I landed enough. Some were a bit lean, and a local who paddled up to me in a kayak reckoned that it was because the caña had mostly died off now and there were no more mice.

It was disappointing to see didymo in the inflowing Río Rivadavia, but I had fun there too, bow-and-arrow casting from the rainforested banks to trout cruising in deep little backwaters and cavities.

Lago Krugger

Our next stop was Los Maitenes, a delightful *campamento organizado* at the southern end of Lago Futalaufquen. From here we chose to walk along a lakeside foot-track to Puerto Limonao, and along the way we spotted numerous 1–3 kg rainbows. We even had an encounter with a puma.

Puerto Limonao proved to be little more than a *guardaparque* quarters and jetty. A little further up the road, however, we arrived at Hosteria Futalaufquen, where we were able to organise boat trips.

A daytrip across Lago Menéndez to see the famed Alerces trees is practically mandatory, and truly magnificent. But we also organised a trip across Lago Futalaufquen through the Estrecho de los Monstruos to Lago Krugger, where a small refugio offered meals and accommodation.

The motor launch that took us to Krugger was small too, and Frances and I were the only passengers. Several other groups came to the refugio in their own runabouts and kayaks, and some ordered lunch, but no one else stayed overnight. So we had lots of opportunity to spend time with our hosts, Anto and Pedro.

Anto, in her thirties, happened to be the daughter of the owners of Los Maitenes. Pedro, in his twenties, was a fly fisher. They shared a love of books and art, and by coincidence their favourite paintings hang side by side in the Louvre. Anto's favourite – *the Raft of the Medusa* – is also one of mine.

I asked about the lack of visitors.

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Typical rainbow, Lago Krugger.

'Refugio Krugger has been closed for several years because of the risk posed by rodents during the *floración* of caña. It only reopened a few months ago, and I don't think the owners anticipated the need to advertise.'

'Are there still monster trout in the Estrecho de los Monstruos?' I asked Pedro.

'Not even during the mouse plague,' he replied. 'The *monstruos* were migratory fish moving up from Río Frey, and the construction of the Lago Amutui Quimei in the 1970s put an end to that.'

In the morning Pedro directed us to a walking track which led through the coihue (*Nothofagus dombeyi*) forest down Río Frey to Naufragio del Frey. 'Naufragio means shipwreck,' he explained. 'In 1899 Emilio Frey and others working for the Comisión de Límites Argentina-Chile came to grief in the rapids. They were mapping the waterways. It was a matter of dispute whether the border was more correctly

defined as a line between the high peaks of the Andes, or as Atlantic watersheds versus Pacific watersheds. Several systems on the eastern side of the Andes, including the Futaleufú system draining the lakes in los Alerces, actually run to the Pacific.'

There was plenty of scope for fishing at Naufragio del Frey. Again I was annoyed by didymo, but spotting was easy, especially when the fish began rising for ants. We polaroided fish in Krugger too, and killed one for dinner. Anto insisted on preparing it for us. 'Where are you going next,' she asked.

'I thought it would be nice to follow Río Futaleufú across the Chilean border to Lago Yelcho,' I said. 'And by pure chance, Jaime Castillo, a guide we met years ago in Mongolia, manages a lodge there – Chimalfe Lodge.'

'You fished Mongolia?' asked Pedro, wide-eyed.

fraternity. I travelled with Mick up the Lancefield Road in his lovely white two-litre Daimler, with full leather upholstery and walnut panelling — quite luxurious. I remember being impressed with the on-board liquor bar folding out from the seating, which contained fortifying drinks such as Jamaican Captain Morgan rum, and wonderful Spanish Dry Sack flor sherry. Mick was very civilised and generous when it came to entertaining his friends.

We arrived at the creek and parked by an old bluestone bridge. From the car I could clearly see a trout rising in a pool below the bridge, and when I studied the scene further I could see that the fish was 'porpoising' through the water surface. When I mentioned this to Mick he said: "Probably after mayflies on the wing".

I assembled my tackle at some speed, as young people are inclined to do, and finished off by attaching a Dick Wigram-made size 14 Black Spinner to my tippet. Mick, who was slower to put his gear together, sensed my eagerness to fish and said: "You try for it, I'll be down directly".

