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THE VICTORIAN FLY-FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

SEPTEMBER 2012

Organisation No. A0024750J

P.O. Box 18423 Melbourne Bourke Street, Melbourne 3001

www.vffa.org.au

September AGM

Thursday, September 20, 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club

Our September Annual General Meeting will see the retirement of Rick Dugina as President as he completes a very successful term in office. It also marks the commencement of a new Council under the leadership of a new President.

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

All members are invited, but PLEASE make a Dinner booking by 12 pm (lunchtime) on Tuesday, September 18, by –

Phone: 0498 254 497, and leave a message,

Or Email – secretary@vffa.org.au



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Advance Notice - September AGM

The September meeting is the Association's Annual General Meeting, and President Rick Dugina, who completes his term and retires at the AGM, is keen to remind readers that all financial members are eligible for nomination and election to the Council. The relevant Notice Papers are again included with this newsletter, these being the 'Nomination Form' for Council positions, the 'Appointment of Proxy' form, and the 'Notice of Annual General Meeting' (the agenda).

The current Council has 16 members, but at a Planning Meeting held in early July the current Council membership and structure were discussed with a view to some possible changes. A letter from the President to all members explaining the potential changes was posted several weeks ago.

Council meets regularly and all the management issues involved in running the Association are dealt with there so that the general meetings can be given over totally to the advertised activities – guest speakers, auctions, fly-tying demonstrations ...

So if you have some experience and talent in management and a keen desire to see our Association remain strong and vibrant and responsive to the needs of members, please give some thought to nominating for Council. Be assured, meetings are lively and entertaining, and you will be enriched by your participation, as well as having the opportunity to contribute your ideas and expertise to the running of our Association.

The date – Thursday, September 20, at the Celtic Club.

The August Annual Dinner

Friday, August 24, was the date of this year's Annual Dinner, the eightieth such event and held this year at the Celtic Club in Melbourne. Just over 80 members and guests attended the dinner, which featured the presentation of the Jack Ritchie Medal to long-standing VFFA identity Mick Hall, and an excellent talk by guest speaker Mike Stevens on the establishment of the Australian Fly Fishing Museum in Tasmania. While there are a number of fly-fishing museums in the northern hemisphere, the Australian Museum will be the only institution of this kind in the southern hemisphere. Mike, as Chairman of the Museum, has been a driving force in its promotion and development, and will oversee the official opening at Clarendon, on the banks of the South Esk River, next May.

The presentation of the Jack Ritchie medal to Mick Hall proved a very popular decision, generously applauded by all who were present. Mick has worked tirelessly over many years to defend and promote our Victorian Trout Fishery, especially during his years as President of the Australian Trout Foundation, and his Jack Ritchie Medal was a well-deserved award in recognition of his magnificent contribution over so many years.

A regular feature of VFFA annual dinners are the magnificent raffle prizes which are donated by a number of generous supporters. Peter Boag and David Grisold are to be thanked for their hard work in collecting and preparing the prizes. This year's prize donors include: Aussie Angler Pty Ltd, Armadale Angling, Australian Fishing Network, Flyfisher Magazine, Flylife Magazine, Hayes on Brumbys, Hookup Bait and Tackle, J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd, Mayfly Tackle, Mick Hall Flies, Millbrook Lakes Lodge, Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker, Pro Angler Tackle, Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies, Stevens Publishing, The Compleat Angler Box Hill, The Flyfisher Tackle Store, The Fly Fishers Rod and Creel in Thornbury and Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle.

Our thanks to all of these donors for their very generous support.



Mick Hall receives his Jack Ritchie Medal



Those magnificent raffle prizes



David Wakefield was a very convincing salesman



An attentive audience

President's Message

The Annual Dinner was greatly enjoyed by the 80 members who attended and all agreed that it was a huge success. It would have been good to see more members supporting this peak event in the VFFA calendar, and I say to those who weren't able to attend that you missed a very convivial one-off event. The Celtic Club staff put on a magnificent meal, accompanied by some very fine wine. During the evening it was my privilege to award the Jack Ritchie Medal to Mick Hall for his outstanding contribution to trout fishing in particular and fly-fishing in general.



During the speeches David Featherstone paid a heart-felt tribute to his old mate Howard Scrivener, who passed away recently, and all present stood for a minute's silence in honour of this esteemed member. A Tribute Service to celebrate Howard's life was held at the Sandringham Football Club Rooms on Monday, September 3.

In line with our Risk Management Strategy and safety of members in general a number of our members have purchased the Garmin Rino 650 UHF radio / GPS device as a very useful addition to their tackle. Because we have some 'non-technical' members who may be wary of 'exotic equipment' the October meeting will be run as a 'set-up and learn' session to enable members to become familiar with this item. Jon Kenfield will demonstrate how easy it is to use, and members will then be able to make an informed decision about the purchase of this type of equipment.

Another safety item that has been produced, this time by the Ballarat Fly-fishers, is a video on safety in the water when wearing waders. The video dispels some of the myths that have arisen over the years. It runs for only seven minutes but is very worthwhile and I will arrange to show it at a future meeting. This should also translate into a practical session on wader safety at an indoor pool in the near future.

Conditions for our sport appear to be heading towards the best season for many years, and I am itching to get out onto the Victorian streams very soon. I have been encouraging members to fish locally as I think we will have world class fishing this season. I'm confident the Fisheries officers will continue their good work of last season in apprehending the idiots who are doing the wrong thing. Hopefully over time we can minimise the effect of those vandals.

This will be my last President's Message as my term as President is coming to an end. I will be presenting my annual report at the AGM, some of which will be included in the October newsletter. I will say here that my two years as President has been quite interesting, including health issues, some trips, lots of meetings, and I have never done so much writing - not even at school!! But I have enjoyed the time immensely. I must thank my fellow members on Council, and some who weren't, who have given me so much support over this time.

I have rabbit-ed-on enough about the forthcoming election in an effort to encourage members to attend the AGM meeting and play an active part in the running of the organisation. It seems it is always the same stalwarts who give support and this has been a little disappointing. However this year we have had an influx of keen new members, some of whom I am sure will step up to the plate.

Our Sunday Casting is now finished for this year and unfortunately, as I have been busy elsewhere, I have only attended a few sessions. I hope to rectify that next season and catch up with members in a more social atmosphere. Our convenor for the Sunday Casting since the Master Caster, Malcolm Elms, stepped aside has been Joe Haslauer, who has done a sterling job in looking after the troops on often cold and bleak days. I have heard quite a few comments on how enjoyable the casting sessions have been through his effort. I would thank Joe on behalf of all members for his very helpful contribution and I hope we can convince him to continue next season.

I think the VFFA is a fantastic group that has a great capacity for achievement, and I wish it and the membership my very best wishes for a bright future. My role will now be more advisory with a narrower focus on the future and there are other duties I will be involved with.

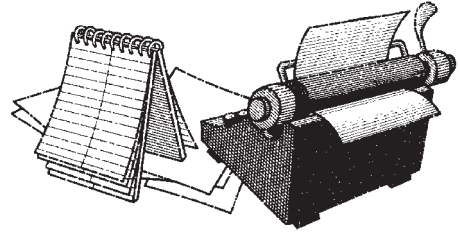
Tight lines, and I'll see you on the water,

Rick Dugina President



Congratulations to those members that have achieved these outstanding milestones. I hope that many of the 25's are converted to 50's in the future. I will definitely be at the Christmas Dinner to collect my 25 Year badge. See you there.

From the EDITOR'S DESK



“Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”

Where on earth did I dig that up from? If readers will indulge me just one small quote from the Old Testament, these words were written about 700 BC by the prophet Isaiah who was trying to bring some encouragement and hope to a tiny Jewish nation passing through truly terrible times. They have since been used countless times by all manner of groups as a rallying cry when the times are changing.

