

FLY LINES



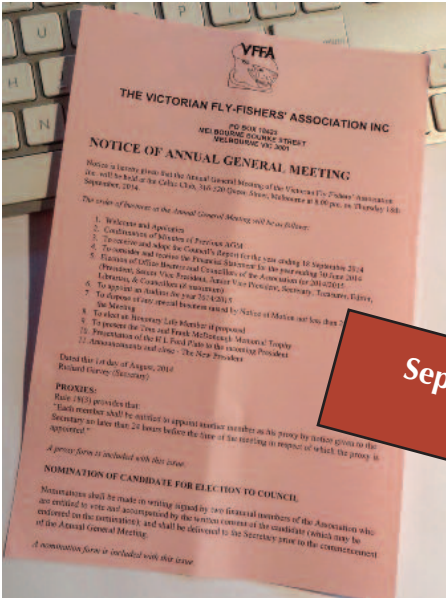
SEPTEMBER 2014

The September general meeting is our Annual General Meeting – an important event, and often surprisingly interesting. President Terry Rogers reminds us that all financial members are eligible for nomination and election to the Council. Notice papers relevant to the AGM are included with this newsletter, including the Nomination Form, Appointment of Proxy Form, and the Notice of Annual General Meeting.

Thursday, September 18,
8:00pm, at the
Celtic Club

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

All members are invited to
attend the Dinner, but PLEASE
make a Dinner booking by
12 noon on Thursday,
September 18 – either by
phoning 0498 254 497 and
leaving a message, or by
sending a text message to
President Terry Rogers
on 0438 553 326.



September Meeting
– the AGM

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THE VICTORIAN FLY FISHERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

SEPTEMBER 2014

Organisation No. A0024750J

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

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September Index

VFFA Office Holders	2	Stocking Comment	15
Advance Notice - September AGM	3	Catching a Monster	17
Advance Notice - October & November Meetings	3	A Fishing Net and Scabbard Recovered	18
The August Dinner with Rex Hunt	4	Montana 2014!	21
President's Message	12	President's Casting Day	26
Web Fish	13	Fly of the Month	29
Editor's Desk – Lyndon Webb	14	Bullen Merri Fishing Weekend & Dinner	30
		VFFA Meetings & Activities	32

Advance Notice - September AGM

The September meeting is traditionally our Annual General Meeting. President Terry Rogers reminds us that all financial members are eligible for nomination and election to the Council. Notice papers relevant to the AGM are included with this newsletter, including the Nomination Form, Appointment of Proxy Form, and the Notice of Annual General Meeting.

Council meets regularly – usually every second month on a Wednesday evening, and all the management issues involved in running the Association are dealt with there, so that our monthly general meetings are given over totally to the advertised activities – guest speakers, auctions, fly tying demonstrations, etc.

This year will see some changes, with President Terry Rogers completing his

two-year term of office, and Secretary Richard Garvey reluctantly stepping down due to his heavy and growing workload with the Hawthorn AFL Club. So we'll start the next VFFA year with a new president, a new secretary, and some new faces on Council.

So if you have some experience and talent in management and a keen desire to see our Association remain vibrant and responsive to the needs of members, please give some thought to nominating for Council. Be assured, meetings are always lively and entertaining, and you will enjoy your participation as well as contributing your skills and expertise for the benefit of our Association.

The date – Thursday, September 18, at the Celtic Club.

Advance Notice – October & November Meetings

At this stage the details of the October meeting are still being finalised, but planning for the November meeting is well underway. November will be an auction of both books and equipment.

Our auction organisers are already busy sorting and planning, and a catalogue of items for sale at the auction will be made available well before the November meeting.

A Warm Welcome to a New Member

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Andrew Wolf as a member of the VFFA. We trust that Andrew's membership brings many years of pleasure and enjoyment. Welcome aboard Andrew.

The August Dinner – with Rex Hunt as our Guest Speaker

The August Annual Dinner was another well-attended and very enjoyable occasion. Some 72 members and their guests were there to meet with friends and fishing companions of many years, to enjoy a fine meal together, and to be royally entertained by VFFA member and guest speaker Rex Hunt, who was sparkling form. An edited summary of Rex's talk is given here:

Thank you Terry for your very kind introduction. I'm a proud member of the VFFA. I don't get to meetings often but I do get on the stream very often, and I get on the phone to many people who I might not have met had I not become a VFFA member. These people have not only become great comrades on the water, they have become dear friends who accept me as you would like to be accepted - without conditions.

I am quite edgy about talking tonight. It's a bit like talking to the Australian Cricket Eleven after being only a fair cricketer with the Parkdale fifths in their matting competition. Such is the wealth of experience and ability of anglers in this room. I'm certainly not here tonight to ram any thoughts down your throat.

What I say will merely be a postcode of my life in fishing, which I shared with my son at the funeral of a dear friend yesterday. He said, "Dad, I've never seen you so emotional as you were at the loss of your dear friend at the age of 62."

He also asked, "Fishing dad – what about your fishing?" I replied, "Well, I still enjoy my whiting fishing. I love going out on the Tortoise Bank of Westernport with Choco, or with Hughie, or with you, and catching the run out tide as the first rays of sun come up over Corinella Hill and - bang the first King George whiting is on."

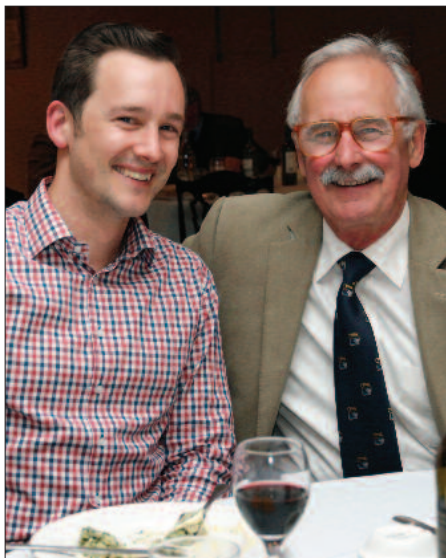
And as for you people here tonight who fish the streams and lakes of Australia or New Zealand, and beyond, the results are no accident. I know what to do. I don't have to look at a barometer to know what



Rex in full flight

the day is going to be like. I've already had a look at the long-range forecast, and when I rise and see the clouds starting to dissolve on the horizon of a southerly that will turn into a south-easterly and then go back into the south with the sea breeze, I'll get some fresh mussels and some pipis and I'm off. I just wish that at this stage of my career I could say the same for my trout fishing, because I'm going to use a couple of swear words here tonight. And if you are not offended then please be patient - I will get to you.

Those particular words are 'bait fishing' and 'spinning'. This year I've probably had my best trout season for many a year spinning the Goulburn River. I was talking about this earlier tonight with my dear friend Bernard Holbery, who is the



*Rick Williams enjoyed the evening
with his son Theo*

master of the trout fishing in the Acheron Valley. I will use whatever the trout are taking on a particular day. Last summer I'd had a magnificent day until about 2 pm when I got the little stove going while my friend Doug continued working his gold wobbler, and his Celta, and my Tiger Devon with the Tasmanian keel which was glistening in the early afternoon light. Then I thought to myself, I've just got to try my 5-weight rod. I didn't put a Stimulator on as an indicator with my nymph because I had learned, not only from great people within this organisation but through my own experiences, that 95% of my fishing will be to fish that are taking subsurface. So I used a two-nymph rig. And I cast my arm off and I was double hauling with my new Hardy Sintrix rod.

