



# The Vice

## News letter of Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.

Volume 9, Issue 2

Winter Spring Edition, October 2011



### President's Report

#### Presidents Report

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Vice and welcome to the bumper trout season of 2011/12. This is a very exciting start to the season. Good old Arthurs is looking terrific. In fact all the lakes and rivers are looking good, so this is the year to put some time in. Clear out the diaries, forget about the back yard and get out there.

The committee has once again put together an interesting program of events with a variety of fishing situations. This is your chance to increase your skills with some very experienced flyfishers. So if you've always wanted to see what all this 'shark fishing' is about or wondered how do you fish the beautiful but frustrating Dee Lagoon? then join us for a weekend or two during the year. We have some interesting speakers for the Oct and Nov meetings including a Scottish salmon guide who is visiting our shores. I'm keen to ask him about single handed spey casting amongst other things.

The Thursday lunchtime casting group is growing in numbers. Tight loops are everywhere and double hauling is smooth as silk. Bruce Barker and I are keen to fit in a roll cast workshop soon. This must be the most under utilised cast and yet has so many applications for fishing the lakes. So, there you have it. The planets are all lining up. The fish are plentiful and hungry. Good times are waiting to be had.

I wish you all, the best season you've ever had.

Role Cast Dave  
Hemmings (FRACC)

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### Coming Events

#### October

22 – 23 Tasmanian State Championship Round 1  
Jason Garret

28 – 30 Arthurs Lake (Miena shack)  
Malcolm Crosse  
(Commonwealth Championship Volunteers)

#### November

1 Spring Vice published John Smith  
4 – 6 Macquarie River Craig Granquist  
21 Monthly Meeting

#### December

2 - 4 Penstock weekend Mark Aspinall  
11 Snowy Range Family Christmas fishing day  
John Smith  
19 Christmas Drinks, Lenah Valley  
Pete Murphy

## Suggest a Caption or Send in a Story

Doug Miller won the \$30 for his article on mid week fishing. There were no Dave Young Stories but there could be some soon. He is back in Tasmania?



“The vice is done and so am I”



The boys at Spot On fishing tackle have kindly provided the Club with 4 vouchers to the value of \$30 each for this year's **competition**. I'm sure everyone will join with me in thanking the lads for this kind support, and continue to patronise Steve's shop.

## Editorial

Editorial

Great news Doug Miller has agreed to help with the Vice so it could well return to the 4 issues a year full of quality stuff. After a probationary period Doug could well become sub editor with excellent prospects of fast track promotion.

Thank you, Tony Dell for your article on fly tying and congratulations on winning club man of the year for the umpteenth time as well as the Fowler Trophy. It was between Tony and Doug for the Spot On dollars but I thought Tony had won enough for one year.

I have run out of ideas for the *Spot On* dollars so we will stick with the caption or the best article, fishing tip, or new fly design (send me a dozen for testing)

I had the wonderful experience of a trip Christmas Island with Malcolm Crosse and Dave Imber. I hope that some of you will take the opportunity next time. “Crossy” kindled interest on the Island and the guides are trying to raise funds to send a team to the Commonwealth Fly fishing Championships. It would be great if the club can help. We might run a Snowy Range function to raise some money and also provide support while they are in Tasmania if they get here.

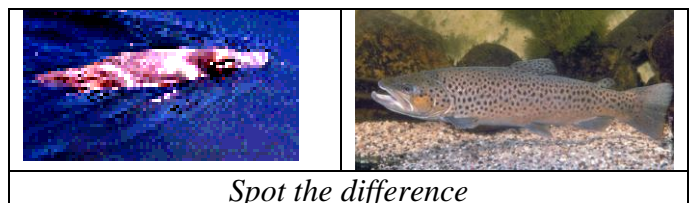
Congratulations John O'Halloran and Malcolm Crosse for becoming life members they deserve it. I will profile john in the next issue and maybe say a bit more about Malcolm.

JTS  
Editor

## Write the best story and win a \$30 *Spot On* voucher!



“Great Guide”



*Spot the difference*

Have a go  
Simply send your entry to John Smith  
< [nib1943@inet.net.au](mailto:nib1943@inet.net.au) >

## Tasmanian Casting Competition August 2011

The championships were held once again at Peter Hayes superb facility in Cressy.

