



# The Vice



**Newsletter of the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.**

**Volume 16 , Issue 22 Summer 2023**

**Inside: Penstock Short Table, Pioneer Fly Tyers, Wyatt Variant –and more ...**

*Cover Shot – Laurie's Catch and Release Penstock Mate!*

## **For payments to the club**

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Please remember to clearly identify yourself for ease of recording your payment

### **Office Bearers**

President	Andrew Reed
Vice President	David Travalia
Secretary	Tony Abel
Treasure	Andrew Blackwood
Committee	Wayne Bellette Dave Long Paul Markey Tim Urbanc
Vice Editor	Doug Miller

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

## President's Report 2022

Welcome to the Summer Vice for 2023. Christmas Drinks were held at the Lenah Valley RSL Club with a great turnout. It was a relaxing evening with no official meeting. Many enjoyed catching up with new and old friends.

The TFFC was issued an invitation to attend the TFFC Cane Day at Little Pine Lagoon in Mid-January. This came about as Peter Rasmussen is a member of both clubs. The Cane Day has been running for many years and it was great to be part of it. Ten club members came along and met at the TFFC shack. We booked in with our cane rods and set off fishing. It was great to be there and the two clubs now plan to have combined events more often. As it turns out both clubs have familiar faces in them! This day was well subscribed we decided to plan a meal at the Great Lake Hotel. The meal and the company were perfect and I handed over some cash for my new cane rod to Ian Stokes to use the next day!

Penstock Day on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb was held in perfect dry fly conditions. There is a trip report following so I won't steal their thunder.

Two new members, Paul McCosh and Brian Schabe were welcomed to the Club at our February meeting, where they both received their badges and keys. They introduced themselves and are both very keen fly fishers and tyers so please make yourselves known to them. Now is a good time to remind all members that as a club we encourage visitors to our meetings and casting sessions. Speaking of the Wind Knots Fly-casting Group on Facebook, this activity is open to everyone.

The Club has some interesting upcoming events. Chris Medwin is leading a Euro Nymphing Workshop in Westerway this weekend and there is a Lake Pedder Trip on 24-26<sup>th</sup> of March. April and May see the Miena based field trip and the casting day at Salmon Ponds. So, get on board and register on the club website. Information has been circulated to members about the Second Bug Survey at Penstock Lagoon on 18<sup>th</sup> March. This is again centred at Malcolm's shack. A fundraising day is being held for the Australian Fly Fishing Team on 19<sup>th</sup> of March in the Great Lake Area. There is a mobile number for contact on the flyer in your inbox. These are great ways to show your support for our environment and competition fly-fishing.

The Committee continues to work through some details of our public liability insurance policy and we are having a 'Planning and Strategy Meeting' this month. As always please feel free to contact the committee if you have any suggestions for us.

I recently came across an old fibreglass fly rod that was given to someone I know. It was in very average

condition so I offered to rebuild it for them. Who knew old fibreglass fly rods cast so well? I have replaced all the guides and thanks to Wayne Bellette's rod dryer, the final coats of gloss varnish look great. Tight Lines for the end of the season.

**Andrew 'The President' Reed**

## Editorial

Firstly I must offer my sincere apologies to Professor Beverley F Ronalds for my tardiness in publishing her excellent piece on iconic book *The Fly Fishers Entomology*. It was very generous of her to write this for our publication!

Thanks to Tony Dell for sharing his experimental Wyatt variant, which he hopes, the trout will accept with enthusiasm!

The fishing has been sometimes brilliant, sometimes challenging but always fun.

Lets hope things keep picking up from here on in!

**DM**



Steve at Spot On fishing tackle has kindly provided the Club with 4 vouchers to the value of \$30 each for the coming season. Many thanks for this kind support, and continue to patronise Steve's shop. Vouchers can be picked up from the Editor at your leisure!