Hardy is now manufacturing in South Korea, as you know, but that's another story for another occasion. I always use a line one weight up on my outfit, because with a little bit of arthritis and tennis elbow I like to shoot the line properly, and

I find that it just goes out beautifully on a big tailrace stream like the Goulburn. And in half an hour of my best casting, which would probably be laughed at out there on the Red Tag casting pools, I caught absolutely nothing. I knew the fish were there, but what were they feeding on? I've had people tell me, you know, back at the Alexandra Hotel, "Reg, they were taking in the surface film." I said, "It's Rex you idiot." The thing about it is that I put the Tiger Devon halfway across the stream and worked it back like Bob Gibb used to teach me, and - bang, down it went. A lovely little brown of a bit over a pound. So that's my message here tonight as to why I use words like 'bait fishing' and 'spinning', because I give the trout what they want to eat. And I don't go fishing to say, "Oh, I saw one last week," or "I went to the middling bank and I saw a bloke there who I think saw one." I'm not like the blokes who subscribe to the fact that they had a great day but didn't get any fish.

I was introduced to trout fishing in 1959 by Bill Jenkins, who used to own Boatarama. At that stage I was 10 years of age. We used to go in his old Austin A40 down the Gippsland Highway, through the Haunted Hills and up to Glenmaggie. Bill and Les Thorogood and me. Bill was a very churchy sort of person and they would sing hymns from the Billy Graham services. They'd sing George Beverly Shea's 'How Great Thou Art', and I remember thinking as a 10 year-old that I was going to need God if we hit one of those trees racing past at 70 miles an hour.

On the morning of Opening Day in 1959 I caught my first brown trout on a scrub worm. And I was hooked, so to speak. That afternoon at the Traralgon Creek I took another one and a couple of small black fish, and my journey was on the way. For the next couple of years we went to the trout openings and I caught >>>



Yes, the raffle prizes were very appealing

couple of fish. In about 1961 or 1962 I wandered up near the wall and saw some blokes with cane rods working heavy lines and big flies. All of a sudden one bloke's rod bent with a fish trying to get off the line, and in came this glistening brown trout of 2½ pounds. And he explained to me, and back in those days 'children were to be seen and not heard', and how dumb was that? But this bloke actually spoke to me and explained to me what he was doing. The smelt were coming over the spillway of the Glenmaggie dam and the trout were making their way up and gorging themselves on the smelt that were stunned. So these fish were in good condition.

In 1963 David Scholes wrote that magnificent publication, *The Way of an Angler*. It is still my favourite of Scholes's masterpieces, because he takes you with him onto the stream. He doesn't talk down to you. He gives us such gems as suggesting when he was watching a wombat or a wild hen at McVeigh's on the Yarra, "Isn't it a shame that we can't converse with wildlife and explain to them that we mean no harm." I just

wonder how many people in this room would say that when you read *The Way of an Angler* you went onto the Woori Yallock with him. Or you were there on Snoddy's big bend just across from the Launching Place hotel. You could see the glistening brace of trout – yes, a brace, and doesn't that bring back some memories. And I'm sure you would all like to have been there on the day when David and Fred Stewart were caught poaching on Mr Findlay's famous water race.

How could a 14-year-old boy not be captivated with that type of writing. From that day on I always looked forward to the trout opening. I hope you can actually appreciate what great days they were. We had dictionaries at school that had two words that we don't hear much now – 'please' and 'thank you'. We had respect for our elders, and we opened doors for women. I think life then was less complicated than we have today. People had time for each other, and we weren't in such a hurry.

Can you remember those tanks in Hartley's Sport Store that had trout swimming around in them? And big Geoff Brooke sitting there on his stool and talking to the toffs, and telling us kids to (disappear). We used to have *Let's Go Fishing* brought to us with the kind regards of J.M. Turville. But Geoff was fantastic for fishing, writing in the *Sun* and broadcasting on 3KZ. Can you remember the Melbourne Sports Depot with Jack Carolin. We used to get our mudeyes there. When I was a copper I used to swap a dozen mudeyes when I got rid of Jack's parking tickets.

I went to school with a boy called David Clark who, as chief engineer, designed the wall at Dartmouth Dam. David and I were like peas in a pod. I used to sit next to him in class but he left me in his wake when I spent the best three years of my life in Year 9 at Mordialloc High School. And



*A gathering of presidents, current and past –
Terry Rogers and Rick Dugina*

back then I couldn't even get a game in the Year 9 football side. But then all I could think about was fishing. The headmaster said to me, "Hunt, what do you want to do with your life?" I said, "I want to be a footballer and a fisherman, sir." "Well, as far as I'm concerned you'll never get anywhere. So get yourself a trade."

The Masters Apprentices were magnificent when I had hair, and their top hit had the words 'Do what you wanna do, be what you wanna be, yeah!' I'd told the headmaster that I wanted to be a fisherman and I wanted to be a footballer, but there was a time in between of some 12 years when I was a policeman. I majored in company fraud, and was in the crime car squad, and I spent time in the consorting squad dealing with the scum of society. Then one night I was shot at, and I guess the only people who would laugh at that are those who have never had a gun pulled on them.

I enjoyed a magnificent 17th birthday when my father drove David Clark and I

to the bridge that crosses the Acheron River at Narbethong. We headed downstream. As presents for both Christmas and my birthday I had a brand new Shakespeare fly rod and a Farlow fly reel with a Kingfisher silk fly line. And on the end – a Red Tag. It wasn't one of John Pilkington's but I tell you it was a really good Red Tag, because I had saved up and bought it from Carters in Glenhuntly. Magnificent memories there. Anyway, all of a sudden on my first cast up she came, and I was hooked on fly fishing. I wrote in the VFFA newsletter last year how I had revisited that same spot with one of Pilks's Red Tag masterpieces, tied with a Palmer hackle that worked beautifully in the rough water there now. I don't know whether the Nissans and Toyotas that drive up and down the stream bed there has got anything to do with the movement of the spawning redds in the Acheron, but anyhow, people put up with it.

I got my license and was driving a Volkswagen beetle. We went up the Big River, though not as far up as Pilks's place, and I caught another fish and discovered the Coachman fly that I could see in the fading light. And I went back to Glenmaggie and would see this mass of smelt come up as those big browns and rainbows would go in and go bang. It was absolutely magnificent.

In the summer of 1968 I was introduced to John Lanchester - the man who designed and made the Tom Jones what it is today. There are many variants and I have one myself that has a little red throat hackle that works particularly well if they are really aggressive on the damsels. If you can make that little bit of hackle flair you will see fish come up behind your fly and grab it. John taught me so many things. We used to tie flies at his place in Port Melbourne. He took me out fishing, and it was like Greg Norman taking you on the golf course, or Ron Barassi saying, >>>



Peter Boag and Kevin Finn sharing some moments

"Follow me. I'm the ruck rover and I'll show you how it's done." To see John Lanchester in 1968 with an old rod he got from Lindsay Haslem blowing up this little boat and rowing out using his hands on Lake Eppalock. He explained to me about the midge and the midge ball - salt and pepper and palmer tied. And he caught fish, and I was happy to sit back and watch the master in action.

I have since renewed my friendship with John because it was time that I told him just what those days meant to me. I think it is important for elderly people like a lot of you here in the room (!) to share the wealth of experience you have with young people. I played with Ron Barassi in the only state game that I played, and I've still got that big V guernsey at home. And do you know why? I came from an era where if you were no good you were told that you were no good. And most times if you were told that you are no good then you ended up no good.

I look back at the smart alecks in the under 15s at Parkdale who were always better than me. They could kick further and they could make more runs. But what I had was an ability to converse with old people like Bill Jenkins and Bob Gibb, who

was Mick Martin's best mate, and I'd met them both up on the Goulburn River. How could a young person not be swept up in their slipstream when I saw these masters plying their trade. I met David Scholes in the early 1990s, around the same time that my television show was starting. A guide called John Fox introduced me to some magnificent fishing at Lake Sorrell before it became turbid. During the late winter spawning run of rainbows you could see the fish in Crystal Creek as if you were looking through glass, such was the mystique of this marvellous fishery.