Ok, so the context is totally different, but when I thought about what lies ahead for us this year these words somehow seemed to fit. Winter is over and done with. There's blossom everywhere, the days are getting longer, and we're seeing some sunshine at last. A new fishing season is upon us and it promises so much. The lakes are full, and those wonderful men from the DPI are driving around topping them up with trout. As for the rivers, friends down in Gippsland report that the numbers of fish seen in some of the spawning streams confirm we've had one of the best spawning runs for many years. So after that dreadful decade of drought our trouting fortunes are truly on the mend. Perhaps one small indication of a pervading optimism among anglers is the significant lift in trade being reported by the tackle shops.

The new season offers so much in fresh opportunities. Over recent years many Victorian anglers have sought better fishing by scooting off overseas, with Tassie or New Zealand being the popular haunts. But this year we may well find plenty of very good fishing much closer to home. I for one am keen to explore some of the many Victorian rivers and streams I haven't ever fished. Perhaps we don't appreciate just how fortunate we are here - we can fish a host of local public waters, both lakes and streams, for the princely sum of \$25 per year, the cost of an annual angling licence. Believe me, this is truly a bargain, especially if our trout fishery lives up to the promise.

The beginning of a new season is a great excuse to try some new gear – a new rod, or a new line, or perhaps a new vest or pair of waders. A good time, too, to experiment with some new methods and new flies. There's probably nothing wrong with the old gear, the old tactics and the flies we've used successfully over the years, but it's always good to explore and expand the repertoire.

There's some new things happening in our Association too. The AGM on September 20 will see a new President installed and possibly new members on Council. It's an appropriate time, too, to thank outgoing president Rick Dugina for the magnificent work he has done on our behalf over the past two years. David Grisold, a recent past president, has made the point that even though there is a hard-working and effective Council in place, the fortunes and progress of our Association depend heavily on the energy, drive and vision of the president, along with countless hours of work he puts in every month. During Rick's presidency we've seen the

regular schedule of meetings and functions and trips continuing in fine style, and we've also experienced the significant and very successful change of home to the Celtic Club, along with the revamping and updating of our website and a serious examination of the structure and tasks of the Council. We've gained a number of new members over recent years, and at meetings and activities there's a strong sense that things are going well. So on behalf of all of us, thank you Rick for a job well done.

On a totally different tack, readers will be well aware of the delightful watercolour angling scenes by New Zealand artist Nancy Tichborne that appear frequently in our issues. Nancy has a worldwide following for her work, has produced a number of instructional DVDs and has worked as an illustrator or writer on ten books. She enjoys a very high reputation for the quality of her work, and we are so grateful that she allows us to use her watercolours free of charge. She and her husband Bryan now live in French Farm Valley, close to Christchurch in New Zealand, where their garden was recently acknowledged as a 'Significant Garden' by the New Zealand Gardens Trust. Bryan tells us that interested readers can see something of their work at <http://watercolours.co.nz/garden.htm>. He also suggests that members visiting New Zealand with their wives are very welcome to call in and enjoy the hospitality of the Tichbornes at French Farm. As the website confirms, it is a very attractive place and well worth the visit.

Tight lines,

Lyndon Webb

The Text of Mike Steven's Presentation

When do you think fly-fishing started in Australia? On a wider basis the Macedonians mention it in about 200 AD, then the *Boke of St. Albans*, attributed to Dame Juliana, was published 1496 and the *Compleat Angler* in 1653. The VFFA history *The Country for an Angler* mentions 'A Waltonian Club' being in existence by 1850 and an 'Anglers Protective Society' being formed in 1861.

The Acclimatisation Society was formed around 1860-61 and was very supportive of James Youl's attempt to bring Atlantic salmon to Australia, and trout as well of course, though they were in effect almost an afterthought.

Was it Alfred Ronalds? It is interesting to note that Ronalds, whose grave the VFFA restored, was a professional fly tier, tackle maker, angler and author of books on flies and fly tying for



trout. He immigrated to Australia in 1847 after his wife died. It is amazing that someone revered for his book *'The Fly-Fisher's Entomology'* should move to a place with no trout, which were undoubtedly his favourite fish. He remarried in Australia, and after working as an engraver eventually settled in Ballarat where he ran a market garden on the banks of Lake Wendouree. He died in 1860, four years before trout were acclimatised into Australia and the southern hemisphere. There seems no mention that he ever fly-fished in Australia.

Alfred's daughter Maria married Robert Shanklin in Geelong. Maria had been taught to tie flies by her father, and it was perhaps after the introduction of trout that she turned her hand to tying again. Her flies were revered as 'much superior to the imported article' and won her a medallion at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition. The Wommel was one of Maria's best known designs.

However I digress – when was the first fly-fishing? The first advertisement for fish hooks was in 1803, so maybe it was then. In 1827 Peter Cunningham, a ship's surgeon who spent four years in Australia, wrote in his journal *Two years in New South Wales* probably the earliest reference to fly fishing in Australia:

"The perch are caught with bait or fly, the red worm answering best in spring, and the grasshopper, or locust, in summer. They often take best after dark, but they are as capricious as those in England. I have caught as many in less than an hour in Hunter's River as made both my arms ache in carrying homewards but a short quarter of a mile..."

However, it was in 1833 that Thomas Richards wrote what is considered to be the first article in print on fly-fishing in Australia, and we note that it is well before the arrival of trout.

The Hobart Town Magazine – Volume 1. 2 April 1833

A DAY'S FISHING IN THE PLENTY.

"Most courteous of readers! Art thou a fisher? An enthusiastic, hearty angler, one who is "born to it," as Izaak Walton hath it; and who will follow it with energy and spirit, wading like a crane, fording up to the arm-pits, and diving, like a Platypus, if it should be requisite. "And are there such noodles in the world, as to do all this for the sake of a dozen or two of mullets?" asks some sedate elderly gentleman, who entertains the same opinion of angling as that scurrilous fellow Swift did, namely, that it is a pastime performed with a rod and a string—with a worm at one end, and a fool at the other! But, softly good Mr Cynic, and just favour us with five minutes of your valuable time, while we prove to you, beyond all dispute, past, present, and to come, that angling is not the silly affair you think it is, and that it was practised by wiser and better men than ever you and I can hope to make ourselves."

(This article runs for several pages and is too long to reproduce here. But perhaps a few excerpts might give us a feel for the author's contagious enthusiasm for his trouting.)

"We have intimated that angling has been pursued by wise and good men, as a pleasurable relaxation from the toil of business, or the intensity of study. In proof of this, let us merely mention the names of HORATIO NELSON, WALTER SCOTT, and HUMPHREY DAVY—three of the most illustrious names which this or any other age can boast of. We wish we could add to this glorious triad, the name of WELLINGTON; but, although an excellent soldier, his Grace has not handled a fishing-rod since he (was) a merry, careless, unambitious school-boy. Indeed soldiers, generally speaking, are indifferent anglers: we know not why—but so it is; and the

only soldier with whom I was acquainted who could throw a fly with anything like skill was an old pensioner in Wales, whom *la fortune de la guerre* had deprived of an eye and a leg; but he was an extraordinary man in many respects, and could hop with his wooden pin higher and faster than any man in the district. He is still alive, and long may he continue to ensnare the golden trout of the dark-waved Dee!”

“But angling has been stigmatized as a dull, unsocial, stupid pastime. Angling dull and stupid! Heaven help the egregious blockhead who thinks so! But do you, our excellent and most gentle “brother of the angle,” “take up your rod, sling on your basket, and accompany us in a “Day’s Fishing in the Plenty,” singing as we trudge along:

“Oh! the gallant fisher’s life, It is the best of any; ‘Tis full of pleasure, void of strife, And ‘tis belov’d by many.”

And now then - to the Plenty. In leaving Richmond Hill you pass on the left Mason’s Hotel, and on the right the neat and comfortable residences of Dr Officer and Mr Lindley, and Miss Ring’s Establishment for Young Ladies. We are, now, fairly on our way to this lively little river.