**This time the vouchers go to... Tony Dell for his Wyatt Variant!**

Send your stories to [55dmiller@gmail.com](mailto:55dmiller@gmail.com)

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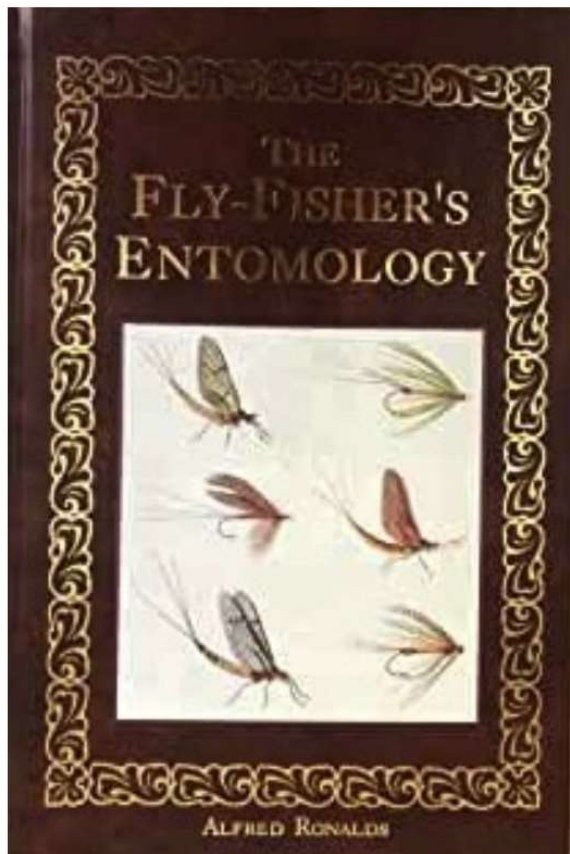
## Australian Pioneer Fly Tyers

I received an email last year from Professor Beverley F Ronalds from Perth regarding an iconic book *The Fly Fishers Entomology* in which she very kindly offered to write an article for *The Vice*, which she thought might be of interest to our members – a very generous offer which I gladly accepted. I prepared it for publication and subsequently neglected to actually include it! So with sincere apologies to Professor Ronalds I present it now.

Ed.

Dear Doug

Two early fly tyers in southern Australia were Alfred Ronalds (1802-1860) and his daughter Maria Shanklin (1832-1884). Ronalds published the esteemed book *The Fly-Fisher's Entomology* in 1836 before migrating to Victoria. After his death, Shanklin established a factory in Sale, Gippsland, where she designed, made and sold flies imitating local insects to catch Australian bass. She also tied flies suited to brown trout when they were introduced to Tasmania and Victoria.



I would be happy to provide further detail on Shanklin and Ronalds should it be of potential interest to your membership. I would also be pleased to draft a short article about them for your newsletter *The Vice* if that would be of benefit.

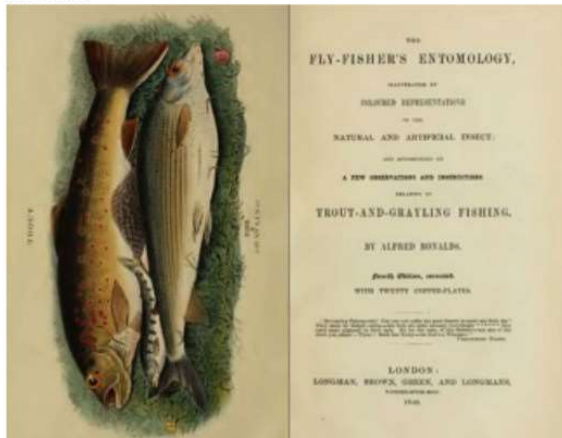
Regards Bev

## Pioneer Fly Tyers in Australia



Two early fly tyers in southern Australia were Alfred Ronalds (1802-1860) and his daughter Maria Shanklin (1832-1884). Before migrating to the colony of Victoria, Ronalds published the esteemed book *The Fly-Fisher's Entomology* (1836) to share his experiences of trout fishing in Staffordshire. Shanklin later set up a business designing, making and selling flies that imitated "colonial" insects to catch Australian fish.

