



# The Vice



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

**Volume 17, Issue 1 Summer 2024**

**Inside: ... Presidential Tour, Long Tables, Cane and much more...**

*Cover Shot – Chris Medwin in his element at Lake Ada*

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<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

## President's Report

I have now retired and am slowly getting used to the changes that this brings. I have spent more time fishing and had an awesome trip to New Zealand early in the year. There will probably be an article with a few photos in the following pages.

Christmas Drinks was well attended by 40 members. As usual it was great to catch up on everyone's news and plans. The drinks and finger food seems to be a winning combination.

The Cane Day at the Pine was combined with the Club's Central Highlands Meal. I'm sure there is a trip report so you can read all about it. Thanks to Peter Ras for being our Inter club coordinator.

The Penstock Long Table Dinner was a great success with 22 guests for an exceptional event. Thanks to all those involved, Malcolm for the venue, Andrew Hood for wine choice and supply and David Travalia and Steve Butler for Chef duties.

The Lake Sorell Shack project is in final planning stage and work is to start in the very near future. Weasel Dam Camping Weekend is a few weeks away so put your name down and come along.

If you have fished the Fowler Trophy please enter your score on the club webpage, there is a special dropdown menu under the Activities tab.

As always thanks to the Club members for all their work organising, planning, attending and researching club business and events. There will probably be a venue change for the upcoming Tiger Hut weekend so keep an eye on your emails and club calendar.

Finally, as president I had the very difficult job of emailing all Club Members to inform them of the tragic death of Andrew Blackwood. He joined the Club in 2009 and was very active. This included being on the Committee and Treasurer for 13 years. He attended and lead many activities over the years and was particularly keen on those that involved walking and fly fishing. I would like to thank all those who attended his memorial service. In true club spirit David Travalia and Steve Butler organised for this to be available both live and recorded on Zoom for those who could not be there in person. The Club has reached out to his family and offered support. I would also like to thank Doug Miller for his heartfelt and kind words as he spoke about his great friend and fishing companion at our last general meeting. We proposed a toast at the Long Table Dinner and he will be sadly missed by us all.

Tight Lines.

**Andrew 'The President' Reed**

## Editorial

Apologies for the lateness of the Summer Vice but there has been a great deal going on. The loss of the Treasure has hit hard. I will miss him terribly and will try to write something appropriate in the next edition.

Otherwise, there are a lot of great articles in this edition. The president has found time in the hectic schedule of retirement to pen a piece about his trip to New Zealand. Dr Chris has written about the Long Table Dinner that will make your stomach rumble and Peter Ras has reported on the Cane Day held at Littler Pine earlier in the year.

It was sad to hear of the passing of Jason Garrett who was one of the real movers and shakers in fly fishing. Sincere sympathy to Jason Junior and his family. Thanks also to John O'Halloran for writing so well about his friend.

The potential of running the Tiger Hut weekend at Lake Sorell is a really good one and will be a new beginning for this wonderful event. Andrew Hood is coordinations it this time so make sure to reserve yourself a space!

DM



Steve at Spot On fishing tackle has kindly provided the Club with 4 voucher Vouchers can be picked up from the Editor at your leisure!

**This time the vouchers go to... Chris Hilton and Andrew Reed**

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

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### Presidential tour of NZ 2024

It started with an invitation in early 2023 from Malcolm to come to New Zealand fly fishing in January 2024. I would be retired by then and it is something I've been wanting to do for many years. There was some homework to do as our host had written a book called New Zealand's Best Trout Flies, in the same format as Malcolm's books. I tied up some heavy nymphs and Rainbow specific wets in the hope they would like what I could offer.