Then after a few years Arthurs Lake was producing small fish, and then all of a sudden the fish started to get bigger. It all comes in cycles, doesn't it. The trollers started to get a few, so too the mudeye fishermen, and then the fly fishers on the Cow Paddock were catching trout. It was a great lesson to me, and I'm going to swear here again. We were fishing mudeyes 18 feet down in 20 feet of water and were catching fish that looked as black as a dog's guts. They'd never seen the light of day, and you would never see them up on gum beetles or on the morass sipping emergers or spent spinners. But they were down there eating those prehistoric shrimps. And then I discovered I could actually cast to these fish with an intermediate line with a little bit of split shot on the end of a 12 foot leader. You would just twitch it along and all of a sudden - bang. This was some of the best fly fishing I'd had in my life.

I was introduced to the upper North Esk, and the South Esk, and a little gem called the St Pauls just out of Avoca. If you've got someone you dislike then I suggest you take them fishing there, because it's full of big tiger snakes. That will sort them out. But the fish are magnificent.

Why do I still go spinning and bait fishing? Because as I said earlier, I want to



Rex and Hughie and the raffle tickets

catch a fish. The day that I had at Toolondo last November with my friend Doug was the best run of fish on mudeyes I have ever had in my life. They were magnificent and they came in one after the other. That same day we drifted across the area that used to be called the racecourse. We were in about 7 foot of water fishing with an intermediate line and a little Tom Jones, or perhaps figure-eighting a Maltby nymph or something similar – for nothing. That’s what I’m talking about.

I was there again four weeks ago on a good report, but the barometer had plummeted and I knew we were in trouble. We called into Lake Wendouree on the way home and the trusty old Tiger Devon took four in half an hour. I went up the next day with my son, drift spinning, and also drift stripping. And we got absolutely nothing, but that’s fishing.

I want to talk just a little about why I love fishing so much. It’s something where I don’t have to go to a university to get a piece of paper that says that I’m good. The people I think we have to be very wary of in our society, and particularly in our fishing, are the people who make

rules. Who could ever understand the decision made mainly by Alan Baxter and Charles Barnham to take away the very soul, the very base, of our trout fishing. How could they decide to remove size limits and bag limits and closed seasons. Can the troubles we’re having today be somehow tied back to when we lost our very soul. I think that it was just an ill-informed decision that wanted to be made: rules made by people who don’t fish and supported by those who can’t fish.

Where did we go wrong? Tomorrow morning I have a radio show that goes to 104 stations and 1.7 million people, and I’m going to be talking to Philip Weigall, because Philip wants to convince me that the trout fishery can repair itself. So we don’t need to stock. I’ll ask him why the Traralgon Creek is totally devoid of fish. And why the mid-reaches and a lower reaches of the Dandongadale, before it runs into the King River, have just water in them. “Oh, it will come back.” Well – perhaps a bit like David Featherstone’s and my hair - it just might.

No one has ever asked me why in four or five foot of water next month at first light on the Tortoise Bank of Westernport Bay you will catch whiting like we do. But you genuinely have to angle for them, you just don’t hook them and bring them in. But you have to angle, while blokes are sitting back and saying, “Look at that lucky angler.” But I know that when the water goes from about 11°C to 14°C the Polychaete worm will then become very interested and stick his neck up. And people will ask, “What’s that got to do with it?” The whiting is like Gladstone Small – it has no neck. And it’s got its mouth under its chin, and they pick the worms out of the Benthos like pieces of spaghetti and suck them in, and that’s why you use a long shank hook. And that’s why we should all look and >>>

listen, because you can learn from barramundi fishing, which I love. And you can learn from whiting fishing, which I also love. But nothing floats my boat at the moment like fly fishing for trout in small streams.

I have been to New Zealand a couple of times filming, and I went last time with Gavin Hurley. Paul Squires and Hughie Maltby were the only members who would put up with my snoring. And I had the time of my life. My son expressed some surprise that I would actually pay to go fishing. I told him I was paying for a bloke to tell me where I should fish, and to stop me walking past rocks in the water, because when I walked past those rocks they suddenly swam downstream. I only caught 17 fish for the week but they were all absolute rippers. We drank some really good wine and solved the problems of the world, and that's what fly fishing is all about. But the happiest days in the last few years have been on my own, reflecting on Scholes and his desire to converse with the wildlife around us. Between the top of the Dandongadale and where it just starts to really hot up for fishing I saw red bellied blacks and copperheads wandering around as if they didn't have a worry in the world. Deer just looked up at me and then put their heads down again.

I hope I'll be able to go back to the top of the Dandongadale, or up around Wes's place on the Howqua River, or Pilks's on the Big River again one day and find that the fishing has returned. But I'm really doubtful, because until we get fishermen making decisions we are going to struggle. The snapper fishermen all those years ago said that people were taking too many fish, so a bag limit was introduced. Then the snapper fishermen got rid of the scallop boats. The people fishing Westernport got rid of the netters,

and it has since become a multimillion-dollar tourism haven. When we first put the argument to the government Premier Brumby said people have got to be able to eat fresh fish. Well what sort of people can afford fish that was \$52 a fillet this morning at the South Melbourne market?

Far too many of us are going to go to that big stream in the sky thinking that we've made a contribution. Well, why don't you make a contribution. When the editor asks you to write something for the newsletter, do it and share some of your experiences.

Isn't it amazing how people who have gone into the box suddenly become such fantastic people. Tell someone that you love them before they die; don't stand up at their funeral like I did and tell them what a good man Robert was. Make a contribution. Do something like the Rex Hunt Future Fish foundation and make fishing fun again for kids and families.

Before I finish tonight I feel that I should recite something I recited yesterday over the lifeless body of my dear friend, who came fishing with me, who marvelled at every breath, and who lost his fight about a week and a half ago. *A River Runs Through It* is a beautiful story by Norman Vincent McLean. The book is magnificent and the film was directed, narrated, and produced by Robert Redford. The plot involves one of the scourges of our lives at the moment – gambling. What did we do as kids? We didn't have any drugs. I got knocked off the night before I joined the police cadets for having an Abbots Lager within 500 metres of a dance hall for heaven's sake. What are you going to do – throw me in a cell with Ivan Milat? "What are you in here for mate?" "Oh, I killed 18 backpackers and they haven't yet found the 12 others. What are you in here for?" "I had a long neck less than 500 metres



from the Beaumaris dance." I mean to say, it's all horse droppings isn't it.

The story in *A River Runs Through It* is about a pastor and his two sons, set in the 1920s in Montana. The boys' mornings are spent in school and religious study, while their afternoons are devoted to fly fishing in the nearby Big Blackfoot River. As adults they got into the company of some very bad people and they both lost their lives. The final moments of the film are a shot up the Big Blackfoot River gorge with the pastor of 86 tying on a fly.

Then we hear Redford in all his glory: "Now I am too old to be much of a fisherman, and those that I fished with are all gone. But I still reach out to them. I like to fish the waters of the Big Blackfoot River, although some friends think that I shouldn't. But when I'm alone in the Arctic half light of the canyon all existence seems to fade to a being with my soul and memories, and the sounds of the river and a four-count rhythm, and the hope that a fish will rise. Eventually all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of those rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words,

and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters."

If you're too busy to go fishing then un-busy yourself and go. Spoil yourself, because when you are where my friend is today it's all over. Why not ring a mate that you haven't spoken to for some time and ask him, "Do you want a day on the water?" He can only say no. And instead of rushing around looking for that big fish, why don't you look in front of you at the little creek. And when you think there's no way known you could cast there, or if you got a fish on you couldn't get him out, remember Scholes's masterpiece and adopt the offensive. Have a go.