I have been attending these championships since 2001 and always enjoy the friendly competition and company. Peter makes time to demonstrate or teach a particular aspect of casting so there is always something new to learn. This year, Pete demonstrated the roll cast – a very under utilised cast.

There has been a quiet revolution in fly casting over the past five years or so. There were two FFF (Federation of Fly Fishers) Master Casters present and seven CCI (certified casting instructors) including the youngest CCI in the world – eleven year old Lachie Hayes. By the way Lachie was tested in Malaysia by two Board of Governor representatives and Paul Arden (sexy loops) with his father pacing nervously in the background.



*The new club uniform*

The instructors are always willing to assist with the casters on the day. This year we had sixty eight casters from a variety of clubs around Tasmania competing in the Dry fly, wet fly and the Skish events. This number is growing each year as more and more are ‘bitten by the casting bug.’ Skill levels ranged from beginner to superb with all participants warmly supported. Bruce Barker and myself represented the Flytyers. For the record. The club event was won by The Coralinn Casting Club. Van Diemens second and Devonport third.



*Bruce wants that hat*

Jonathan Stagg again won the individual event with Alan Eckert second and David Hemmings third. For a bit of additional fun a new event was added- the 5 wt distance. Staggy managed to sling the line out against the wind - 115 ft 8 in -Very impressive indeed! We all had a terrific day. Next year is the time of the Flytyers. I'm hopeful that we not only field a team but bring the club trophy south for the first time. Now that's worth casting for.

David Hemmings



In recognition of their service to the club over many years, Malcolm Crosse and John O'Halloran were made Life Members at the AGM on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

They were each presented with a framed certificate and a hand-made wooden landing net.

## The Award Winning Article

### The Little weekend

#### Mid-week Fly Fishing

Doug Miller

I am in the fortunate position of only working 4 days a week – This year I have Wednesdays off so it is like two little weeks. This gives me the luxury of having a fishing day mid-week. There are of course conditions on this that limit my options. I need to drop my daughter off at school at 8.30 and pick her up again at 3.00pm and there are the usual household chores that need doing. This means that my fly fishing options are limited to places within 30-45 minutes of my home in Howrah which gives me about two or three hours to fish.

My aim is to photograph and write about each of the places I like to fish. The trips I go on are always fun but quite often uninterrupted by fish. This is not to say I catch nothing but it possibly true to say that being there is most of the fun and fish are a surprise and welcome bonus!

#### Pawleena Reservoir

The first place I like to fish is the Pawleena Reservoir - a small irrigation dam about 10 minutes out of Sorrell. To find it you simply drive out of Sorrell towards Port Arthur and take the first turn on your left once you leave the township. It is conveniently signposted for the



geographically challenged like me!

The road passes heavily netted fruit farms and turns into a dirt road after about 3 or 4 kilometres. You pass over a small creek (crick?) and drive up the hill past the Ingham's chicken farm. You get your first glimpse of the Reservoir from the brow of the hill. From there you travel down until you reach the gate that leads to the dam edge.



The dam itself is often stocked by the IFS (300 browns this year) and is well tended by the Clarence Licensed Anglers who like you to record any fish you catch or take so they take keep records. In addition to the stocked fish there are also resident fish that can reach a surprisingly good size. It is surrounded by hills and is often really calm even on the windiest days.

The first thing you notice is the bird life. Swans, cranes, cormorants, ducks and gulls are everywhere as well as swamp hens which scatter alarmingly from clumps of reeds when you walk by. The dam itself is usually quite turbid after rains but does clear a little bit after settled weather.

Wet flies seem to do best early in the season but by about the September the fish really start looking up and emergers and dries are useful. I have had most early season success on stick caddis and a Viva tied normally and with a gold bead. The dam is quite shallow at the top end and is most suited to floating lines and weighted flies. If you go down to the dam wall however it can be useful to use a ghost tip to get your flies down deeper to where the bigger fish lie. When the fish are rising they tend to like to surface about a cast and a half out of my range but

I am sure others may find them accessible. I seem to catch trees and grass with regular monotony when I go after them. There are however enough that come close enough though for me to bother them. I have had most success on Klinkhamer style dries in size 14 and 16 and Jan's Pheasant tail Possum Emergers in size 16.