At the heart of Alfred Ronalds' book was a catalogue of 47 artificial flies that he recommended by month and time of day in different weather and water conditions. In addition to practical angling knowhow, his recommendations were founded on analysis of the stomach contents of trout, detailed entomological research into the insects the fish favoured, and then painstaking studies into how best to mimic the insects.

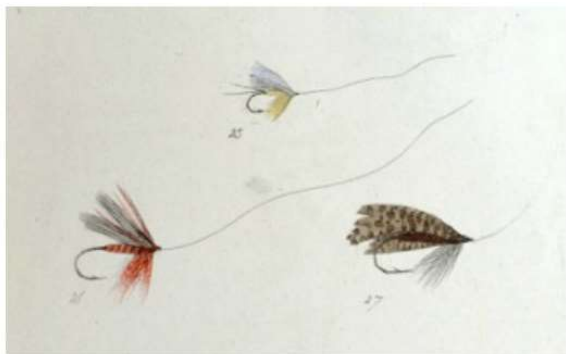


This research generated an exhaustive list of materials for dressing the flies, which ranged from feathers from "the back of the partridge's neck" and the peewit's "top-knot" to "Fur of a hare's ear". He maintained an active collecting regimen with his own hunting horses and pack of hounds and appears to

have kept an aviary. The raw materials were then dyed to the correct colour using his own dye recipes, before finally tying the artificial flies. He also illustrated each natural fly and its imitation in precise coloured pictures, so that others could readily recognise and replicate them. In the words of angling author Dr Andrew Herd, Ronalds' hard work "really did change the contents of fly boxes forever".

A decade after Ronalds died; Maria Shanklin extended her father's research to the fish, insects, birds and animals found in southern Australia. She established a factory in Sale, Gippsland, where artificial flies were dressed to catch Australian bass on the Thomson and La Trobe Rivers. Her flies mimicked the grasshopper, tree locust, cricket, and varieties of moth, caterpillar and dragon fly. She also tied flies for brown trout when this species was introduced to Tasmania and Victoria. Her display of 108 trout and other flies was awarded a medal at the International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1880-81. Maria Shanklin's work was well in advance of any other fly tying in the colony and helped to popularise fly-fishing for Australian fish species as well as trout.

Medlar Press is publishing a new biography of Alfred Ronalds and Maria Shanklin. There is further information at:  
<http://www.sirfrancisronalds.co.uk/marbarb.html>



Three of Alfred Ronalds' artificial flies: the Sky Blue, Fern Fly and Alder Fly. *The Fly-Fisher's Entomology* (1836)

### Beverley F Ronalds

Copies of the Fly-Fisher Entomology are available from Dymocks and other good book sellers!  
[https://www.google.com/shopping/product/7318063618779020038?client=safari&q=The+Fly-Fisher's+Entomology+\(1836\)&prds=epd:11765091027920663622\\_eto:11765091027920663622\\_0\\_pid:3523571104031366137&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQ5ruogr29AhUEwzGHRiqAA0Q9pwGCAk](https://www.google.com/shopping/product/7318063618779020038?client=safari&q=The+Fly-Fisher's+Entomology+(1836)&prds=epd:11765091027920663622_eto:11765091027920663622_0_pid:3523571104031366137&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQ5ruogr29AhUEwzGHRiqAA0Q9pwGCAk)

## The Bug Day 2 - Penstock

If you want to play a part in establishing some baseline data on the aquatic life in Penstock then this activity might be of interest to you. Contact the Club Secretary if you are interested.

### "AAT's Collaborative study into environmental and angler impacts on shallow highland waters." Aka "Duns study" continues

Following our preliminary, and successful, waterbug sampling on Penstock Lagoon in November, AAT plans to hold a second session on March 18th. With a high level of interest (and I hope enjoyment) flowing from the 1st session our aim is to consolidate angler skills in the sampling and identification of aquatic bugs, further add to the information collected and examine seasonal variation. We will again be using the WaterBug Blitz app and protocols.