Some of you may be sitting back there looking at others and thinking, "How lucky are they and I could never do what they've done." But you're looking tonight at a kid who at 15 years of age had such a low opinion of himself, yet 40 years later took a standing ovation at the Prague Cinema at a presentation of the European Recreational Fishing Foundation. I was being honoured for my services to fishing. And I don't say that to ram it down your throat. I don't mind what people think of me. My daughter taught me a great thing. She said: "Dad, what people think of you is none of your business."

I'll leave you with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt. He was going through tough times in the Congress and they wanted him to stand down. So he stood up and threw his callipers to one side, and said: "Far better it is to dare mighty and impossible things ... even chequered by failure, than to take rank with those poor souls who neither enjoy nor suffer much. There's is the great twilight known as mediocrity. Have a go and damn the consequences."

It's dinner time. Thank you.



President's Message



As my term as President of the Victorian Fly Fishers' Association draws to a close this month, I would like to take this opportunity to hand out some well deserved "Thank You" statements.

Firstly, I wish to thank the current Council for their support over the last two years. I would particularly like to thank Richard Garvey and Tony Mitchem for their efforts as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Richard has decided to step down as Secretary this month due to the ever-increasing workload that is being put on him as a Board Member of the Hawthorn Football Club.

The lifeblood of the VFFA is our monthly Newsletter. This has always been a quality publication. However, I am sure that the total membership will agree that over the period that Lyndon Webb has been at the helm as Editor, the standard has risen even higher to encompass such words as outstanding and excellent. Thank you Lyndon for your untiring efforts as Editor, and for your personal support to me as President and your gentle nagging to see that I meet the required deadlines for each issue. Thanks also to the Editorial Sub-committee that was formed to review and revamp the physical aspects of the publication. I am sure all will agree that the format of the last few issues of the Newsletter demonstrates the success of their efforts.

Thank you to the various convenors of events such as dinners, trips, raffles,

auctions and the like for the amount of effort put in in each case to make these activities a success. You each know who you are. Again, I must single out one activity for special mention, and that is the Sunday Morning Casting at the Red Tag Pond in the off season. This Sunday morning social gathering of VFFA stalwarts will, I am sure, maintain its momentum for many, many years to come under the outstanding command of Joe Haslauer. Joe has done a sterling job in running this event every Sunday morning through the winter months. The catering has earned the reputation of being the BEST North of the Yarra. Thank you Joe, and please keep up the good work my friend.

The 82nd Annual Dinner was held on Friday, August 22, and was attended by more than 70 guests. The address by our own Rex Hunt was excellent and is reported in detail in this Newsletter. Yet again, the generous supporters of our raffle provided a collection of such high quality products that we were able to offer 12 individual prizes which raised just over \$2,100. Thank you to Peter Boag and David Grisold for their efforts in contacting these generous organisations and individuals who sponsor the VFFA, and for then collecting the items donated. Thanks to Hugh Maltby, too, for organising the raffle on the night. Members are encouraged to support our sponsors, where possible. A full list of Raffle Donors is listed on page 31 of this issue.

The President's Casting Day was conducted on the day following the Dinner, and was enjoyed by all. Congratulations to new member Iain Skinner, who was the winner of the

McDonough Memorial Trophy for 2014. The reports are that Iain has been a regular attender at the Sunday Casting, and his conscientious practice has obviously paid off. Thanks to Joe and Hughie for the catering and to Rick Dugina for running the actual competition.

In conclusion, I encourage as many members as possible to attend the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, September 18, and I thank all members for their support over the past two years and wish everyone a very successful fly fishing season ahead.

Best Wishes, *Terry Rogers*

Web Fish

Cast regularly at vffa.org.au

About the VFFA web site:

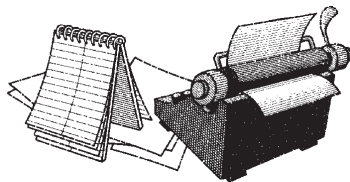
The VFFA web site has a comprehensive coverage of VFFA events, meetings , trips, ...updated monthly making it easy to track dates and times.

Features of VFFA web site:

- Monthly Newsletter delivered to members in full colour.
- Live access to more than five years of past Newsletters
- Newsletter in PDF format for easy reading on computers / iPads / tablets & smart phones
- Newsletter in PDF format that can be read and saved on iPads and tablets like eBooks
- Calendar of all activities that can be synced with all you digital device calendars
- Gallery of events - Photos and Event reports
- Where to fish directories: Victoria, Tasmania, NSW, New Zealand



From the EDITOR'S DESK



"The purple-headed mountain, The river running by, The sunset, and the morning That brightens up the sky:

All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, The Lord God made them all." (Cecil Francis Alexander, 19th Century poet and hymn-writer.)

Good heavens, that takes me back several decades to my Sunday School days. But regardless of our theology, a glance out the window must bring a smile to our faces and a keen sense of anticipation. Spring has sprung, there's blossom everywhere, the days are warmer and longer, and by the time you read this the new trout season will have opened. I love these months leading up to Christmas; as the weeks roll by it just gets better. The rivers drop and clear, daylight saving extends the evenings (is that logical?), the bugs come out with the warmer temperatures, and the stream fishing can be brilliant.

Some of us will no doubt be heading to New Zealand. Well guys – brace yourselves. The New Zealand Fish and Game website informs us that non-residents now have to pay \$160(NZ) for an annual licence, while the licence cost for residents is \$125/year. To quote from the website: "If you are a visitor from overseas planning more than a brief fishing trip, you must buy a Non-Resident Licence (NRL). Non-resident anglers are no longer eligible for NZ adult whole season, family or winter licences. The NRL costs \$160 and is valid for a full fishing season. A NRL can also be endorsed to enable the holder to fish

designated back country or controlled fisheries at no extra charge.

The legislation makes any angler found fishing with the "wrong" licence liable to prosecution. The maximum penalty for this offence is \$5,000. The revenue gained from non-resident licences is to be dedicated to management of back country fisheries."

So there you go. Not sure how it fits in with the 'Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Agreement'. There seemed to be two justifications. The first was that New Zealand anglers pay taxes to support their fishery, while overseas anglers don't, so the overseas anglers were getting their fishing cheaper. (Mind you, everything us Aussies buy in New Zealand is subject to their 15% GST. Apparently this doesn't count as tax.) The other justification is that the average Aussie angler would typically spend two or three thousand dollars on his/her New Zealand fishing trip anyway, so an extra \$35 would hardly be noticed. I guess that's true. But you've been warned.

Last month I confessed to my confusion in regard to the merit of stocking trout into streams. This drew a response from Rod Whiteway, Secretary of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society. Rod has emailed a very informative explanation of the policies and practices of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society concerning the stocking of rivers in Southern NSW. Rod's article is reprinted in this newsletter.

Related to all this is an email I received today from Terry George, who lives in Bright and is a very active member of the Australian Trout Foundation. He along

with ATF member Tony Borrack and VFFA member Brian Eddy had serious concerns with the apparent lack of trout in the Ovens River, so put many hours into preparing a submission for some recovery stocking of the Ovens. Their submission, lengthy and very detailed, sought to show that there was clear evidence that the trout fishery in the north-east was severely and adversely impacted by the bushfires and floods in the summer of 2013, and the subsequent impact on trout was much greater than those which followed from the Alpine fires of 2003 and 2006, and the floods of 2010.

Terry was delighted to report that their submission has been approved, and a total of 2,500 trout are to be stocked in the Ovens. Now I know the science suggests that if the rivers were left alone the trout would do it all for us (eventually), and that putting stocked trout into a river with wild trout is not at all smart. But it strikes me that if there are virtually no trout there at all, and official surveys indicated that this was the case in the Ovens above Bright, then dropping in some of Snobs Creek's finest progeny might really help things

along. In light of Rod Whiteway's insights we can only hope so.