The best places to fish I have found are on the far side near the dam wall and further around in front of the main reed beds. You can see some huge swan nests often full of huge eggs over there but you shouldn't get too close as they are owned by huge swans! The area just near the informal car park is also worth a few casts as there are some nice areas where the creek runs into the main area of the dam.

Pawleena is really an early season prospect as it is drawn on heavily for irrigation after Christmas in particular. It also gets fairly choked with weed as the weather warms. I have often thought that it would be interesting to fish from a kayak or float tube where you can get access to those fish that regularly rise in the middle area – sounds like a plan...



## The flies

I have included pictures of the flies I use and the recipes, all taken from the internet. The Klinkhamer, viva and the Possum emerger are all from excellent YouTube clips. I particularly like the work of Davie McPhail, an Irish fly tyer of amazing skill.

Klinkhamer



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-as9IV1-d8>

Stick caddis



<http://learnflytying.co.uk/the-stickfly.html>

Jan's Pheasant tail Possum Emerger



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpOWmykj45o>

Viva



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skpJfLo3saM>

Doug Miller 2011  
(Aerial photo courtesy of Google Earth)

## Club Activities

### OPENING WEEKEND BONANZA

After what seemed to be a never ending off-season, the opening weekend finally rolled around once again - sparking enthusiasm and many tall tales of seasons of old and the potential of the bumper season ahead. Most importantly for some, it meant the annual club field trip on opening weekend up to the Miena shack.



Like the past few season openers, the weather was looking promising and by all reports the major snow banks had all but disappeared into the great lakes that surrounded the region. The field trip was organised by Trotty once again and was first to arrive at the shack on Friday afternoon around 3pm to set up and wait (not for too long as there where fish to be had in Great Lake) for the troops to arrive. By the time the shack was set up and fire was on its way to bring life back into the shack after the off season hiatus, Mark Rampant was next to arrive. With quick pleasantries exchanged, Trotty and Mark were off to fish the Great Lake shore for the afternoon.

The water levels had risen considerably since the last venture to the Great Lake and many old spots where now long distant memories and took some time to get bearings on old successful stomping grounds. Mark was the first to strike brown gold for the trip, taking a somewhat slabby looking brown trout on a wet. The trout was around 450 – 500 mm but in average condition, so was returned to the water by a delighted Mark.

After much effort, that was the only fish landed between Mark and Trotty so it was back to the shack for defrosting and a few ales beside the fire.

Westy and Spencer along with Steve Martin soon joined the shack duo and told of their success that night fishing the Great Lake shore down at Swan Bay for three brownies in total for less than an hour fishing – while they had success on the lake that night, I am not sure if they succeed at the counter meals at the hotel that night – scallops in the middle of Tassie? – Spencer what were you thinking?

Tony Abel and friend Dean were next to arrive at the shack to join in the defrosting by fire and ale. That night there was plenty of laughs and stories had by all, and most importantly great planning and plotting on where to fish and how to take down the pesky trout the following days, oh and of course including several wineries and a handful of breweries drank dry and a few cheese makers kept in business along with the cracker stores. All in all seven people attended the opening weekend bonanza, great to see such good turn out and never disappointing times.



The next morning there where many sore heads from the previous night's events - as well as a little bit of snoring (chain sawing?) thrown in for good measure. A group of five headed for Woods Lake early while Tony and Dean opted to poke around the Pine and Great Lake for the day. The weather was out of this world for early August with majority of sun and zero wind and a cool crisp air temperature, with occasional clouding over in between – you could not have asked for better weather.