Thanking Mick, I was then down creek-side in quick time. Sure enough the mayflies were there: small groups of Black Spinners darting to and fro, with some occasionally hovering just above the pool surface. The trout 'porpoised' right in front of me, creating a small splash and giving the impression of a decent fish, perhaps a pound or more. I cast my line and fly quickly into the vicinity, but nothing happened. The trout broke the surface again, and I changed direction, but still no response. This happened numerous times, until finally Mick appeared. He watched my endeavours for a while, and then said in a helpful tone, "Here, put this over him, he should take it".

By now my confidence in Wigram's Black Spinner was at a low point, so I accepted Mick's offering, but not before asking "What is it?"



Mick Martin with a fine brown he caught at a lake in the Ballarat area
"Halford's Male Black Gnat," replied Mick.

I looked at the fly, which apart from the black hackle, looked nothing like a Black Spinner. Rather than having the fine, delicate appearance of Wigram's fly, the Gnat was ball-like and rather dense. Choosing not to dwell on this further, I changed over the fly and placed it in the vicinity of the still-feeding trout.

"Don't move it," said Mick, "He will discover it soon enough".

I felt a strong urge to chase that trout around the pool with Mick's special fly, but held firm with the instruction given me. All of a sudden there was a gulp, and Halford's Male Black Gnat disappeared, resulting in a beautiful brown trout of one pound and ten ounces - a good specimen from the Emu in those days.

To say I was impressed with that outcome would be an understatement. After putting away our tackle, Mick opened up the liquor bar in the Daimler, and we had a small celebration in praise of Halford's Male Black Gnat.



FLY OF THE MONTH

... the Claret Carrot



This fly looks here like a bit of a nebulous blob. But then again it's a favourite fly of Mark Weigall, guest speaker at our September meeting, and Mark has a well-deserved reputation as a highly skilled fly fisher and guide, so it must good. Jim Jackman, one of the guides at Millbrook Lakes, assures me that this fly has indeed proven to be a deadly pattern.

The fly shown above is just one of a number of carrot fly variations. We had previously described a basic carrot fly in our October 2017 issue, and Jim tells us that by just changing the colour of the body this very versatile pattern can be used to represent a number of different insects. Tied in green or olive fur it's a very effective damselfly nymph, tied a bit larger in black it's a good evening mud-eye pattern, whilst tied in small sizes it catches fish in evening midge hatches. In the colours shown here it is a deadly fly in dun hatches, as apparently claret is a particularly attractive colour to trout when our Australian

mayflies are hatching, and the Claret Carrot shown above has proven consistently successful in dun hatches in both Tassie and Victoria.

The basic Carrot Fly was originally introduced to Australia by John Horsey, a UK-based competition fly fisher who is highly regarded in the UK and a regular contributor to UK fly fishing magazines. The picture above is of the pattern used by Mark, who obtains his supply of Claret Carrots from Andrew Summers at Mayfly Tackle. It is part of their Fulling Mill Christopher Bassano Australian Fly Range.

The Fulling Mill site tells this: "The original John Horsey pattern was orange in colour, but lots of other colour variations have been used. It was originally designed as a 'sighter' fly when using a three fly rig, but has proven to be a fabulous fish catcher on its own. Its floatability makes it perfect for 'pulling' along the surface, but it is eaten static just as often. Large sizes are the norm as the bulk adds to its effectiveness. When mayflies abound it is at its best and even more so when there is a good wave."

Jim suggests another way this fly can be used. Add floatant to the Carrot and use it as an indicator with a nymph suspended a metre and a half underneath. Then let it drift in the wind but every so often give it a long hard pull to draw the Carrot vigorously across the water surface. The wake created will attract the attention of any nearby trout as this is a deadly trigger. The act of drawing the fly across the surface will also cause the nymph to rise up as if it's about to emerge, and this is another very powerful trigger highly likely to draw a strike.

Jim points out that this fly, as shown, is hardly a close imitation of an actual insect. Rather, it is a general representation of something that might be alive and edible in the water. It's about the same size and shape, so has the right profile and proportion of lots of bugs that trout eat and hence they are very likely to see it as food. Rough, buggy-looking flies catch fish.

Materials for the Claret Carrot:

Hook: A dry fly hook in sizes 10, 12 or 14, with 12 the most popular size.

Thread: Red 6/0 or 8/0.

Tail: A tuft of red seal's fur, though Jim suggests Antron can also be used.

Body: Claret seal's fur

Hackle: Brown hen, though if the fly is to be fished as a dry fly or used as an indicator a brown cock hackle can be used.