Finally, the AGM on September 18 sees a changing of the guard. Richard Garvey will resign as secretary and Terry Rogers completes his two years as president. Both have contributed significantly to the VFFA. Richard, as a qualified accountant holding senior positions in some major companies, has a wealth of organisational experience and wisdom. He'll be missed. Terry, who runs a company in the telecommunications area, also brought to the role substantial administrative and business experience. He has provided two years of great leadership, and worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that the many meetings, dinners, and other Association activities ran smoothly and efficiently. Fortunately, as retiring President, Terry remains on Council as an ex officio member. At a personal level I am particularly grateful to him for his constant friendship, encouragement and support. On behalf of all members our thanks to these two fine members.

Tight lines, *Lyndon Webb*

Stocking Comment

(Rod Whiteway, Secretary, Monaro Acclimatisation Society)

As Secretary and Stocking Officer of the Monaro Acclimatisation Society(MAS), I was interested in the excellent discussion on trout stocking in the editor's column of the August Fly Lines, particularly the comments attributed to VFFA member Andrew Mossman, that in the context of the article, inferred that fish numbers in the Maclaughlin River in NSW bounced back as a result of natural processes following drought. I do not think that this is necessarily the case.

As many of you know, MAS working with NSW Fisheries is responsible for an extensive stream stocking program in south-east NSW (impoundment stockings are separate). This coming season stockings will total 180,000 rainbow fry, 90,000 brown trout fry, 20,000 rainbow fingerlings and 20,000 brown fingerlings. MAS agrees with the general principle expressed in the article and for the reasons outlined by Philip Weigall, that stocking should be limited, and is >>>

perhaps unnecessary in streams with adequate reproductive capacity. We would also probably concede that some of our stockings could be reviewed, but it is hard to change public perceptions of the need for stocking, particularly without supporting research. However, one thing that we strongly believe is that the targeted stocking of fish in streams such as the Kybeyan, Kydra, Maclaughlin, and Bobundara is beneficial. All of these streams are recognized as fast growth rate streams and for providing blue ribbon hatch driven fishing, but are subject to intermittent fish kills and/or provide inadequate spawning opportunities. We believe that stocking hastens the recovery from natural disasters in these streams. This has become more important as the apparent effect of climate change reduces the interval between potential fish kills events.

Unfortunately NSW Fisheries has not had the resources to formally test this supposition but there is plenty of informal evidence to support it. Over the past 10 years in particular it has been evident that fish numbers have been highest in the vicinity of stockings, while some unstocked areas have been almost devoid of fish. Also, following the 1982-83 drought a number of fin-clipped fish were stocked into the Kybeyan and the Kydra rivers as part of a proposed study of stocking success. The study did not go ahead, but anecdotal evidence suggested that the fin clipped fish contributed strongly to catches in the two years following the stocking. Many of us can also remember catching numbers of rainbows in Monaro streams when they were stocked into waters where they were not previously present, proving the success of the stocking.

I do not know the period that Andrew Mossman is referring to, but I can assure him that at least in the period that I have been involved with MAS and its stocking program, (the early 1980s) and prior to that to my knowledge, the Maclaughlin has received regular stockings. Much of the bounce back of this and other nearby streams from drought would be the result of stockings.

In an ideal world I think decisions to stock or not should be made on a case by case basis. Some streams and storages would not have a fishery without stocking, while even the most strongly self-supporting streams may well benefit from a stocking at times to shorten the recovery period from some disaster. This aspect is likely to be more important in the immediate future. I have read recently that Victorian anglers are concerned that willow removal has led to an increase in water temperatures and associated fish kills. While in hindsight I have no doubt that the removal of willows could have been better handled, and has undoubtedly contributed to higher temperatures in some stretches of our streams, the real elephant in the room is undoubtedly climate change. Lower rainfall, higher evaporation rates and higher water temperatures will render more fisheries marginal. They are already impacting the Monaro fishery. The alternative to stocking some of these streams may be to abandon them altogether.

Rod Whiteway, Secretary, Monaro Acclimatisation Society



Catching a Monster

(David Featherstone)

It was June 17, and about midday. The weather was overcast and the air temperature a cool 16°C. It was winter of course, so there was no evident movement or insect life. As is my practice I waited quietly and just watched for a long time without disturbing the water or the birdlife. (And not disturbing the birdlife is important – having birds take off and thrash the water surface as they do so certainly spooks fish).

If you're a good caster then the thing to do is to strip off some line and be ready to get the fly out quickly when you see any movement. On this occasion I watched quietly for just on half an hour, and then yes - I spotted a trout cruising out from between two trees. It was an awkward cast but I managed to use a bow and arrow cast to flip the fly out in the direction he was heading. The fish was moving towards me but was still about

12 metres away, so I had time to quietly straighten the leader. My chosen fly on this occasion was a size 12 Parsons Glory (a famous New Zealand fly), and as the trout approached I began a quick retrieve. The fish charged the fly, snatched it up, and raced off, putting on a superb aerial display. After a long battle I was eventually able to grass a magnificent 12 lb 3 rainbow.

Thirty minutes of quiet waiting and watching was well rewarded.



That Parsons Glory



David's magnificent rainbow

A Fishing Net and Scabbard Recovered ...

(Graeme Leith)

In 1974 a group of us young and enthusiastic fly fishers went to the Western Lakes of Tasmania, on that highland plateau, as was our wont and custom at that time of the year, ten days or so after Christmas. We set up camp at Double Lagoon, as we often did, for from there we could fish Double, Lake Chipman and Lake Paget, or Botsford and Augusta on our way from Double to Lake Kay, which was often our next camp site. From there we could fish not only Kay but also Agnes, the Pine River and Hood lagoons, Flora and O'Dell, or even Fergus if the weather was fine and we decided to hike over the hill.

Although there was a hut there at Fergus we carried a tent in case we were caught out by the weather, which of course can happen unexpectedly up there. On one occasion Rod Whiteway and his fishing mate got blizzarded in between the Augusta wall and Lake Kay and had to camp there in the snow for two days. At another time we had hiked over Wild Dog Tier to fish First Bar and Lake Furmage, and our food supplies were almost exhausted when we were about to break camp. Then a blizzard struck and we had to lie in our tents for a couple of very cold and hungry days. John Philbrick and Rod Whiteway were fumigated with the smoke from Tom Edwards' foul smelling 'Condor' pipe tobacco so we decided that we had to make a run for it despite the weather, leaving John's sodden and heavy Marechal tent behind.

That was a never to be forgotten hike, with the only female member of our group, Vicki Barclay, succumbing to hypothermia on the way out and the rest of us close to it. John, who was living and

working in Tasmania then during his university holidays, returned to his tent a week later to find it sitting forlorn in a flooded plain. He slept in his Horne's waders and then carried the sodden mess out. He was very fit and tough in those days, and his spirit indomitable. The group varied from year to year; Bob Roles and John Philbrick were usually part of the mix, and later Jim Allen and Bob Stinson, with me being the only common denominator.

In those days we used to take a taxi from Launceston Airport up to the Augusta wall and hike from there. On our first taxi trip the bemused driver declared: "It's like the surface of the bloody moon up here. I can't wait to get back to Launceston!" However, after the payment of a hefty deposit he agreed to return in ten days to collect us, and on doing so was surprised to see four dishevelled figures emerge from the mist and wolfishly devour the chocolate and biscuits that we had asked him to buy for us.

Food was always a problem on those trips, as there were none of the modern freeze-dried products available at that time. We ate salami and Volkorn bread and greens, pasta and rice, though these were hard to cook if we had no firewood and had to rely on the fuel tablets we used to boil the billy. I don't know if the Trangia stove had been invented then. If so then we didn't have one, so we ate a lot of trout.