We presently arrive at Bell’s Terrace. Below, on the right, the river glides slowly, darkly, and silently towards the distant ocean; bounded on one side by smiling fields and green meadows, and on the other by the road. Trudging nimbly along Bell’s Terrace we commence our descent to the Falls. Here during the months of January, February, and March there is usually very good mullet fishing, but as we are bent on a pilgrimage to the Plenty, we shall not stop even to wet our flies at the Falls, but away at once, up into the hills.

It is yet earliest morning, and the bush is absolutely alive with the chirping of crickets and grasshoppers, the whirring of beetles, the chattering of parrots and magpies, and high above all, the extraordinary scream of that extraordinary bird, the laughing jackass. Ever and anon as you look down on the path a lizard will dart away into the long grass, or perchance, a snake will rush into the brush-wood, giving, as it goes, one rapid piercing glance of its small bright eye, and leaving you standing with poised rod and ‘hair on end’. Oh! how we love the bush, and all its wild and wonderful beauties!

The road here makes a slight curve over the hill and descends abruptly into a flat by the river side. We are now rapidly approaching the Plenty, and shall just reach Redlands in time for breakfast. We turn out of the main road and shortly find ourselves in the breakfast parlour at Redlands. What a grand meal is breakfast! Ham, eggs, beefsteaks, cold meat, fish of course, and add to these coffee and tea, with some of the genuine Redlands butter and cream. It is truly astonishing what an alteration a good breakfast effects on the mind and manners of an individual. The best-tempered mortal breathing will find his temper ruffled, and his suavity soured, after a walk of six miles before breakfast; but no sooner is he favoured with a seat at Major Oakes’s well spread board than his proverbial amenity returns.

There are several favourite and frequented spots in the Plenty where mullet abound. The artificial fly is a very dangerous and successful snare for the mullet. We have generally used a *red hackle*, and the *fern-fly*, and these, from “early morn to evening’s shade,” are decidedly “killing;” when, however, the sun is progressing towards his “ocean bed“ and his beams are withdrawn from the dancing waters, a small white-winged moth-like fly is the most captivating. With the flies we have mentioned, tolerable execution by skilful management may be reckoned upon in the Plenty: and if the angler will pay attention to the following remarks, he

must be a desperate and most daring bungler if he does not fill his fishing basket. In the still pools, or under banks where the water is deep, the fly is decidedly the best. Recollect, we are speaking of creek fishing, and more especially of the Plenty; for as “different minds incline to different objects,” so do the fish of different waters incline to different habits. Experience therefore, based upon sound and attentive observation, is the only sure guide to the angler in these matters.

As to the best times for fishing, we assume that early morning is the best, then mid-day, and then evening, leaving the afternoon last on the list. But so much depends upon the weather that these periods are subject to considerable variation. Warm weather is decidedly favourable to the ensnaring of mullet, and sunshine, especially in a strong stream or ripple, is by no means unfavourable. The best season is spring, that is from Michaelmas to Christmas, for the creeks; and the summer for the large rivers; but we have known the mullet to remain in the Plenty till February.

By noon we have crawled as far as Glen Leith, where we make a capital lunch on broiled fish, new potatoes, and bottled porter, and then proceed to the river side to renew our murderous sport, which we pursue with unrelenting vigour till our baskets will positively contain no more. We then wend our way towards Charlie’s Hope, where George Thompson, Esquire & J.P., gives us a hearty welcome to dinner, seasoned by a tumbler or two of very excellent whisky toddy, after which we set out in the cool evening to walk home by moonlight —after a delightful “day’s fishing in the Plenty.”

So ends Thomas Richards’ enchanting 1833 account of fly-fishing in Tasmania. In 1835 J.S. Uther advertised fly rods and artificial flies in the Launceston Advertiser. After this mentions and advertising of fly-fishing became quite common. So whilst fly-fishing really took off after the introduction of trout in 1864, it was certainly being practiced in the 1820s and more than likely before that. So we are all Johnny-come-latelies as far as fly-fishing is concerned, and in Australia we are moving towards a history of only 200 years of fly-fishing. But regardless of such a short time it is significant.



So tonight I want to talk about the Australian Fly Fishing Museum. Some time ago a VFFA member by the name of Ron Dennis started badgering me about a fly-fishing museum for Australia. Ron is from the Albury-Wadonga area and has been a member for more than 50 years. Anyway, I was able to put him off for a couple of years but his persistence paid off and some planning started. First we did some research on what other fly-fishing museums existed in the world. Surprisingly there are few and it seems none in the southern hemisphere. There is one at Campbell River, British Columbia, and there is the Catskills Fly-Fishing Center and Museum in New York State, the American Museum of Fly-Fishing in Vermont, and there are probably a few private museums and some that combine methods – such as the IGFA in Florida. Tasmania has a trout fishing museum at Plenty, but this is all methods and restricted to trout.

After a lot of research it became a possibility that we could have a ‘fly-fishing only’ museum, the first and only one in the southern hemisphere. Finding a site was the next thing, and this included a long list of wants and needs. Near the top of the list was cost. How could a property be affordable and how would it run?



The Shepherd's Cottage at Clarendon – the new home for the Australian Fly Fishing Museum

Sometime before this I had looked at an opportunity to display a few items from Scholes, Wigram, etc, at the National Trust property of Clarendon House, one of the most important properties of the National Trust (Tasmania). It was built by James Cox in the 1830s and is an architectural and heritage icon with many unique features. Situated in Tasmania's northern Midlands, the western side of the property is flanked by the South Esk River and across the river can be seen Symmons Plains.

Why Clarendon? It is close to Launceston (27 km away), and less than 10 km from airport. Fly-fishing in Australia is predominately fly-fishing for trout and it was James Arndell Youl from across the river at Symmons Plains who was primarily responsible for the successful acclimatisation of trout in the southern hemisphere. After many attempts the first little trout hatched in Tasmania in 1864. The same James Youl had married Eliza Cox, sister of James Cox, at Clarendon in 1839 and this association was an important link that became prominent when a fly-fishing museum proposal was moving along.

Discussions started with the National Trust's (Tasmania) managing director, Chris Tassell, and progressed quite enthusiastically. When the National Trust offered accommodation for the museum in the shepherd's cottage at Clarendon, its fate was sealed. Clarendon was now to become home for Australia's first fly-fishing museum.

There is a Museum of Trout Fishing at Plenty, near Hobart, but this caters for trout exclusively and all methods. The Australian Fly-Fishing Museum as a project is certainly not about taking anything away from the Plenty museum, but more about building a relevant, outstanding and lasting legacy focussed on fly-fishing for many species in both fresh and saltwater in Australia. Tasmania has a long and rich heritage of fly-fishing and although trout were not the target it was in March 1833 that fly-fishing was first written about by Thomas Richards, as mentioned earlier.



Flies from the 1830s – the “Red Hackle” and the “Fern-fly”

R.H. Wigram was one who promoted fly-fishing heavily and he moved to Tasmania in 1921. Dick was a direct descendant of Money Wigram, who donated space on the ship Norfolk that brought the first trout ova to successfully hatch in Tasmania. Dick, as we all know, wrote several keenly sought and collectable books on fly-fishing and he is just a small part of the history which will be captured at the Australian Fly-Fishing Museum.

Saltwater and other states will not be forgotten. Whilst there is no doubt this museum will be trout centric, all states will be included. It is Australian. Saltwater fly-fishing was a slow starter and really ramped up in the 1970s. However I have a photo of Reg Slater with a number of Australian salmon he caught on the fly around 1902.

Some will ask: “Why is the National Trust involved?” Whilst Clarendon seemed like a perfect fit for somewhere to house a fly-fishing museum there was much more. A strong acquisitions policy was important, as were charitable donations, grants, insurance, liabilities, curating, conservation, financial controls and more. Starting a museum from scratch and trying to ensure all necessary things were covered seemed impossible, and it was soon realised that the National Trust do all these things and has successfully done so for many years. Most of the challenges were the same. After some soul searching it was realised that being part of the National Trust brought huge benefits, and reinventing the wheel was not necessary.