Malcolm Crosse has again offered his eastern shore shack as a base for a re-run of the November session.

We anticipate the sampling and ID session will run from 10:00 to an AAT provided BBQ lunch and AAT hopes to share a presentation outlining the activities of the wider study.

As always AAT is very interested in hearing from anglers of their own observations and experiences fishing for trout rising to Mayflies and we encourage both previous and new attendees to be involved.

Details of access, a clearer time frame and agenda will be forthcoming closer to the date.

Howard Jones AAT





## Penstock Weekend – Short Table

One of the great events on the FTC calendar is the Penstock Weekend with the highlight being the 'long table dinner' traditionally held at Malcolm Crosse's wonderful shack. This year however Malcolm was away and the event was limited to a very low key Penstock weekend with a meal at the pub. In fact it was so low-key the only takers for the meal were David Travalia and myself. It was indeed a short table meal so the tradition wasn't entirely lost!



We arrived at Penstock at gentleman's hours after having a reasonably good coffee at Bothwell – coffee is a must when raveling with David! As usual the car park was chaotic with single cars parked in places where boats and trailers could have been, people parking far enough away from the person in the next vehicle to turn a four place park area into a two space and so on. There was even an enterprising campervan set up lengthways over the furthest car park. They did at least turn their van around when David politely suggested that boat parking was often at a premium but still managed to take up at least three spaces. This is an issue that does need to be addressed, as common sense is not in evidence or abundance!



Once we were out on the water things started to improve. When we left home there was heavy cloud, light breeze and high humidity. At the lake it was blue

sky and very still. There were duns popping though – not a huge number but a steady flow and the trout were up and about. Tim Urbanc was there of course and he had already boated four all on the dry!



We drifted the western shore down near the Waddamana end because that is where the most nymphs were in the study that David and The Bugman\* carried out late last year. (90 nymphs in a 5-metre sample, all but one were nymphs of red spinners)! We both managed to entice a few good takes on emergers.



The fish were in superb condition! The takes were brilliant because you could watch them cruising around sipping duns and they were struggling out of their cases, popping and drying their sailboat wings.

Subsequent trips to Penstock have been less interesting with very few duns but this was an excellent day.

\*The second bug Sampling Day with John Gooderham (The Bugman) will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> – check your emails to join in!

DM

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## Wyatt Variant – An Experimentation

### Wyatt Variant Orange Spinner - born out of failing eyesight!

Frustrated again this season by not being able to see conventional Orange Spinner patterns on the water and being able to easily see my normal Wyatt Variant in dark brown and claret due to their dark possum tail wing I decided to experiment with an orange version.

I tied up three versions using various hues of orange dubbing and various threads and began fishing them at Penstock at the beginning of January. I must stress this is an on-going process with no definitive outcome, but with sufficient encouragement to report progress.

The three versions I tied were:

- a darkish orange (Veniards) possum dubbing on normal UNI orange 8/0 thread;
- a fluorescent orange (Veniards) possum dubbing, on UNI Fire Orange 8/0 thread; and
- a burnt orange dubbing (Dharma Monarch Orange) on UNI Fire Orange 8/0 thread and also ribbed with it.

All were tied with a natural dark brown possum thorax and a dark possum tail wing and all on Kamasan B110 #14 hooks. I don't add tails to any of my Wyatt Variants.

The conditions in which I fished (with Macca) at Penstock have been quite bright with some cloud and variable breeze both in direction and strength, but generally under 20km/hr. On my visits, dun activity has been minimal with most surface activity related to Caenids early in the day (when a #16 Black Gnat has proved spasmodically effective) and Orange Spinner later.

We have generally fished the deeper water except early on when looking for Caenid feeders.