Chris, Malcolm and I departed together and flew direct to Auckland and stayed in a hotel. Early the next day we collected the dual cab Hilux and

headed south to our digs. The trip meant staying in Manunui with a well-known competition fly fisher and author. Peter Scott has been involved in competition fly fishing for many years and represented NZ on many occasions. As luck would have it, he has some accommodation attached to his house on the banks of the world-famous



Whanganui River. You can see it from his BBQ deck! Peter was a great host, guide and NZ agent for Hanak. What's more he had a comfortable boat that could happily take all 4 of us. There had been a lot of rain before we arrived and the weather was very humid for the time of year. This meant the rivers were up and almost unfishable. We spent most of our time fishing the nearby lakes. Access to a boat made this trip a great success. Many of you will know that it is almost impossible to hire a boat in New Zealand so we really appreciated access to Peter's. First up was Lake Kuratau. In humid and warm conditions wet flies were required as there were no fish moving. Chris fished from the bank and



Malcolm and I had a great session from the boat. I mostly used a DI3 with a damsel pattern and generally most Tasmanian wets worked well. Fly fishers being the people they are Peter had a



good friend and NZ teammate, Paul Dewar, come down for a few days. He also had a boat so we set off for Lake Rotoaira. This lake is on Māori land and requires its own licence. For \$8NZ we had the lake to ourselves.

Rainbows behave differently to Browns as they tend to school and love in and out flows. Having local knowledge was such a great thing and we all did well. I had a go at Plonking with a large indicator. I think I managed 1 fish but found this style of fishing not that enjoyable. I much preferred drifting past deep weed beds with a sinking or nymphing line.

The last of the lakes we fished was Otomangakau. This trophy water was just amazing. It had lots of floating weed mats and so much trout food. On one of the days, we were swarmed by damsel flies that were thick in the air. The fish here were very special. I hooked a rainbow that I didn't see that took me to the backing in about 3 seconds and was gone despite my best efforts to control it! Peter had a good laugh and said 'They grow up big and strong in this bit of water'. We all caught several excellent over the several days here and got some fantastic pictures. This lake is managed as a "Shallow and Trophy Fish Lake". Which means it closes for the last months of summer as the water temperature is too high and fish do poorly. This didn't seem to worry any of the trout fishers as they know it's for the long-term benefit of a very special place.

The two flies I had most success with were a glass beaded damsel and a chartreuse and black UV straggle.



We had a few tourist days driving around and were impressed with the tourist infrastructure and the general tidiness of New Zealand. I can highly recommend a visit to Creel Tackle House in Turangi. They provide great advice on local fishing, especially the Tongariro, and have very good coffee. I managed to hook a nice rainbow downstream from town and was broken off. Chris and I fished Waitahanui, a spring fed river on the eastern side of Lake Taupo. The water was crystal clear and we could see fish cruising the outflow. They were very spooky and I managed to catch the smallest fish of the trip Euro nymphing. On the last day we fished the local rivers that had cleared up and still high. Malcolm did well with 2 nice rainbows and Chris and I both had a fish free day.

Packing up we made sure all our gear was clean and dry as the Tasmanian Border Force are very keen to keep any nasty stuff out of the state. On reflection it was an amazing trip that made lifetime memories. Thanks to my travel companions, Malcolm and Chris, and our host and trout guides Peter and Paul. Their running joke was that they were both waiting for Mary. I'd also like to thank those club members who helped my prepare for the trip, David T, Westie and Zuie.

**Andrew 'The President' Reed**

## Interlaken - The New Tiger Hut?



Interlaken Fly Tying Weekend, currently proposed for Session 1 arrive 31 May leave 2 June, Session 2 arrive 2 June leave 4 June. (Check to website to book)

After a period of uncertainty about the unlikely possibility of being able to book at the Tiger Hut this year, we have found another venue which promises to be significantly better than the Tiger Hut.



On 21 March Messrs. Abel, Cubbins and Hood visited the Accommodation House at Interlaken which is now owned and operated by the Geneva Christian College, Latrobe. When we visited there was a large, welcoming working bee busy renovating and painting the extensive building, and we were even invited for lunch! The house was built in the early 1900s and is typical of the period with weatherboard construction, wooden walls and pressed-metal ceilings. When the current renovations are completed it will be very liveable and pleasant.