The museum was proposed to operate in a similar way to other ‘Friends of the National Trust’ groups. This gave control to the Australian Fly-Fishing Museum committee, but with all the guidance, knowledge and benefits of the National Trust. The Trust covers all the on ground property costs, plus the committee’s costs for insurance, financial auditing, stationery, etc, and will provide the committee with its systems and protocols to run the museum. And that’s how the Australian Fly-Fishing Museum will operate.

A committee was formed and includes David Grisold, Tony Wright, Jennie Chapman, Michael Youl, Rex Hunt, Chris Tassell, Mike Stevens, Todd Lambert, Janet Lambert, Ron Dennis, Hugh

Maltby, Greg Peart, Peter Boag and Stuart Cottrell. The committee has developed an Action Plan and a Business Plan and brochures and more. Applications for grant money has started and has already been successful with a \$25,000 grant and more than \$30,000 of private money already promised. The \$25,000 will pay for professional curating and much of the setup, but will not pay for any acquisitions.

Plans for acquisitions, restoration and display of museum pieces has also begun. An initial chronology of fly-fishing's important dates, events and people is being developed and from this an acquisitions and displays plan will be developed.

What are we looking for? We barely even know, but it goes something like this:

1. The first fishing 1820+ and then the first written mention from 1833.
2. 1864 onwards – Acclimatisation of Trout display.
3. Australian flies and fly tiers – a history and display by Ray Brown.
4. 1900 - first reports about catching trout on a dry fly. Around this time R.L. Slater was also catching Australian salmon on flies.
5. 1900-2000. A century of tackle. Rods from cherry wood to split bamboo, fibreglass and graphite. Fly reels – imported and Australian, plus other tackle.
6. Shannon Rise: 1930 – 1964.
7. Saltwater fly-fishing. From the start to contemporary.
8. Fly casting history. Kevin Laughton, Charles Peck, Terry Charlton, Dick Wigram, John Brookes, etc.
9. Authors – Joseland, Slater, Wigram, etc.
10. Gear by Gillies, Hartleys, Turville, Southam, etc.
11. David Scholes, Malcolm Gillies, Noel Jetson, Douglas Stewart.

VFFA History

Take a look at the VFFA history for example. The book *The Country for an Angler* has a huge and diverse range and this just covers 74 years of one association – albeit a significant one. It is almost exclusively trout and no doubt that is the way the museum will be, but saltwater species will also come in. The membership of the VFFA has had within its midst at least a dozen people who have written more than 20 significant books on fly fishing. There is a lot of history just in this association.

The museum is starting with a clean slate and this will allow something really special to take place where every display will be planned from the start, rather than put together from a haphazard collection of existing material.

This is a challenge to every person in this room tonight. I invite you all to help. Everyone has some fly-fishing treasures – or knows about some; even better if it has some history behind it. It may be one piece or a collection - a book, rod, reel, old tackle bag, diary, photos or old fishing films. We would love diaries.

I look around this room and see David Featherstone – Mr Hardy in Australia if there ever was one. David has a huge history of fly-fishing in Australia, and the photos to go with it. Mick

Hall – another member with a huge and long history and an interest in fly-fishing in Australia. Jim Allen has loved fly-fishing and collected a huge range of knowledge and gear. Marty Rogers – there is no one more interested in old fishing tackle, and especially fly-fishing tackle. We could build a fabulous museum with just these people.

If you have nothing physical you can give money as a foundation sponsor so we can buy some significant pieces. It is tax deductible. Maybe you have other skills we can use. A fine furniture maker perhaps, or you might have a yard full of blackwood or huon pine we can use. Buy the museum an iPad or Kindle. Volunteer, join as a member. Research an author, event, era, or maybe collect or search for some gear from other anglers. This will be a world class museum, curated by professionals and overseen by keen fly-fishers. One day we would like to see a competition class casting pool on site – and a kids' fishing pond. This is in motion now. I have a vision of borrowing a split bamboo rod from the museum, walking to the casting pool or a few metres to the South Esk River, casting to a rising fish – maybe even catching it.

This will be a place where you can spend all day. 200 word panels on the wall. But there is more on the tablet, iPad, Kindle. Sit in the chair in front of the Douglas Stewart display. Read his background on the Kindle, and then if you want you can read *The Seven Rivers*, take a break on the river for lunch, and go back and read more. Likewise, take the flies display that Ray Brown is working on, from the Red Hackle to something contemporary. The panel will probably have the fly's name and approximate era. The Kindle will have a story about the fly, its recipe, who first tied it, etc. We want to make books available digitally, so you can sit and read – or research.

When will the Australian Fly-Fishing Museum open? May 4, 2013, with a grand opening dinner and cocktail party. This will be a world class museum. I invite you to embrace it – and be part of it.



Peter Campbell presented a beautifully tied and mounted fly to our guest speaker

An Elder Statesman – Bob Roles

When fly-fishermen of longstanding meet and talk there is a name often mentioned. The name Bob Roles is respected and undoubtedly part of Australia's fly-fishing history. Bob Roles has been a passionate fly-fisherman at a high level for more than 50 years. Dermot O'Brien went in search of the long term VFFA member living in central Victoria. This is part one of an interview with one of fly-fishing's elder statesmen.

Question 1: When (and where) did your interest in fly-fishing begin?

In 1961, at the age of 17, I found employment with J.M. Turville, fishing tackle specialists in North Melbourne. They were one of the few shops specialising in trout tackle and built split cane fly rods which was even more unusual. Owner and rod builder, Maurie Turville, having learned his craft at Hartley's Sports Store in Flinders Street, recognised that I was a very keen young angler and offered me a beautiful Regina 8ft split cane rod, not as a gift, but on the basis that I paid it off in instalments, which I did. Then followed a British-made Silver King reel and finally a Kingfisher double taper oiled silk line to complete the outfit. It took me months to pay off these items and it was agony having to wait before I could go fishing, but after that I never looked back. Maurie Turville also gave me (at no cost) a cardboard box containing the home-made vice and fly-tying materials that had belonged to angling identity Reg Lyne, who had died in August 1961. Maurie Turville could not have given me a better start in fly-fishing.



Question 2: Are you a river or lake fisherman?

When I read Glenn Eggleton's book on Noel Jetson I realised that Noel was incredibly knowledgeable on seeking trout in lakes, because he had fished them most of his life. But, when he and Lois retired, Noel then devoted time to fishing small streams with his beloved Winston 3-weight. I am told that this is what Noel loved the most. The charm and joy of little waters captivated him and I feel I am going down the same path, though not as expertly as Noel. My introduction in 1970 to the small streams of the Monaro High Plains, that once produced the best mayfly fishing on the planet, has convinced me that small river sight fishing is the most satisfying angling experience. Yes, I am a river man.



A young Bob Roles – already a keen angler

Question 3: How often and where do you do most fly-fishing these days?

From the spring of 1997 through to the spring of 2009 I fished a small creek in central Victoria almost on a weekly basis. It was a place that engaged me visually and from time to time delivered handsome rewards. But these were drought years, worsening as each season came and went, until eventually on September 13, 2009, I wrote in my diary: 'The creek is a shocker. No flow, turbid, no trout, only carp, time to give it away.' However in October 2010 there was widespread flooding across Victoria, so hopefully "my creek" and other once good spots will benefit from the soaking. My favourite destination each summer is the Upper Murray region, where my family and I camp at Corryong. In January the grasshopper fishing can be good to very good. An added dimension is the recent appearance of willow sawfly grubs, which can be on the trout's menu from early summer right through to the end of autumn. I usually make a return visit to Corryong in March to take advantage of this exciting fishing.

Question 4: What rod and line weight do you favour?