I had caught a sizeable trout from Double Lagoon and as it was destined for eating I carried it back suspended on my net handle where it slapped against my leather scabbard, leaving plenty of fish



Graeme and Jim heading off to set up camp - Western Lakes Tas. Probably 1973

Note "below entry level" camping and hiking gear!

slime and scales behind. It must have seemed edible to a prowling Tasmanian Devil, for in the morning it was gone, including the Streamcraft net within it. We searched all around the campsite area but couldn't find it, so I reluctantly had to leave my net and the beautiful handmade scabbard behind when we hiked on to Lake Kay.

The track into Lake Kay was virtually impassable in those days, even for four wheel drives, if anybody had one. In fact there was a group of fearless and dedicated Tasmanian fly fishers who did have one - a monstrous thing, a WW2 weapons carrier that was something like a double sized Jeep. They ground their way around the lakes in it, occasionally 'seeding' likely tarns with small trout, which meant when fishing such waters you were sometimes in for a big surprise, as happened to Jim Allen when he took the trouble to hike over the hill to a small

blue dot on the map which he later, and with good reason, named 'Shark Lagoon'.

So we fished lake Kay and I put my fishing net and scabbard out of my mind.

Many years passed, then one day in 2009 I received an unexpected phone call. "Are you Graeme Leith?" the caller asked. "I am," I replied. "Then I think I've got something belonging to you. Do you ever go fishing at Double Lagoon?" My heart missed a beat! "Yes, I do." "Did you lose a fishing net and sheath there a long time ago?" "Yes, I did." "Well, my name is Linden Evans and I've got it." "What? How?" "In the winter of 1974 my mate and I took the dogs up to the lakes to give them a run and shoot a few 'roos for patties. We were coming back past Double and I spotted a fishing net on the ground. We had a look around and my mate Rodney found the sheath close by with a few devil bites in it. We took >>>



Linden Evans, on the right, presenting Graeme Leith with his long lost fishing net and scabbard, late 2013.

it home and I hung it on the wall of my shed where it hung for many years. A couple of years ago I went into the shed and a shaft of sunlight was playing on it. I thought I could make out the imprint of some writing, so took it down and inspected it - it read Graeme Leith, Kingower 3517. I rang Rodney and told him that I'm going to find that bloke by hook or by crook and give him his net back."

"Now, I've got a mate in Maryborough who has a similar postcode, so I rang him and asked if he could track down this Graeme Leith. Last week he rang back and told me that a bloke called Graeme Leith owned the Passing Clouds Winery at Kingower, and gave me your number. And that's how come I'm ringing you."

I was, naturally, flabbergasted. He went on, "I live at Latrobe, so you can call in any time and collect it." Well, I go past Latrobe annually en route to the lakes, but it never seemed to be fair on my fishing mates, filled with anticipation for

the sport to come, to say, "Do you mind if we stop for an hour or so while I collect my fishing net?" On the way back to the ferry we were always, naturally, short of time, so for some years more the net and scabbard languished in Linden's shed.

Late last year two men and women approached the back door of my house at Kingower, with one of the men concealing something behind his back. "Are you Graeme Leith?" he asked. "Yes, I am," I replied. "Then here's your fishing net!" he exclaimed, producing it from behind his back. And so I was finally reunited with my net and scabbard, after almost forty years. We had a good laugh about it, and a glass of wine, and they left me pondering the strange twists and turns that life can bring and the kindness and generosity of a fellow man. I've been invited to have a meal with them one day at Latrobe, to eat some of Louis' wallaby patties, made with young tender wallaby, onion, carrot, bacon, apple, egg and bread crumbs ... And I intend to take them up on the offer!



Montana - 2014!

Joe Kahler lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (USA), is a very keen fly fisher, and has written articles for various US fly fishing magazines. He also contributes to our newsletter, for which we are very grateful. He recently enjoyed some time in Montana. Here is his account of his most recent trip.

Plans had been made well in advance for the annual coldwater trip to Yellowstone National Park (YNP) and surrounds, with careful attention to the busy social schedule of my longtime fishing buddy, Richard Evans. I'd booked flights that would take me from the dog-breath south of Louisiana to a 10:45 am arrival in Billings, Montana, on Saturday, August 2. This would put me at the airport within a couple of hours of Rich's delivery of his lovely bride of 47 years, Carol, to the very same airport, to board her flight to Oklahoma for a therapeutic family visit. The plan was for him to drop Carol off, run a few errands, and then grab me up at the airport for the 75 minute ride back to his "cabin" on the Stillwater River. I put "cabin" in quotes because Rich's place is as spacious, well appointed, and comfortable as any house-in-town that I've ever owned!

That was the plan. Then Delta Airlines cancelled my pre-dawn flight out of Baton Rouge. The official story was that thunderstorms in Atlanta the night before had caused delays, and the Federal Aviation Administration wouldn't let the crew fly before "X" number of hours of down time so they could get some sleep. Who needs sleep when we're going fishing?? With the cancellation, connecting flights would be missed and the upshot was that I got into Billings at 10:45 Saturday night, slept a few hours in a cheap motel not far from the airport, and met up with Richard the next morning for a drive in to YNP and an afternoon of fishing (finally) on Soda Butte Creek and the Lamar River.

For over 24 hours I'd felt like a salmon swimming upstream to the spawning grounds, and once comfortably ensconced in the waters of our first national park, it took a while to downshift from "getting there" to "being there." For the first hour or so, I couldn't help reflecting on the irony of it all. Circumstances had forced me to squeeze my 6'4" - 250 lb frame into a densely populated, metallic tube with wings, into a seat designed for "little people" by the Marquis de Sade, only to breathe canned air and literally rub shoulders with persons of questionable hygiene for hours at a time. I'd had to run the gauntlet to pursue the grail.

Psychologically, this kind of travel requires a deep and fundamental turning over of one's sense of self-determination and self-direction - which of course is anathema to the American (and Australian) Western Spirit - not to mention the spirit of the dedicated fly fisher. The only way to maintain anything like sanity is to accept these circumstances as a merely temporary kind of hell, be as kind as possible to the crew and passengers around you, read a good John Gierach book, and give your soul to God, because your butt belongs to Delta until you're down on the ground at your final destination.

And then, you're there. Wide open spaces, low population density (Montana ranks 48th among our 50 states with 2.7 souls/square mile), fresh air, NO billboards, minimal plastic and chrome, animals living in ecological systems that are relatively unadulterated by >>>

“modern improvements” imposed by Homo Sapiens, and (best of all) wild, free-born trout with an attitude and big shoulders on ‘em. You go from the ridiculous to the sublime in a matter of hours, and the decompression takes a while to adjust to. You gotta’ be careful; you don’t want to get “the bends.” Immersion in a free flowing stream with a fly rod in your hand helps a lot.



Joe with another one

Richard and I have been fishing together (saltwater, warmwater, and coldwater) for years now and he’s one of those few folks that I would fish with anywhere, under any conditions, at any time of the year. He lives in Montana for about a third of the year, and he fishes the way I do - with an easy, but focused attention to the immediate conditions, and a roving eye and deep appreciation for the beauty and grandeur of it all. He’s fly fished longer than even I have, and he’s fished often enough to have so worn the cork handle on the Sage blank he built out years ago that he had to replace the cork last year. He knows these mountain waters and is generous enough to serve as erstwhile guide for an angler of lesser familiarity like myself. He’ll put you on

the best water you’re capable of wading, even though it may mean he takes a less productive and more treacherous stretch for himself. I think he gets a bigger kick out of someone like me netting a big trout than he does out of bringing the likes of it to his own hand !

Maybe. He does like to “fool” big, wild fish - and the joy of his success is a phenomenon to witness.