The main building contains twelve individual bedrooms, a well-equipped kitchen, a large dining



room and a “ballroom” which will be excellent for fly-tying, all with good wood heaters. In addition, there is a bunkhouse with four rooms and the complex is a short stroll across the lawn to Lake Sorell. We believe that the accommodation cost will be about \$20 per head per night.

For our purposes it should be ideal, and we decided on the spot to recommend that we use the complex for our fly-tying weekend, and that the weekend should be held over the period Friday 24th to Tuesday, 28th May with the same format of two sessions, each with a nominal maximum attendance of fifteen – Session 1, Friday to Sunday and Session 2, Sunday to Tuesday.

Keep an eye on the club website for more registration, meal and payment details



## Cane Day

Our club was well represented at Cane Day this year. A combined total of 21 entrants saw a total of \$225 raised to support breast cancer research. In total 11 members of our club attended. This was a wonderful turn out that was heartily appreciated by the Fly Fishers club & the organiser Chris Crawford.

The event commenced with a dinner at the Lodge, kindly organised by Anna. The evening was an excellent start to our involvement in this annual event. We were joined by a couple of guests & four members from the Fly Fishers club.



The following day commenced with a long chat about the many cane rods on display. This was followed by the annual group photo as we prepared to head out for a days angling on Little Pine.



The session started full of promise with Caddis & spinner in abundance. The trout were busy & many achieved early success. Then the cold southerly arrived putting the fish down for most of the day. We persisted of course & most managed to add to their account. At 4.30pm we concluded the day with a barbecue & drinks. As the evening wore on the trout seemed to amazingly increase in size 😄 The bottle of whisky was won by Norm Cribbin, so it is your shout Norm!



In conclusion may I take the opportunity to thank members for your strong support of this most worthwhile event. We all enjoyed fellowship & fishing. But most importantly with our fund raising effort we “made a difference” today.

**Peter Ras.**  
Club coordinator for this event.



## Vale Jason Garrett

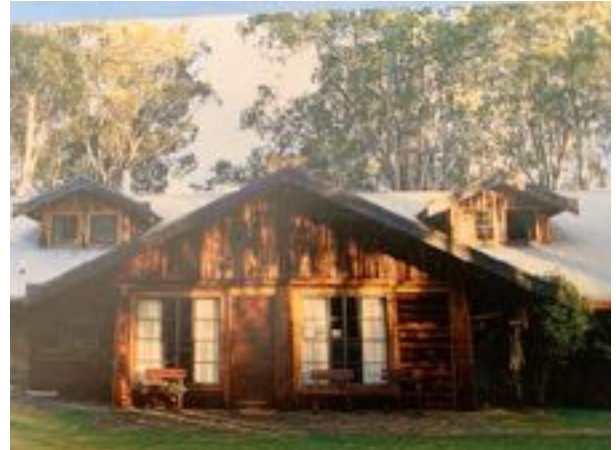
Jason was born in 1937 and spent his early years in Launceston. His father was a keen fly fisherman in the days of cane rods and silk lines, and that was how Jason began his fishing days on the St. Pats at Nunamara, the South Esk and the Shannon at Miena. He recalled receiving lessons on fishing and fly tying from the famous Dick Wigram, tying pot scrubber nymphs and tying knots in grasshopper's legs under Dick's tutelage. As a boy, he also learned the lightning-fast strike from his father and later gained the nickname "taipan", which was to follow him throughout life. In 1951, the family moved to New Norfolk, and Jason completed his secondary education at the Friends School. In 1964, he qualified as a surveyor; he immediately moved to Madang in New Guinea, which he described as a tropical paradise.