I have mostly used what could be termed as general purpose gear: a 9ft rod matched with a 6 weight line, my present equipment being a Loomis East Fork four piece rod matched with a Cortland DT-6-F line. The split cane rod I used mostly over the years was a Turville 8ft 9in Victoria, weighing 5½ oz and matched with a Kingfisher double taper silk line. Because I love the small streams of North Eastern Victoria, I am considering treating myself to a creek rod, say a 7ft three or four weight. A Charles Ritz designed "small stream" 6ft 7in leader would complement this pairing, enabling much greater flexibility in confined spaces.



Another fine brown from one of Bob's favourite North-East streams

Question 5: What is your view on false casting?

False casting is counter-productive to good fishing. Many anglers waste time and effort in advancing the line in small increments through excessive false casting. My method is to quickly strip line which then lies in large coils under the rod handle. There are occasions when vegetation impedes this, but mostly I can find a suitable place.

A full size large arbour reel with conical or disc drag plays an important role. The modern disc drag can be set so that no overrun occurs even when the line is jerked suddenly.

A three inch arbor helps prevent the line from over-coiling. With the line on the ground it is then possible to play out some line on the first back cast - not much, but enough to provide some weight beyond the rod tip to advance the line considerably on the first forward false cast. At this point there should be sufficient line weight in the air to enable a complete "shoot" on the delivery cast, whether it be 8, 10 or 12 metres. The reality is one false cast! During the course of a day the fly will thus be on the water much longer and therefore having more chances to rise a trout. Also, your casting arm will benefit.

Question 6: There is an amazing amount of fly-fishing tackle available these days; does it make us better fishermen?

There is no doubt that the modern graphite fly rod, super lightweight, very responsive and capable of long casts in the right hands has added to angling pleasure. A delight to use. The same can be said for the modern super lightweight full size arbor reel, which can make little or no noise when in use. Most have a drag system with no start-up torque and are smooth in performance. The larger arbor size benefits the fly fisherman greatly by eliminating “pigtail memory”, common with finer size arbors in earlier reels.

Better fishermen? Not so much. Hours on the water is what makes us better fishermen, observing what goes on around us, pursuing knowledge in the field, recognising what’s important and not forgetting it. The angler gets closer to being a better fisherman with more understanding of trout behaviour ... the way of the trout. One need go no further than G.E.M. Skues’ *‘Itchen Memories.’* Skues really knew the way of the trout and many trout paid the price as he made his way along his beloved Itchen River. Skues was a fish-catching machine, but used old fashioned tackle by today’s standards. The one exception was his rod, an American made Leonard 9ft 5oz (some say 5½ oz) split cane which Skues referred to as the world’s best rod. He used the ‘Sage One’ of the day, while others used heavy, soft 10ft Hardy rods. Consider that Skues’ fly line was oiled silk, double taper, and his leader was made from “gut” and required soaking before use. His silk line required frequent re-dressing, often even during a hatch, so we have to conclude that tackle and equipment played a minor role compared with his ability to understand trout feeding patterns and behaviour.



G.E.M. Skues’ books are treasured by Bob

Question 7: Advice to inexperienced fly-fishers?

Asking questions is the key to going forward. A good answer will lead somewhere worthwhile and experienced fly-fishers love being quizzed by newcomers, providing it is not about their favourite fishing spot. The most rewarding novice experience is to share the river bank with somebody who “knows the ropes.” The hard part is to find someone who is generous with their time and knowledge and then keep asking questions.

Question 8: Advice to experienced fly fishers?

Only when asked for and even then I may have none to offer, depending on the circumstances.

Question 9: Does one fish stand out?

Yes, but it was someone else’s personal triumph. In the early years, from 1963 onwards, I did a lot of fishing with Jim Allen, whose generosity in taking me fishing most weekends is something I remain grateful for. The Goulburn River was our favourite weekend destination - Thornton, Gilmore’s, The Breakaway, the Pondage on a Sunday night, then home. One Saturday evening Jim returned from below Thornton Bridge with a tale of chasing a good fish that favoured a tiny backwater at the entrance to a small creek that trickled into the Goulburn.

The following weekend we were back again, with Jim jumping immediately into his waders and bolting downstream. On his return after dark the story was the same, "It's still there, but no joy." Jim would tell you it was ten Saturday nights before he "locked horns" with that fish. He finally hooked it on a small wet black beetle and both fish and angler "slugged it out like prize fighters." The story goes that Jim finally abandoned the landing net, rushed into the water and grappled with the great fish, finally clutching it to his chest with both arms. Back at the Breakaway Camping Ground (before Twin Rivers Park) Jim proudly displayed his catch on the tailgate of his Holden wagon - a magnificent golden-sided brownie of 5lb 4oz. The assembled group had never seen such a trout; a memorable occasion indeed.

To mark the significance of the capture Jim decided to have his trout professionally mounted on a polished board, which he then took to the owner of the Thornton General Store. The fish was displayed above the counter. But alas, some weeks later the store caught fire and was destroyed, along with the mounted fish. Jim was heartbroken!

(Part 2 of the Bob Roles interview in the October newsletter will include his thoughts on leaders and favourite flies.)

Advance Notice – the October General Meeting



After some discussion it was decided that the October General Meeting, on Thursday October 18, should focus on an aspect of angler safety – the use of the Garmin Rino 650 UHF radio / GPS, which a number of members have purchased. Jon Kenfield has some expertise with this unit and has agreed to talk us through its use.

One of the great joys of fly-fishing is its ability to take us far off the beaten track, into places where 'no hand has set foot' (to quote Kenny Everett), at least not within fish memory timeframes. Another of our pleasures lies in the camaraderie of fishing with friends, not to mention the amiable competition that comes with it. However, as we age and our eyes, bones, muscles, balance and (dare we say) brains lose a little of their former "edge", it's wise to get a little more serious about personal safety - dying of a twisted ankle or snake bite a few Klicks from the car would seriously eat into your allocated fishing time.

This is where modern technology can help, without becoming too intrusive. The use of a GPS for finding your target area or your current location or your car park; two-(or more)-way radios for maintaining contact with a mate / shore party while giving each other plenty of room to fish; and EPIRBs for summoning angels in choppers for dire emergencies are all forms of practical risk management we should all be considering seriously.

Jon Kenfield (aka "Gadget") is a long time believer in the sensible use of technology to enhance pleasure and safety (make of that what you will). The VFFA has recently ramped up its safety requirements and advice to members. Practically, this includes obtaining several Garmin Rino 650 units, which combine GPS and two-way radio functions in a single handset. We will have some of these available for member use, especially at future club outings, and encourage members to acquire their own safety equipment where appropriate. Jon will describe when and how to use the Garmins to best effect, and will open a discussion around the whole subject of personal and group safety.

DPI Recreational Fishing Initiative

(The following report was provided by DPI staff on the initiative of Travis Dowling, Director of Fisheries Management. Travis was keen for VFFA members to be informed of some of the recent work by DPI to benefit our trout fishery)

How is the Government progressing with spending the \$16.2 million recreational fishing initiative funding?

- The Recreational Fishing Initiative is into its second year.
- Thirty-three projects improving angler access and facilities are either complete or underway.

Improved Access

Lake Hindmarsh	Heart Morass, Latrobe River
Nelson, Glenelg River	Stewarts Bridge Tk , Echuca
Port Welshpool	Tyers River, Caringal

Fish ways

Ovens River, Wangaratta	Hollands Creek, Emu Bridge
Broken River, Rupertsvale	Banimboola Creek, Dartmouth

Facilities

Albert Park Lake	Yarra River, Richmond
Lakeside Pakenham	Lake Victoria Maryborough
Lake Fyans	Ryans Creek
Yarrambat Lake	Eildon Pondage
Highbett Reserve	Springberg Ln - Perry Bridge Avon River
Lake Tyers (x2)	Corner Inlet

Boat Ramps

Lake Toolondo	Corinella	Lake Hindmarsh
Lake Elingamite	Lake Wallace	Pental Island
Nathalia	Tooradin	Goughs Bay, Lake Eildon
Robinvale - Berribee (Murray River) (8 ramps)		

- A significant number of projects are under negotiation with land managers and other stakeholders and will be funded in the 2012/13 financial year.
- The new native fish production facility is in full scale production. Record native fish stocking for the 2011/12 season has been completed.
- The 2012 trout stocking season is well underway, including the stocking of family fishing waters which coincides with the second and third terms of the Victorian school holidays.