Tying Procedure:

1. Put the hook in the vice and run thread down the shank from just behind the eye to the end of the shank.
2. Select a small wad of red seal's fur (or whatever other tail material you choose to use) and tie it in to form a fairly bushy tail. (The actual length of the tail depends on the way the fly is to be used. So in a hatch where it is representing

an emerging dun the tail needs to be a bit longer, while if it is being used as a mudeye pattern then the tail can be shorter.)

3. Add some tacky wax to your tying thread (as seal's fur can be difficult to dub) and then wrap a suitable quantity of loosely gathered longish bits of claret seal's fur around the thread. Wind the thread with the seal's fur around the hook shank to form a fat loosely tied dubbed body. Tie the body off a short distance behind the eye, leaving room for the hackle to be added.
4. Prepare the hackle (hen or cock), tie it in behind the eye, and wrap two or three turns around the shank.
5. Trim off the waste hackle and then take a few more turns of thread behind the eye to build up a small head. Whip finish to complete the tying process.
6. To finish the fly take a stiff toothbrush and brush the claret seal's fur back from behind the hackle to accentuate the loosely packed claret seal's fur body.
7. (Jim points out that you may need to experiment a bit to get the right amount of claret seal's fur to produce the nice full body. Another, perhaps easier way, of dubbing the loosely wrapped body is to use a dubbing loop. Form the loop below the point where the tail is tied in, poke some claret seal's fur into the loop, spin the loop, then wind the loop onto the shank to build up the body.)

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2019 Annual Dinner:

- AFN Fishing & Outdoors • Armadale Angling • Aussie Angler
- Australian Trout Foundation • Compleat Angler (CBD) • Essential Flyfisher
 - The Flyfisher Melbourne • Fly Finz Fishing Tackle & Books
 - FlyLife magazine • Hook Up Bait & Tackle • Hurley's Fly Fishing
- J.M. Gillies • Mayfly Tackle • Millbrook Lakes and Victorian Fisheries Authority.

VFFA 2020 meetings & other activities

Members will appreciate that activities planned for the rest of this year are tentative because of possible changes to Covid-19 restrictions. So activities and events will need to be clarified and confirmed as they get closer.

October 2020

- 6 Tuesday Fly Tying introductory session – 8:00 pm. A Zoom session by Richard Kos who will talk about the basics of fly tying – the tools, materials and techniques.
- 15 Thursday General Meeting, with Andrew Fuller from the Melbourne Flyfisher store. Andrew plans to talk about what he calls 'Lockdown Lessons' and will also discuss the latest and greatest in new fly fishing equipment. This again will be a Zoom video presentation, commencing at 8:00 pm.
- 27 Tuesday Session on understanding Social Media by Will Davidson, a Zoom meeting commencing at 7:00 pm
- 28 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.
- Date TBA Thorpdale Dam Day with Latrobe Valley Fly Fishers. Details to be advised if we are able to run this event with LVFF.

November 2020

- 3 Tuesday Fly Tying session - 8:00 pm. A Zoom session by John Pilkington who will take us through the process of tying a fairly simple but very popular fly – the Red Tag.
- 19 Thursday General Meeting, commencing at 8:00 pm. Speakers - John Billing from Mending Casts and Jo Dobson from Casting for Recovery. This will be a Zoom video presentation.
- 18 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.
- 25 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes.

December 2020

- 1 Tuesday Fly Tying session - 8:00 pm. A Zoom session by Andrew Mossman who will take us through the process of tying two very effective flies using possum fur.
- 2 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.
- 11 Friday Our Christmas Dinner, with guest speaker Malcolm Crosse, who was Director of Operations for the World Fly Fishing Championships in Tasmania last year. Malcolm plans to tell us about the vagaries of organising the World Championships, as well as updating us on the Tasmanian trout fishery. This will also be a Zoom video presentation.

January 2021

- 3 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes.

February 2021

- 3 Wednesday First Council Meeting for 2021 – 6:30 pm.
- 13 – 21 Tasmania trip to Hayes on Brumby's (subject to border crossing rules). Event Co-ordinator – Chris Gray.
- 25 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club: "Liars' Night" – reports from members on their summer fishing.

March 2021

- 2 Tuesday Fly Tying session - 8:00 pm. A Zoom session. Details still to be confirmed.
- 3 Wednesday VFFA members visit Millbrook Lakes.
- 18 Thursday General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Kelvin Club: Speaker – TBC.
- 26 – 28 2020 Big River trip. Event Co-ordinator – John Pilkington.
- 31 Wednesday Council Meeting – 6:30 pm.