As per usual there was plenty of boats at Woods but really no hassle and it is a very pretty lake so well worth having a look. Much to our disappointment the fish were very hard to find and convince to take a fly and from the lack of other

anglers excitement on the water, it appeared that many others faced the same fate as our troop did – a potential blank...however, after much flogging wets high and low along with covering just about every inch of Woods Lake – including the trees and weeds on land – Mark missed a very tentative swirl at his fly. Then about 2 hours later Trotty hooked and landed a very silver and excited brown trout of around 2 pounds, with some aerial display and swallowing the fly right down the gut. The fish took an amended *Shrek* pattern. Steve had seen a few fish but they were asleep, the ones that had been awoken by snoring that night refused the flies Steve presented, I suggested presenting a bottle of red to them – didn't get much of a laugh!

Steve managed to locate several nice fish up in the shallows sun baking and chewing snails, and after missing a couple, he managed to entice a lovely 3.5 pound brown onto the hook and to stay on it.

Westy (the Woods Specialist) and Spencer (Heroic Side-kick) packed up early from Woods fishless, and headed down to Great Lake for a quick flick before heading home. The duo ended up with a few fish, however, the reef had been cleaned out by squidgy fishers the previous two days, so without a plastic surgeon on board to entice more fish to the boat, Westy and Spencer called it quits – at least they got some fish.

Tony and Dean fared much better from the bank, fishing both the Pine and the Great Lake at Tods Corner. They were successful in hooking up and landing a few from the Pine in close on the rocks and also around the flooded grounds and grass lands while similar success was had at Tods with both anglers faring much better and taking a couple of slabby looking browns on wet flies.

Saturday night in the shack, the four remaining opening weekend troops assembled weapons for the following morning based on the previous days recon missions. Preparation was aided by several more lashings of fine beverages. It was decided that Woods was asleep at present and with the weather becoming a little more gloomy and drizzle and wanting an early exit from the lakes to get home for dinner, it was decided that some

shore fishing was in order, so Mark and Trotty opted to get up early for a dawn patrol at the Pine, following on Tony's advice, while Tony and Dean joined a little later on the Pine. Mark had quick success within the first ten minutes fishing a worm pattern (thanks Spencer) with a nice 2lb brownie on the road shore. After 30min we decided to head over to the untouchables where the water level was as high as I have ever seen it, worm feeders had to be everywhere. After fishing for another 10 min Trotty snagged another Pine fish, good quality fish of about 2.5 lb and looking very healthy taken on an olive seals fur body and black marabou tail fly. Then the wind picked up and washed the untouchable shore out, so we decided to head back to the Great Lake at Tods Corner to end the opening weekend trip. The shore was calm and only a slight wind ripple existed with snow and sleet falling gently every so often, the water was high and clear and looked very fishy.

Mark went one way and Trotty went the other and within the space of an hour Trotty had successfully landed 3 brownies from the rocky shore using his olive seals fur fly while Mark only managed to fowl hook one fish in the bum with the worm fly – not sure if the worm fly was trying to venture in and up or the fish simply sat down to go to sleep on the fly, but nether less the trout screamed off and broke Mark off.

At the conclusion of the opening weekend great fun was had by all, the weather was quite warm for this time of year with little wind for majority of the time, seven people attended the weekend, and over a dozen plus fish taken. In all it was a great success and a very enjoyable weekend with like-minded soles. The verdict - Highly recommended for next year for those punters not able to make it this year!



Trotty

## Woods Lake Weekend

Leader - Brian West

The Lodge was full on Friday and Saturday night with a crew of 11 all up ready to tackle Woods Lake from boat and shore.



*“Cool Preperation”*

An early rise to be greeted, by a wonder world of snow, did not deter an enthusiastic group of wet fly fishers armed with Shreks, Stickys, and other secret weapons. The weather was favourable after the cold start but the fish were not easy.

“Cubby”, “Stokesy” and ‘Plankton” fished the shore to start with, with some success. David and Bruce also fished the shallows up the Eastern end and caught “a number” of fish as they did in the PM while fishing from the boat. Mark and Doug, Noel and Tony and Westy and I fished from the Boat. Westy’s Shreks were the most successful lures/flyes and Westy the most successful angler with 6 nice browns, depending on what David President meant by “a number, yes”.

Westy was fishing 2 to 3 wets with a Shrek on the point and a Stick Caddis casting a short line in the clear patches in the strap weed with his new 10’ rod. A slow retrieve with an extended hang proved the most successful. By the end of the day everyone had caught fish which makes a nice start for a pleasant evening. Not sure if Stoksey got one but he sure caught a heap in Lake Sorell over a few beers.