- Over the next 18 months, eight recreational reefs will be constructed in various estuarine systems, and one large oceanic reef will be deployed in coastal waters out from the Torquay-Anglesea area.

If you have a great idea on how funds can be invested to improve recreational fishing in Victorian waters we'd like to hear from you.

Fisheries Victoria stocking update

Fisheries Victoria has continued to stock fish as part of its annual trout and native fish stocking program. The proposed 587,250 salmonids to be stocked in 2011 was exceeded with a total of 659,632 salmonids stocked, which includes the popular Family Fishing lakes near urban centres.

The trout stocking program has resulted in anglers finding plenty of quality fish in many of Victoria's stocked lakes. The western district lakes such as lakes Bolac and Tooliorook have been popular and good reports are just now beginning to trickle in from Lake Toolondo.

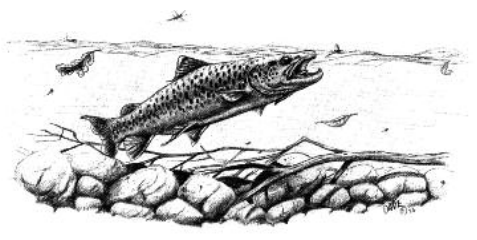
Further good news for those who like to fish for salmonids is the pending resurrection of Victoria's Chinook salmon fisheries. Considerable effort and resources have been focussed at the Snobs Creek fish hatchery to improve breeding techniques for these exciting sport fish. The 2012 breeding season was very good and it is expected that Chinook stocking will resume in Bullen Merri in 2012 and Purrumbete in 2013.

Fly Fish Baw Baw

On November 23-25 a fly-fishing event 'Fly-Fish Baw Baw' will be held at the Mt Baw Baw Resort. The event aims to promote fly-fishing in Victoria and to encourage fly-fishers to take advantage of the fantastic opportunities that local rivers and streams have to offer in the Baw Baw region.

The event will feature structured activities on and off the mountain that include an information night on the Friday evening for fishers to get all the knowledge from local anglers, and a fishing day on Saturday using a map to specific local waters that have been provided with private land access permission for the weekend. Sunday is a fly-fishing trade fair at the resort that will showcase all there is to fly-fishing with the latest products on display from the major wholesalers, fly tying experts, purpose-built casting ponds, local food and wine stalls and activities for non-fishers.

The event will be conducted in partnership with Fisheries Victoria, VRFish, Mt Baw Baw Resort and the Baw Baw Shire. For more details check out www.dpi.vic.gov.au/flyfishbawbaw.



Report From Way Out North-West

(Jim Blakeslee's account of some of his fishing exploits during his recent visit to the USA)

My trips to North America usually involve seeing family and friends in California and visiting relatives in Idaho, with some fishing, diving, surfing, skiing or bushwalking thrown in. This year, my wife Tricia and I took time out from visiting family to explore a part of the Canadian Pacific North-west that we hadn't seen before, and to catch up with some Aussie friends. We had travelled for two days and made the long, 16 hour drive north to Seattle to take advantage of an offer to fish the Travelling Sedge hatch for Penask-strain rainbow trout. These are powerful, slender, silvery Kamloops Lake rainbows that were first introduced by British Columbia Fisheries into Penask Lake, and from there into many other rich, alkaline, previously fishless volcanic lakes on the Thompson-Fraser River Plateau in British Columbia. This plateau lies in the rain-shadow to the east of the Cascade Range, and the further east one goes the drier it gets.

The offer to fish the Travelling Sedge hatch had been made earlier in the year during a phone conversation I had with an ex-pat Victorian friend of ours, Peter Conrick, who described it as the search for the "Holy Grail" and a not-to-be-missed fishing experience. Finally we were on the last leg of our quest to achieve the very pinnacle for a caddis fly-fishermen. It was the 4th of July, so we celebrated Independence Day with a BBQ and a glass or two of beverage while watching fireworks late into the night with Peter and his family. The next morning Peter described where we were to cross the Canadian Border, then the Cascade Range, and that we should expect to have another long day's drive before we would reach our campsite for a week's fishing.



Pontoon Boats – ideal for lakes

“How did a Victorian teacher/fly-fisher end up living in Washington?” you may ask. Peter was born and raised in Geelong and trained at Melbourne University as a high school humanities teacher. In his early years he had surfed and fished along the Otway coast, where he developed an intimate knowledge of the best spots and knew them “like the back of his hand”. Then, at his first school placement in Melbourne, he met his wife-to-be, Susan, who was a teacher from California. They married, started to raise a family, and lived at Jan-Juc near Bells Beach for a number of years. But Susan became homesick for America so they decided to have a go at living and teaching in Washington State. To make a long story short, Peter and Susan have spent the last 25 years living, raising two sons, and teaching near Seattle, Washington. In that time Peter has developed a considerable wealth of experience and knowledge of the fly-fishing opportunities of the Pacific North-west, and in particular, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.



Good work Jim



A well-catered camp

So, on July 5 we packed our camping and fly-fishing gear into Peter’s Toyota pick-up (ute), along with a float tube and a couple pontoon boats. We drove north, crossed the border, then drove east along Highway 5A to Merritt, the largest town in the area to the south-west of Kamloops. There we loaded up with supplies and drove the final hour to Glimpse Lake, playground for holiday-makers mainly from Vancouver. We set up camp, had an early dinner, and prepared for the evening rise – setting up the pontoon boats, donning waders and rigging our rods. We tied on and greased up a size #6 Sedge pattern (the sort of thing you might use for the evening rise on the Clutha River below Lake Wanaka in New Zealand). Peter explained that early to mid-July was *usually* the best time to catch the peak of the hatch of Travelling Sedge that occurs on the volcanic lakes in southern BC. The Travelling Sedge is a mega-sized brown caddis fly that emerges like a cork popping to the surface of the lake. The Sedge then proceeds to flutter its wings and “run” across the surface – activity that attracts plenty of interest from hungry rainbows. The plan was for us to row out into the lake an hour before dark, position ourselves outside some nice beds of reeds, cast our large caddis pattern in towards the reeds and retrieve with a strip/pause/strip/pause action. Of course, we needed a full-on Travelling Sedge hatch to bring up the big fish. As things turned out, we had good hatches of regular size caddis; even a few mayflies that evening and during the next 4 days. But the hatch of Travelling Sedge was sparse and elusive.

Still, we had a great time with lots of excitement and action, and plenty of smaller rainbows attacking our flies - fish ranging in size from 0.25kg to 2kg. The best we caught were about 2.5kg. But the really big ones - fish that can go upwards of 5kg – just weren't interested. I think temperature was a factor (global warming??) The air temperature was in the mid to high 30s Celsius the whole time we were there and the water surface temperature gradually rose until it was quite pleasant for us to go swimming at mid-day. This is in Canada, remember. Maybe the heat didn't suit the caddis and, as far as the bigger trout were concerned, they seemed to prefer to stay deep where the water was cooler and where the *real* food was (more about that later).

We saw some beautiful wild flowers, vast conifer forests badly affected by a beetle infestation (that's another story) and lots of wildlife while fishing Glimpse, Blue, Plateau and Peter Hope Lakes that week. There were plenty of ducks leading around their little mobs of ducklings, Canadian geese, deer, even the occasional muskrat and beaver. Highlights included the ever-present, curious, fish-eating birds called loons that were quietly circling us, hunting, waiting for their chance. Suddenly, one would torpedo past or even under the boat and steal another rainbow that was struggling on the end of the line. After a while we started referring to another successful loon attack as "catch and release." Now and then there was a terrific splash behind and we would turn to see a bald eagle flying off with a fish gripped in its talons. Bird life and beaver were OK with my wife, Tricia. However, she was relieved that we didn't cross paths with any bears. Peter assured us there were plenty in the area!