Jason quickly established a large surveying business, met, and married Barbara, and, in 1968, was elected to the PNG Parliament, serving as a member for ten years. During his time in PNG, he returned frequently to Tasmania to fish, and during these visits, he conceived the idea of constructing a private fishery in the central highlands.

Jason, Barbara, and their five children returned to Tasmania in 1978 and began, despite what some would consider overwhelming difficulties, to establish London Lakes. He constructed two dams to retain the waters of Lake Big Jim and Lake Samuel and built his wonderful lodge. He received his first guests in 1982. London Lakes thrived

during the eighties and nineties, receiving accolades from keen fishermen worldwide, many with famous names.

In 1989, Jason purchased land surrounding Brown Marsh, over the Victoria Valley Road from London Lakes, and this was to become Highland Waters, a lake and private fishery surrounded by sixty



allotments.

Highland Waters was to become Jason's pride and joy. He wanted lot owners to enjoy privacy and fine angling in picturesque surroundings. He established firm rules regarding buildings, fishing, and protecting the local environment in keeping with his ideals. In Jason's words, "When I am dead and gone, Highland Waters Estate will forever remain a sustainable project providing opportunity for every lot owner to pursue the sport in a safe, environmentally friendly and beautiful surroundings".

Jason was awarded an Order of Australia in 2018 for his services in fly fishing, tourism, and contributions to professional associations. Jason Garrett led a full and rewarding life; even towards the end, when his body was failing, his mind remained active and enthusiastic for news and plans of his beloved Highland Waters.



He was a man of many varied talents, a perfect host, keen fisherman and fly tyer, accomplished cook, bird enthusiast, budgie breeder, artist and painter, wordsmith, and gardener extraordinaire. Somehow, Jason had time for all these activities!

He was a fine friend, and



everyone who knew him will miss him.

**John O'Halloran**

## Penstock Long Table Dinner

The Long table dinner - at Malcolm Crosse's shack  
- March 9th 2024

Once again Malcolm Crosse kindly made his shack available for the famous long table dinner. Perhaps for the last time ... though it may be worth remembering the alleged words of Sean Connery's wife, ' Never say never again "

For the lucky twenty two Fly Tyers and guests that were booked in, preparations began a few days earlier with a little bit of gardening as well as ordering of the supplies. On the day itself our skilled chefs, David Travalia and Steve Butler were to be found beavering away in the shack .... deboning the quail [ 24 !! ]

The expert at work - a study in concentration



deboning the quail [ 24 ! ], dressing the porchetta and preparing a huge range of veggies as well as the hors d'oeuvres, with the aid of Andrew Hood and others. I learnt a new skill watching David in terms of blackening the peppers which made removing the otherwise tough skin an easier task. Andrew Hood, very generously, brought some much appreciated and expertly chosen wine. Tables were resurrected from last year, spiders removed and set out with classy paper table cloths bought at great expense by Malcolm ! New cutlery, glasses and plates were cleaned. Then the cooking started and once those of us not directly involved became a bit redundant, the opportunity

arose for a fish despite the fairly stiff wind [ this, of course, is why you have the dinner next to a trout lake ]. Paul Markey caught a fit brown female from the shore on a red spinner while the author, despite much flailing, remained fishless.

Returning to the shack, the party had started, with Champagne flowing, hors d'oeuvres, [ a question David please .... was there also a punch ?? ] and much chatter.

It was at least this big ...



And who let these two in ?



After a while Malcolm called us all to start dinner and a [ mostly ] orderly queue formed up. There was, as usual, plenty of food to go round despite some pretty voracious appetites. The dessert was a fantastically tasty crumble with cream. After certain people went back for at least seconds .. there was none left for any poor possums hanging around for remainders.



Bravo to all the helpers but especially our chefs David T and Steve B !

Another superb Tasmanian Fly Tyers weekend !

**Chris Hilton**

Our President, Andrew Reed, asked us all to raise a glass to remember our sadly missed and dear friend, Andrew Blackwood. A moment of emotion for us all.