**Two pictures of the same orange Wyatt Variant, RH one showing the UV signature.**



The above version is the one that has been most



successful, but since I caught the first fish on it and had several other takes it has been the one I have used. It has also proved successful as a searching fly. As yet I have caught nothing on either of the other two versions but will keep trying.

As a result of this experimentation I have thought about the, hopefully, upcoming Jassid hatches and have produced a Wyatt Variant which I hope might work for them. Again, failing eyesight is the driver.

This is tied on a Kamasan B110 #16 with a black wallaby dubbing body ribbed with UNI black 8/0 thread, a prominent Super Fly red possum thorax and dark possum tail wing.

Happy experimenting!



**Tony Dell  
16 January 2023**



## A Glimpse of What is to Come...

Vice President David Travalia present us with a glimpse of the future at the February meeting when he brought in a kit that may well become commonplace in Tasmania and even on the big island!

*So, what is it all about?*



Basically it concerns trying to stop the introduction and spread of pests and diseases in the remote areas and agricultural areas that we love to fish in by practicing basic hygiene on our footwear and vehicles.

*What diseases?*

Most of us have heard of Phytophthora or Root Rot, which can destroy the root systems of native plants like Heath and cause them to die. Many are also aware of Didymo or Rock Snot, which is an algal pest that has devastated many rivers in New Zealand.

There is also concern about Chytrid, which is a fungal disease that affects frogs and Mucor, which is another fungal disease that causes problems for Platypus.



It is hoped that we can keep these diseases out or prevent them from spreading with a few simple steps.

This makes sense for those who regularly visit remote areas and also for ones who fish rivers that run through farming areas. (Already there are reports of special hygiene areas on properties adjoining the Tyenna River).

*What's in the Kit?*

The kit will probably include a scraper and a brush for cleaning your boots, which will ideally be rinsed in clean water and left to dry completely.

If this is not possible because you want to fish in different locations then you can use F10, a low risk veterinary disinfectant spray, which is also in the kit.



I believe the kits are still in the development stage but will probably be available in the near future at popular fishing locations. They may also become available for anglers as a useful addition to their vests.

David suggested that as a club we get behind this initiative as it can only help to keep our wonderful wild places in as good condition as possible for us, and future generations to treasure!

The information for this article came from the brochures pictured. More information can be from NRM South – [www.nrmsouth.org.au](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au)

DM



## Exploring The James River



The part of the James River that we explored joins East and West Lake Augusta and is a really interesting bit of water. Even though it was a little low when we fished it we had a sensational day and saw a lot of fish ... and they saw us!

Even though we have fished up in the Nineteen Lagoons a bit over the years one of us had fished the James. We pulled in off the road to Lake Ada where the track to Pillans begins and parked the car. Everything was pretty barren and rocky, the sky was blue and cloudless and there wasn't much breeze at all. We set off with gaiters (just in case), rods, sunscreen and hope. (You can ask Dr Chris about his patented sun device)



The walk to the river was around 500m and, to be honest I was expecting too much. The first glimpse of the James though was fantastic! The banks were open, the river was slow flowing, reasonably wide and crystal clear. Fish were darting around snipping insects off the surface in both directions. The challenge was to get into a position where you could cast without spooking the fish. I went with a single dry hopper pattern tied by the brilliant Brian West, which was easy to track by both angler and fish.



*Westy's River Fly*

Dr Chris walked right down to East Augusta and stalked the edges looking for mooching fish to cast whilst David Travalia and I concentrated on the river itself. The river fish were plentiful but very spooky. In all there was about two kilometres of river that we explored with very few fish actually hooked. There were boils and snaps and the occasional grab but spookiness was the order of the day. We called it quits after lunch on the riverbank and went off to explore other lakes in the immediate area.



## Index of Vice Articles

I have compiled a list of contents from previous editions of the Vice as some members have asked about various stories and the like. All these can be accessed directly from the club website under the link to The Vice. I will include it in all future editions and add to it where possible.

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

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