We did see some seriously big fish cruising along the drop-offs, especially in Blue Lake, which has a certain reputation among BC fly-fishermen (Oops!! They better not find out I'm writing and telling the world about one of their secret hot spots!) We were even able to entice them into coming up for a dry on occasion, but only for a look; I bet they see a *lot* of flies during a summer in that lake. Anyway, in the main, they stayed down. We eventually worked out how to hook them, though we failed to land the best of them. The Canadians encourage anglers who fish these lakes to release most of the fish they catch, so that's what we did. Honest, we didn't keep any fish from Blue! But on the third day we weakened. We wanted something to grill and had kept a few fish from Glimpse for dinner, which is OK. While cleaning the fish we noticed that the main items in their stomachs were large green "couta" mudeyes and large green caddis pupae. Here in Australia one of my favourite flies is a #6 green Carey Special (a Canadian mudeye pattern, originally named the "Monkey-faced Louise," that was developed by a certain Colonel Carey for fishing Kamloops area lakes such as these). I also like using a #10 green Caddis Emerger (one that I have previously described as the "cream bug" or as a "shrimp pattern.") I always have these in my fly box. So, in the warmer hours, when I "matched the hatch" and started fishing the Carey with a caddis emerger trailing behind and deep, I got results. Late evening and after dark the Carey fished shallow or caddis emerger trailed behind a large, dry Travelling Sedge pattern worked very well indeed. I'll have plenty of these in the fly box next time I'm back in BC, and hopefully, it will be when there's a full-on hatch of the elusive Travelling Sedge.



This is the fly to use!

President's Casting Day – Saturday August 25

The day following the Annual Dinner is, by long tradition, set aside for the 'President's Casting Day'. Thus, on Saturday August 25 some 25 slightly enervated but optimistic wavers of the long wand assembled at the Red Tag Casting Pools and gathered round the BBQ to support each other, ruminate on the previous evening's meal and speaker (and the consensus was it was all very good), and if really pressed, grab the VFFA tournament casting rod and try to cast that little plastic fly into those hoops out there in the water. This last challenge was quite difficult as the wind was gusting nastily, the official VFFA casting rod flexed like a flagpole, and the hoops this year seemed much smaller than those used last year (perhaps they'd got wet and shrunk.) But despite the elements, spirits weren't at all dampened (though a few were consumed), and the casting proceeded apace. The event is officially the 'Handicap Event for the Tom and Frank McDonough Memorial Trophy', and it is pleasing to report that the eventual winner was none other than our retiring president, Rick Dugina. Well done Rick, and congratulations!

The day provided a delightful opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow members, and to appreciate the magnificent work of chef Peter Campbell who never fails to impress. The success of the occasion was due to some hard work by a number of members, and particularly Joe Haslauer, who set up the casting materials, Peter Campbell, who cooked the lunch and provided some delectable fruit pies to eat, and Colin Morrison, who again acted as chief scorer. Our sincere thanks to them all.



*Chef Peter Campbell –
a man of many talents*



Kossy casting



Those hoops are smaller than they look

The Bullen Merri Trip

(report by David Wakefield)

To borrow from Julius Caesar "...we came, we fished, we blanked out".

Well nearly - Kossy claimed that the fish on Friday night's barbecue were several redbfin and a headless trout that had been extracted from Lake Purrumbete earlier. I guess they could have been, but with smoke from the charring barbecues limiting visibility to the bottom of the glass almost anything could be claimed with impunity. I will claim a near distance early release trout on a Muz Wilson pattern earlier that evening when fishing with Lester and Hugh round by the Quarry. Other than Mick's couple of redbfin, also allegedly caught earlier in the week with a 'mudeye pattern' that was so accurate that it actually bled, that pretty well summed up the weekend's fishing.

The advance party was reinforced on the Friday by Hamish, Terry, Gadget, Colin Morrison, Richard Salvado, David Hooke, John Permewan, Lester Walton, and myself. Jim Blakeslee, from Warrnambool, joined us on the Saturday.

All reports described the weather during the week as worse than awful, with howling winds, stinging rain and cabin heaters on full throttle. The fishing likewise!

The new venue at Lake Purrumbete Caravan Park was certainly more sheltered than the cabins crowning Lake Bullen Merri's volcanic rim, so Friday evening (prior to the barbecue being fed but not before the slow combustion heater was fired up in the sealed rotunda) saw a few of us casting in the evening as the wind dropped and the rain promised to depart. The lake's surface had stilled and the thronging birdlife intruded less frequently on the settling evening. It was that magic expectant moment for the chilled trout fisher - a clear signal that it was time to get back to camp and open a bottle!

A few enthusiasts braved the wintry Saturday morning in search of fish, notably Hamish Hughes and Terry Rogers, who placed breakfast orders by phone on their way into the town cafe. For others a bit of a slog along the jetty, through the reeds and around the gravelly shores until lunchtime convinced us that we were seriously focused and dedicated fly-fishermen. Hughie's efforts with the chops and sausages at midday led to a bit of "grass casting", with everyone's new, old, or 'for sale' rods, reels and lines being tested. An odd thing to do, bearing in mind that the lake, deemed to be one of the State's premier trout fisheries, was a whole 30 metres distant! In the background the Saturday arvo footy match got under way on the radio.

Gadget spent the morning unpacking and preparing his inflatable, then went fishing for an hour or so, and then spent the afternoon repacking for Sunday. Such was the level of activity out on the lake. During the afternoon various forays on foot or afloat, singly or in company, constituted the remainder of the day's hunt for our favoured target species. It was generally agreed that any trout that were around were hovering in the extreme depths and only showing a spark of interest when a female of the species swam by. The fact that another camper had picked up several superb rainbows during the day by fishing a nymph just under the surface was conveniently kept confidential until later in the evening.

The multitudes, suitably resplendent, assembled at 6:00pm at John "Ming" Menzie's



A fine meal



VFFA's elite anglers

spectacular eyrie atop the Bullen Merri crater. To the skirl of bagpipes and the nostalgic aroma of seasonal “Daphne” and a crackling log fire we were piped into the spectacularly timbered rooms. Introductions all round were quickly followed by the chink of glassware and the glug of emptying bottles. After we were seated the sonorous tones of the bagpipes preceded a magnificent Haggis tenderly held aloft by Colin Morrison. And it was superb!

During the delicious roast pork dinner our host recounted the colourful history of his magnificent home. The main room had once been Camperdown’s “Gentleman’s Billiard Room” and was rescued by John and transported to join the original timber cottage on the site. John’s son had indicated an intention at one stage to return to the property, so a couple of bedrooms were added. Subsequent additions and improvements were also instituted - but all to no avail. Fifteen years have passed but the prodigal has not yet returned!

David Hooke regaled us with the exquisite tale of his garrulous local “Noojee” cafe owner who supplies all and sundry with detailed descriptions of how to find Rex Hunt’s nearby favourite and very secret fishing spot! Anything to sell a toasted sandwich in the bush!



*Careful with that Haggis
Colin*

Jim Blakeslee provided some excellent Semillon Blanc from his vineyard to wash down the delicious sticky date pudding, and then in his usual measured delivery enthralled us all with an irresistible invitation to attend the Warrnambool season opener on November 9 - 11. Participants were reaching for their diaries as Jim described fishing opportunities ranging from 50 kg Bluefin Tuna through to kilo plus trout, and all in the same weekend. However he did stop short of providing a written guarantee!

Votes of thanks and a toast to our host John and chef Wendy for another memorable evening were enthusiastically supported. The absence of Dickie Goodall was noted with regret and Hugh Maltby’s organisational skills were applauded. Fortunately the drive home was downhill through an unpopulated area, with no sightings of the dreaded flashing red and blues. Most made an early departure the next morning, though a few wet a line. All in all another wonderful midwinter get-together - the type of event that makes membership of the VFFA so memorable!