Andrew then introduced our guest speaker, Mac Cunningham, from Aspen, Colorado. He spoke at some length about the encouraging work of Trout Unlimited in the USA as well as kindly leaving a few TU magazines. TU appears to have a budget [ if I remember correctly ] of some tens of millions of dollars] and as Mac described it, seems to have a careful non partisan approach which appears to achieved some success in terms of changing water use patterns for the better. There was interesting feedback including discussion about the decline in insect populations which concerns many as well as a timely reminder that not all in the non fishing community are concerned for brown or rainbow trout in Tasmania due to their non native status.

As if we hadn't had enough, some fine cheeses and various delicious fortified alcoholic drinks were provided. Conversation continued despite, or perhaps enabled by, the marvellous feast well into the night. Eventually my bunk partner and I left to get some much required sleep and slipped away into the darkness despite ongoing mirth round the dinner table.

Next morning, there was a bit of clearing up to do quickly achieved and Malcolm gradually got his shack back, not much worse for wear. The weather had calmed down and so what else was there to do but ....GO FISHING ! Our Chairman kindly took Mac out in his boat showing him the Tasmanian way to catch four good Trout and I was fortunate enough to go out with our fish whisperer, Tim Urbanc, in his well equipped boat once again. Under his skilled guidance and one of Delly's excellent fluoro orange possum emergers, even I eventually hooked and boated a nice brown, missing another rise, before leaving for home to tell my lovely wife what she had missed.

## Casting at Shadows



I was lucky enough to draw Chris Medwin for the Fowler Trophy Fishing in Friendship Day this year. For those who don't know about this event is named for one of our past Patrons John Fowler and the aim is to get club members who do not usually fish together to spend a day on the water together. The competition part of the event is not the main reason - the friendship is!

So I was very lucky to be able to spend a day out with Chris who is one of the best fishers in Tasmania and possibly Australia.



We met at the club shack at Miena and decided that the best place to go would be Lake Ada and maybe Lake Augusta as it was quite bright and sunny with a bit of wind. Sight fishing was the aim.

We took Chris' boat which is about 4m long and floats in next to nothing - the perfect craft for a shallow lake like Ada. The water was crystal clear and we began our drift from the lee of a bank on the western shore.

I found it difficult to see the number of fish that Chris was seeing until I got attuned to looking at the bottom of the lake and started seeing the shadows of the fish moving around. I still didn't see as many as him but saw the refusals and some of the takes. Unsurprisingly Chris caught more than me but I did land one ... eventually.

I was very impressed by Chris' boat handling skills and in particular his use of the drogue. He managed to sail us along the edge of the lake with a strong tail wind and keep us steady at a good casting distance from the shore. I made a mental note to actually work out how to use my drogue more effectively.

After a few hours we decided to go to Augusta for a look. The lake was quite low but we still managed a good few drifts following the myriad of channels that were there. Fish were holding in all of them but were even more difficult to see with older eyes. My experience of fishing Augusta is that fish can hit your fly seemingly out of nowhere so it can be quite exciting!

The fly of choice for the day had to be the 'Midas' which accounted for 5 of the 6 we caught. Chris had three flies on and the Midas took in all three positions! I even managed one on it so it must be good! The secret is in its scruffiness and floatability and particularly in the legs which are basically pheasant tail tied in reverse style.

Hook: Dry fly 10-14  
Thread: Red  
Rib: Mono fishing line 4-6lb  
Body: Seals fur or possum in brown  
Legs: Pheasant tail fibres tied reverse  
Hackle: Brown - sparse  
Head: Gold tinsel dubbing  
Brush ridiculously well to make it scruffy as possible.



For tying instructions check 1212out Lyndsay Simpson on YouTube below. It's a great fly that can take on many variations - even Bibio!  
<https://youtu.be/-PMrzpqUo-c?si=Q8vdqWO5I7iJNDvv>

DM

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>