Rich is almost ten years my senior, but you’d never know it by the way he gets around in fast moving water or on the 45° incline at 7,000+ feet that one treads on the hike in to the fabled “First Meadow at Slough Creek.” Relatively tall and very lean, he works out daily in a gym, and his calves are disproportionately large from frequent wading of the Stillwater and other wild rivers in Montana. In short, he’s a wading machine with the perfect fly fisher’s physique. I, on the other hand, continue to spend most of my days in a chair or staring at a computer screen and, though I’ve trimmed 25 pounds off of my bloated body in the past seven months, I’m still working on losing some more to get back to something like fighting weight. I’ve always exercised diligently,



Richard with a fine trout

and I'm in pretty good cardiovascular condition, but I'm still "a work in progress." I did manage to shave about 10 minutes off my hike into the "First Meadow" this year (now at 37 minutes), but trying to keep up with Richard has only served to reinforce my motivation. More than once I looked up the slope to see him patiently waiting for me to catch up as I plodded along at my turtle's pace. Add a little healthy stoicism and a working sense of humor like Richard's to all the virtues above and you have the perfect fishing buddy.

Slough Creek's First Meadow is Valhalla. None but the dedicated and physically intact venture to make the journey, and the only folks you see there are a very few anglers - not "tanglers" - who typically know what they're doing and exercise pretty good stream etiquette. The newbies either don't know about it

or are unwilling/unable to make the hike. You often find that you have the place to yourself if you're game enough to make the trip. Bears (both grizzlies and black) are commonly sighted along the way and Richard has taken pictures of wolf paw prints that are as big as my hand in the streamside mud. The fish are mostly Yellowstone Cutthroats that are relatively unschooled in the ways of the fly fisher, but they can be picky when feeding selectively. We came upon a pod of fish showing a typical rise-to-emergers form and, though we cast a wide variety of patterns and sizes to them, we couldn't get a "take." We moved down the stream about 200 yards and wound up catching a number of respectable "cutts" on Comparaduns. It was remarkable that the same species could be so different in their willingness to play ball within such proximity of each other. >>>



Fabulous pocket water

Did I say it rained? The first day of fishing, I was rained and sleeted on at the Lamar. With no fowl weather gear (I'd never been more than sprinkled on in YNP in the summer, so I failed to pack it), and with precipitation falling horizontally, thunder in the offing, and no trees near enough to serve as cover, all I could do was lower my rod tip (graphite is a superconductor), turn my back to the rain/sleet mix, and wait it out. It only lasted about 30 minutes, but I was Maytagged (do they have Maytag washing machines in Australia?). Thanks to hip waders and quick-dry clothes I was relatively dry again in another 30 minutes or so.

At Slough Creek it drizzled off an on (mostly on) all day. The next morning I invested in a cheap plastic poncho at the General Store in Cooke City that miraculously survived the entire day and saved me a slow drenching on our third day in the park. The rest of the week was dry, but that poncho now lives in the back compartment of my fishing vest - insurance against future lapses in judgment. I found myself wading water that was higher and faster than I'd ever fished in Yellowstone because I was there earlier in the year and closer to "run-off" than in the past. But the water was remarkably clear for the flow, and we did find volunteers willing to take a dry fly. How they saw them in time to make a connection in the brawling waters of some of the lanes we plied is still a mystery to me.

My host and I returned to the cabin on the Stillwater on the evening of Day 3 because Richard had to pick up Carol at the Billings airport on the morning of Day 4. I fished the Stillwater with little success that morning, and so did Richard. Nor did I do particularly well that afternoon. The remainder of the trip was spent on various stretches of the Stillwater, with

Richard serving as "trout whisperer" and helping me drill down and decode the exact areas we were fishing.

Having someone who not only knows the water, but also knows your wading skill level and is willing to show you just where you can fish on a fast moving, freestone stream is a very rare treat. Typically, when you hire a guide, you wind up with a young guy working a summer job out of an area fly shop who may know more about the river than you do, but not by all that much. He winds up mostly pointing out feeding lanes you'd already drawn into your sights before he said anything. He doesn't know you, hasn't fished with you, and is understandably reluctant to put you anywhere that might remotely qualify as risky wading for a guy twice your age and half your skill level. You wind up learning a little bit about where to access eager, smallish to medium-size trout, maybe get an idea about what flies will work, but more than anything else you wind up paying for some very expensive terminal knots as he ties your next offering onto the end of your tippet for you. If you're lucky, he's fished the area more than a couple of seasons, but there's really no guarantee about that.

With Richard, legal liability for the outside chance of a twisted knee, broken ankle, or serious dunking was not an issue, which I think contributed to his relative comfort with helping me stretch and challenge myself a bit. Truth be told, I wouldn't have attempted half of the forays into the current that we made if Rich hadn't said we were gonna' do it. It was a dance of mutual trust - he trusting me to be able to make it to where he wanted to go, and me trusting that he wouldn't take me anyplace I couldn't manage. He put me on some great water with beautiful rainbows in it that were tough, wild jumpers. One I brought to the

net was so fat that I had a hard time figuring out how she could haul her big butt into the air so high as she maniacally struggled to unbutton herself from the #16 Comparadun I'd managed to lodge in her tongue.

Evenings were spent in epicurean



Lunch

splendor on the covered porch behind the cabin. The food, as always, was outstanding. We discovered that we share much the same taste in music, and the company was . . . well, it was Richard and Carol - two of the kindest, most intelligent and decent folks I know. Topics ranged from wine, to politics, to international travel, to horticulture, to irrigation and agriculture, to relationships. It was sweet corn harvest time in the area and we had plump, golden ears that had been off the stalk maybe 24 hours, so their sugar content had no time to dissipate in transit. I'd found patches of wild chives down at the streamside within a few steps of the cabin, and harvested some for Carol's kitchen - a very small, but I think

appreciated contribution to the table fare.

At the end of the time we had together in Montana, Rich seemed almost apologetic about the water not "fishing well yet." The fly fishing report in the Billings Gazette indicated that stream flows were right on average for the time of year, but because the previous several years had been so dry, it did seem like they were unusually high. We read that the guides were saying the progression of the hatch-year seemed to be about two weeks behind. But I was more than pleased with my catches and the experience as a whole. My body had begun to acclimate to the altitude and the hours on the water, and I can only imagine what it would be like if I were able fish like that for four months out of the year like Richard does. I learned a lot about reading the waters and what I could manage to pull off in terms of staying glued to the bottom of swift streams, all thanks to a guy who wanted only to share the joy of it all. If I hit the lottery, Rich and Carol will surely have a new neighbor.



Richard and Carol – fabulous hosts

President's Casting Day

As is the tradition, the day following the Annual Dinner was the President's Casting Day. While there was a casting competition as part of the agenda, with most members being lured into flicking a practice fly at those horrible little coloured hoops that seem to move sideways as you're casting to them, the day is principally a very relaxed and pleasant social gathering in the aftermath of the Annual Dinner. This year Hughie manned the barbecue, and the sausages and hamburgers were magnificent. Mike Crewes turned up with several superb apple pies, courtesy of Mrs Crewes, and when drowned in fresh cream provided a superb dessert.

Some 25 members wandered in at various stages, as the event is a moving feast (quite literally). People come for a while, grab a sausage or two from the sputtering barbecue, then enjoy a quiet chat with some mates before drifting off to some other engagement. A goodly supply of liquid refreshment was on hand and seemed to assist in lubricating tonsils and facilitating the constant hum of

conversation. And a special note – it was great to see Richard Salvado there, though only briefly. Richard has not been well recently, and we all wish him a speedy return to good health.

The casting competition is officially for the Tom and Frank McDonough Memorial Trophy. It is run according to a special set of VFFA rules, and this year's winner was one of our new members - Iain Skinner, who in fact won by quite a margin. Apparently Iain has been a very regular and committed attender at the Sunday Casting on Sunday mornings, and all this serious practice brought its reward. Well done Iain!