There were some memorable moments:

After lunch Westy picked up Plankton and I and we headed up to the Eastern end and our fine

guide found a drop off. Plankton hooked and landed a large male brown of around 6 pounds; creating great joy for Peter. Westy was not fishing at the time and offered me his new 10’ sage to try.



*Plankton with a ripper*

Plankton, with his fine eyesight spotted what he described as a large platypus bill at about 11 o’clock 50 feet coming closer. With my eyesight who was I not to accept Peters identification so when I saw two more swirls at about 40 and then 30 feet I did not get excited. When Westy said have a cast I did, a perfect one landing like thistle down a few feet in front of the disturbance; and bugger me the Shrek was taken and I knew I had hooked something large, (probably a platypus). It was some time, with Westy’s new rod bent down to about 5 feet, and the owner pulling a knife to release protected fauna that the creature surfaced a large brown trout at least 6 pounds which we landed and released. I have often cast at a platypus thinking it is a fish, but casting to a fish thinking it is a platypus is a first for me!



*“Same fish?”*

Another highlight was the menu of Bruce Barker and our President, roast lamb and baked



vegetables for dinner and stir fried tomato onion mushrooms served with smoked salmon.



*Big fish or small net?*

Sunday most fished Arthurs. Westy and I got a dozen or so round the rocky shores at the Dam end and the others caught a number of fish around the Jonah Bay end. The fishing was not easy but the season has not fired up yet.

J.T.S ED

## Casting in the Park

Dave Hemmings and Bruce Barker our qualified casting instructors are meeting mid week in the park near CSIRO for a lunch time cast. They are also casting on some Sundays. If you want to join in and improve your casting just call Dave or Bruce.



## Member Profile

### Jason Garrett

Extracted by J Smith Ed

Jason was born and started fly fishing in Papua New Guinea at the age of 10. In 1978 the family moved to Tasmania which was when Jason first started fly fishing for trout. They moved to Derwent Bridge while Jason Garrett Senior, as part of his grand vision, built the Lodge at London Lakes over the next 4 years. This marked the start of Jason's attempts at mastering the art of fly fishing where he only fished in two lakes over the next 8 years; London Lakes – Lake Big Jim and Lake Samuel. What a place to start!



First Trophy Trout



*"Dad had a big influence on my fishing"*

Jason recalled catching his first **ten pound trout when he was eleven**. He did not tie his own flies –“I just pinched them from Dad when he wasn’t looking. He used to ask me what the flies were called and I used to irk him by saying black ones, green ones and dry ones”. Us mere mortals can only dream about growing up around London Lakes and observing and catching fish on the fly in all the seasons of the year. Jason enjoyed spending whole days wandering Lake Big Jim and Lake Samuel catching large numbers of large trout. After being dispatched as a boarder at Hutchins, Jason would return during the holidays to catch fish.

The flies he most used then were: Tadpole (black one), Galena (frog pattern or green one), Dun (dry one), and Caenid (another dry one) indicating the depth of fishing experience gained at an early age.

Jason started guiding at London Lakes when he was 16 and recalls how Dad would give him all the difficult clients, This taught me some bad habits though – “how best to get upset when you lost a fish, which Noel saw when we were fishing the John Fowler trophy last year unfortunately.”

Jason went to Queensland in 1991 returning to Tasmania in 2001 but over this period he still managed the odd trip home and some fishing at London Lakes.

Jason told me, “Macca, who guided at London Lakes was a wonderful mentor. When I returned to Tasmania, and after a few lessons in fly tying from the great man, I started fly tying and then, with his guidance I ventured out to other lakes. I

also pinched his fly vice when he wasn’t looking and that has been very useful.”