FLY OF THE MONTH

Bernard Holbery's Steavenson River Dun



Tying materials:

Hook: Standard Dry Fly – hook sizes 12 – 20 (the smaller the better).

Tying thread: Brown 8/0.

Tail: A few fibres from a ginger cock hackle (small sizes), or pheasant tail fibres (larger sizes). These are tied onto the hook shank first, and then the CDC feather stem is then tied in as the base for the body. At this point the brown thread which is tied over the CDC stem to form the body is also used to wrap the tail fibres to the CDC stem.

Body: Extended body, as the photo shows. The body consists of fine brown tying thread tied over a CDC feather stem, then ribbed with fine black thread.

Wings: Malvoisine paired wings, which Bernard imports from a supplier in the Malvoisine area of France. Bernard sells the paired wings at his Brunswick shop. However there are other thin and relatively translucent materials available that he suggests could be used instead, such as starling wings or some of the new fine synthetic winging material now available. Adventurous fly tiers who don't have access to the Malvoisine paired wings will undoubtedly find a suitable substitute.

Hackle: Brown furnace cock hackle (Whiting)

Some notes on the fly:

The small chocolate brown dun of the Baetis species, in a size 18 or smaller, hatches twice a year. There is a mid-spring to early summer hatch and then another in autumn. But the most prolific hatches over the past ten years on the Steavenson River have been the November hatches. These mayflies can be found in slow to moderate flowing water, and it is often necessary to use very long and light leaders and tippets, and the angler needs to make a very careful approach. This is exciting fishing and can be extremely productive.



The Steavenson duns usually hatch mid-morning, and cloudy overcast days are by far the best types of days for this hatch. Most spinner falls occur in the late evening, but can occur late afternoon too, depending on the weather and hatch times. Some parts of the Steavenson River produce clouds of mayfly and over the years I have witnessed some very heavy hatches. I suggest you take with you nymphs, emergers, duns and spinner imitations of this mayfly when you head out. The pheasant tail nymph is useful for all mayfly nymphs, including the Baetis nymph. The parachute pheasant tail (dry fly) works well in this hatch too.



Some views showing the Malvoisine paired wings

I first tied the Steavenson River Dun about thirteen years ago. I had collected examples of the mayfly in my specimen bottles for many weeks and studied this insect closely before sending samples to an entomologist in the United Kingdom. Then I started tying the closest imitation possible. Since then my dun has been fished by many of my friends and is sold in my fly shop in Brunswick as the Steavenson River Dun, though is known by the locals as Bernard's Dun. Their small size permits the growth of two generations per year, and they are good dry fly insects because they frequently hatch in

impressive numbers. The duns ride the water for a long time before taking flight, thus making them readily available for waiting trout.

Baetis mayflies are often called Blue Winged Olives, but this is one of the follies of common names. The name Blue Winged Olive was originally coined for a species of British ephemerata. Some anglers try to imitate the duns on the Steavenson using flies with blue wings and olive bodies and this is the confusion in this species. The wings are actually various shades of grey, possibly with a slight hint of blue, and their bodies are various shades of olive or brown. When you come upon a hatch try to catch one of the mayflies rather than assuming you know its colour. There are many species of Baetis and the Steavenson River Dun is a light chocolate brown colour and seems to be unique to the Steavenson River. I haven't ever found this species on the Acheron, Rubicon, Taggerty, or Goulburn rivers. Other species of mayfly – yes, but not this one.

For many trout, Baetis are the first and last mayfly hatches they see each year - the one that ended last autumn and the one that is not far off in beginning in November. The duns on the Steavenson River usually show up in the first week of November. By about the third week and the fourth week they are quite prolific. The Baetis species don't like bright, sunny days. Some will hatch, but not nearly as many as on cloudy and damp afternoons. November is usually my best fishing month, and when I move back into my cabin at Narbethong and take a month off to fish this classic mayfly hatch I'll be using my Steavenson River Dun.

Tight lines, *Bernard Holbery*

Warrnambool Season Opener Weekend & Dinner

It's on again – the Season Opener to Warrnambool and District on November 9 – 11. Following a magnificent visits to Warrnambool and district over the past two years we will do it all again for this year's opening weekend.

Accommodation has been booked at the Surfside Holiday Park. This complex is very comfortable and in a great location. The accommodation has been booked in cabins from arrival on Friday, November 9, until departure on Sunday, November 11.

We will fish a number of local rivers including the Merri, Hopkins, Mt Emu and Moyne. These rivers offer a wonderful variety of fishing - both wet and dry styles, depending on the height and clarity of the water.

The President and members of the Warrnambool Fly Fishers will again guide us, and host a dinner at Jim Blakeslee's Winery on the Saturday evening. Jim and his wife Tricia will be our hosts. Members will each share the cost of this meal and provide their own drinks.

This will be a great weekend, so reserve your spot now by contacting Hugh Maltby on: Mob - 0423 283 079 or by email - redntag@hotmail.com



LIBRARY NEWS

All members should remember that the Mick Martin Memorial Library is one of the most extensive collections of fly-fishing literature in Australia. It is valuable in its own right but is a great asset to members wishing to expand their knowledge or who simply enjoy sitting by the fireside and vicariously enjoying the exploits of others. In addition, the library boasts a number of videos on trout fishing. Our librarian Marty Rogers will be available prior to each general meeting to assist members wishing to borrow books or videos.

The library is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.

Part 2 Books available for reference only and not to be taken from the library.

Part 3 Books bequeathed to the Association and not to be taken from the cabinet.

OVERDUE BOOKS

Our librarian reports that a number of members have failed to return library books on time. Could all those book loving members who have failed to return books promptly do so.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA).....	\$70.00 each
Book "Geehi to Great Lake"	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo.....	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon).....	\$35.00 each
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges	\$7.00 each
<i>The Australian Trout</i> by Jack Ritchie.....	\$20.00
V.F.F.A. car stickers.....	\$2.00 each

Members wishing to purchase any of these items should contact
Hugh Maltby prior to the monthly General Meeting on telephone 0423 283 079.

VALUED DONORS

The following made donations for the raffle at the 2012 Annual Dinner:

Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network • Flyfisher Magazine • FlyLife Magazine • Hayes on Brumbys • Hookup Bait and Tackle • J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle, Mick Hall Flies • Millbrook Lakes Lodge • Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker • Pro-Angler Tackle • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd • The Compleat Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle Store • The Fly Fishers Rod and Creel in Thornbury • Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

VFFA Meetings & Activities

September 2012

- 12 Council Meeting – 6:40 pm at the Celtic Club: preparation for AGM
- 20 Annual General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club, election of President and Council members.**
- 26 First Council Meeting for the new Council – 6:40 pm at the Celtic Club

October 2012

- 18 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club. Speaker – Jon Kenfield, who will explain aspects of angler safety, especially the use of the Garmin Rino 650 UHF radio / GPS unit**
- 24 Council Meeting – 6:40 pm at the Celtic Club

November 2012

- 9-11 Opening Weekend Trip – to Warrnambool again this year, with Convenor Hugh Maltby looking after the arrangements. (Phone Hugh on 0423 283 079, or email him on redntag@hotmail.com)
- 15 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club. Speaker - Gavin Hurley from Pro Angler, who will give details on the many trips Pro Angler organise for fly-fishers**
- 21 Council Meeting – 6:40 pm at the Celtic Club

December 2012

- 5 Council Meeting – preparation for Christmas Dinner
- 13 Christmas Dinner – 6:30 pm for 7:00 pm at the Celtic Club. This will be a celebration of 25 year and 50 year members, including the presentation of special badges. Speakers will include some of our most respected long-term members.**

February 2013

- 13 Council Meeting – 6:40 pm at the Celtic Club
- 15 - 17 Bairnsdale Dudley Lee Donger Weekend and Bairnsdale Fly-fishers' Annual Dinner
- 16 – 22 Annual Trip to Tasmania – staying at Hayes on Brumby's