Our thanks to all who assisted in organising the day – Hughie, Mike, Rick Dugina (official steward and scorer for the casting), and especially Joe Haslauer. Joe not only prepared the casting hoops and other bits and pieces for the day, he has been the constant, very reliable, and hard working organiser of the entire winter Sunday casting program. Many thanks Joe – from all of us.



Dermot devouring some of Mick's magnificent apple pie



Those elusive hoops that move when you cast to them



Iain Skinner – the winner of this year's McDonough Memorial Trophy



Joe Haslauer – organiser of the entire winter casting program



Duncan Milenkovic had no trouble finding the hoops

FLY OF THE MONTH

Rod Barford's Water Boatman



There are countless flies representing this particular insect, also known as the corixa or backswimmer, but this pattern is the end result of my seeing this bug in the water, trying other patterns, and finally seeing the Beetle Back material at the fly shop.

The Goulburn River seems to demand a pattern of this type, as they're prolific along this river, and on some days the fish send a very strong message - if you don't have a good backswimmer pattern, stay home! Since tying this one up the first time it's accounted for many a good Goulburn trout. Sometimes you only need to dangle it in the water in front of actively feeding backwater trout and they'll lunge at it; other times you have to work for a take, but inevitably it will elicit a take.

The last fish I took with it was a handsome 3 lb brown at the Breakaway, caught in the middle of the day. The river was otherwise deserted when I arrived and the level had begun to rise quite suddenly. By 3:00 pm, it was well into the grass, so I

wandered down toward the Acheron confluence. Seeing the water creeping into the grass down there, I positioned myself near a small backwater that was usually inundated and therefore held a good population of insects, including backswimmers. I figured perhaps a wandering trout might poke his nose into this rich playground.

Before too long the first trout appeared. A fish of maybe 2 lb, he immediately charged a group of *Gambusia*, but then changed his preferences when he spotted a number of backswimmers. He cruised slowly over, apparently approved the new menu, and began chasing them down, one by one. I cast my imitation into the maelstrom he'd created, and instantly was fixed to a leaping, charging trout. He tore through the long grass back toward the river but I managed to turn him back and finally netted him onto the grass.

While I was busy releasing him into the river, I heard a commotion behind me and saw two more fish mowing down the unfortunate backswimmers. I cast from where I was and again had a bowed and bucking rod. This 1.5 lb fish was soon released back into the river. The other fish had disappeared once he saw my standing form. It wasn't long before I spotted another moocher, this time working his way along an old vehicle wheel rut parallel to the river. I kneeled and dropped my fly just to his left and let it sink. He turned and moved to within a few inches, eyeballing it. I gently pulled on the line until the fly rolled slightly. It was enough, he charged it and swallowed it, then turned away, driving the hook point in. He charged straight back into the river, where I played him out for release, another nice fish of around 2.5 lb. I went on to fish until dark, but only took another three fish for the rest of the afternoon, but six nice fish from the Goulburn in an afternoon, in brilliant conditions, is reward enough for me, especially when it's sight fishing like that.

Apart from the general appearance and movement, I believe the Beetle Back material is the most significant part of this fly, as it not only reflects light but also gives it a more realistic appearance. The Pearl Antron dubbing material also appears like the belly hairs of the real insect, holding onto a bubble of air, again a reflection of the real insect behaviour.

Materials for Rod's Water Boatman

Hook: Daiichi 1550 #14

Thread: White 8/0 Unithread

Body: Pearl Antron dubbing to make a bead-shaped body

Carapace: Beetle Back synthetic sheet – cut leaf-shaped to suit the hook size

Legs: Grizzle hackle stem with all the fibres removed

Tying the Water Boatman

1. Strip the fibres from a grizzle hackle feather (which can be a lesser quality from a grade 3 cape), leaving only the stem.
2. Cut two short pieces for the legs, each about 12 mm long and not too thick.
3. Tie these horizontally across the hook at the midsection.
4. Cut a small piece of Beetle Back material to a gum leaf shape, sized according to the hook.
5. Run the tying thread down the shank to the start of the bend, then tie in the pre-cut piece of Beetle Back.
6. Then dub on some of the Antron and wind it on to form a cigar shaped body, winding around the two legs so that they are bent slightly backwards.
7. Tie off the Antron, then pull the Beetle Back forwards and tie it tightly over the body to form the carapace.
8. Whip finish and varnish both the head and the carapace, using some flexible cement.



Bullen Merri Fishing Weekend & Dinner

Date – October 3 - 5

Hugh Maltby has organized our annual visit to the Camperdown area to fish those two fabulous Western District lakes – Bullen Merri and Purrumbete. The weekend also includes a magnificent dinner at the property of Caroline and John Menzies.

Accommodation is booked at the Lakes and Craters Holiday Park, Camperdown, from arrival on Friday October 3 until departure on Sunday 5. Participants need to bring their own bedding.

The Saturday evening dinner commences at 6:30 pm for drinks, BYO (please bring your favourite).

Dress - sports casual.

For all enquiries and to confirm your place please contact Hugh Maltby on 0423 283 079. A copy of the VFFA Event Registration Form (ERF) can be easily downloaded from the VFFA website. Log in, click on the 'Members' drop down list – 'Accounts, Forms and Payments' then download the Event Registration Form.

The Chinook are on the chew and with a bit of luck we will score a few.





LIBRARY NEWS

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

The library is divided into three parts.

- Part 1 Books available for loaning to members.
- Part 2 Books available for reference only and not to be taken from the library.
- Part 3 Books bequeathed to the Association and not to be taken from the cabinet.

V.F.F.A. ITEMS FOR SALE

The Association has the following quality items for sale:

Book "The Country For An Angler" (the History of the VFFA)	\$70.00 each
Book "Geehi to Great Lake"	\$45.00 each
Columbia Shirts.....	\$70.00 each
Polarfleece jacket with VFFA logo	\$40.00 each
Association ties (blue or maroon)	\$35.00 each
Wine glasses and whisky glasses inscribed with VFFA logo, set of 6.....	\$45.00 per set
Cloth badges.....	\$7.00 each
<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 2014 Annual Dinner:

- Aussie Angler Pty Ltd • Armadale Angling • Australian Fishing Network
- Bernard Holbery • FlyLife Publishing • FlyFinz • Hayes on Brumbys
- J. M. Gillies Pty Ltd • Mayfly Tackle • Millbrook Lakes Lodge
- Mountain Stream Company • Nick Taransky Bamboo Rod Maker
- Pro-Angler Tackle • Ray Brown Onkaparinga Flies • Stevens Publishing Pty Ltd
- The Complet Angler Box Hill • The Flyfisher Tackle Store Melbourne
- Vision and Pisces Fly-Fishing Tackle

VFFA Meetings & Activities

September 2014

18 **Annual General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club.**

October 2014

3 – 5 Annual Bullen Merri trip (Camperdown) – convenor: Hugh Maltby

16 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Speaker - TBC

22 Council Meeting – 7:30 pm at the Celtic Club

November 2014

14 - 16 Annual Warrnambool Trip – Convenor Hugh Maltby

21 General Meeting - 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Auction of books and equipment

December 2014

12 **Christmas Dinner at the Celtic Club - Guest Speaker (TBC)**

February 2014

14 – 20 Annual Trip to Tasmania, staying at Hayes on Brumby's

26 General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club – first for the year

March 2014

19 General Meeting – 8:00 pm at the Celtic Club: Speaker – hopefully Simon Gawesworth, British Casting Champion, author of two superb textbooks on Spey Casting, and Senior Manager at Rio. Simon will be in Australia at this time, and is very keen to speak at a VFFA meeting

Advance notice – upcoming trips:

Bullen Merri - October 3 – 5

Warrnambool - November 14 – 16

Tasmania 2015 – February 14 – 20

Bairnsdale Donger – Still being negotiated, but possibly in February or March in 2015