Jason Garrett Senior and Macca got Jason involved in competitive fishing in 2000 and he entered his first competition in 2001 and “blanked out in every session - a very embarrassing moment.” Since then his performance has improved marginally. In fact Jason was fortunate enough to represent Australian in 2008 when Macca was captain of the Australian team. He joined the national committee of Fly Fish Australia Incorporated in 2010 and has also been President of the State Chapter since that period. Organising the Nationals in Tasmania last year has been a highlight over this period

Places fished outside Tasmania include:

- North and South Islands of NZ including the ‘One Fly’ fishing championships.
- NSW in the Snowy Mountains.
- Victoria.
- Tea Bagging in South Australia and
- Impoundments in WA.



*A memorable NZ River*

Memorable fishing experiences well there are many:

- Fishing the Tyenna a Tasmanian jewel which I am happy not many people know about and am happy that those that do forget about

- Dry fly hatches on London Lakes with 10 lb browns and rainbows sucking them down.
- Fishing the NZ rivers-fantastic.
- Dun days on Arthurs Lake.
- Laying in wait for cruising fish on Lake Samuel.
- Walking around Lake Samuel in the snow for hours chasing tailing fish.

Favourite flies now are the Shrek, Hair and Copper, the Claret dun, the Humungus, the Bobby Dazzler, Gary's Favourite and Halley's Comet.

He recalls fishing with his son on Penstock; "Well I was fishing with my son's rod while he lay on the bottom of the boat but also watching him catch his first fish on the Tyenna."

Mr Garrett met Tony Dell and joined the club in 2005. He repaid Tony by fishing with him in the Fowler Trophy and took him to that mysterious undisclosed place called Lake Piccadilly.

I have not fished with Jason but I have met him during fishing championships while a controller including the time he topped the comp at Arthurs Lake. With his wonderful background at London Lakes, an encouraging father who is now his best fishing pal (still competing in fishing competitions), plus Macca as a mentor it is hardly surprising that Jason is a quality fly fisher.

Solid as a Rock is Jason,  
He's now a fishing sensation  
As a young tacker, he was mentored by Macca  
That's helped him fish for our nation.

Jason likes flies with claret  
And fishing with Jason Garrett  
It's a family affair, they will fish any where,  
Competitions act as a carrot.

Forced to engineer, what's meaner?  
To consult with the pack of hyena,  
Less designing than fish, if he had a wish,  
He'd retire to the call of Tyenna



*Nice 2011 brown*

While at the Lodge drawing profile information from the lad I was privy to a glance at the new 10 foot 3# rod for Australian nymfing in rivers. Much of his past fishing has been in lakes so with the new gear and more experience I would expect to hear more about Jason. He also has great potential as a future committee member.



*"Jason content at the Vice"*

## CHARLES PECK'S HATCHING NYMPH

Charles has been using this pattern for more than twenty years with great effect early in mayfly hatches.

He was having difficulty catching fish at the beginning of the hatch at Little Pine (his favourite haunt and shack location) and decided to do some intensive observation. During his observations he noticed fish taking extremely quietly, occasionally showing their dorsal fins and tails in the process. He managed, intermittently, to take a few of these fish on a reasonably large (#12 long shank) conventional possum floating nymph developed by Dan Dempsey ( of Low Head and Tods Corner), and his examination of gut contents showed, almost invariably, that the fish had been feeding on quite small hatching nymphs with shucks still trailing.

With this knowledge, he set to work to try and replicate the hatching nymph and shuck. It was tied after watching the hatching process many times – starting from an apparent black spot in the skin of the water, which then pops open as the dun emerges , leaving the silvery shuck trailing behind in the final stages. He, like Dan, used a possum body (dark, preferably black) but somewhat smaller and made a short shuck out of a small bunch of silver fibres from the belly, scrotum or base of the tail of a wallaby.

The fly, of course has undergone continuing incremental modification since its original development, and even had a black foam body at one time when no suitable coloured possum fur was available – however, this version was short lived as it didn't hook fish as well. Charles thinks that was probably because of its increased buoyancy and higher floating characteristic. The fly is simplicity itself to tie – just a small plump lump of dark (preferably black) possum fur with a short silver wallaby fibre shuck. It, of course, needs to be well treated with floatant (although Charles doesn't use floatant) and is best fished on the point, either on its own or with a suitable emerger or dun pattern on the dropper. Takes are usually very quiet, at times barely perceptible until the cast starts to move.

### **The Pattern:**

**Hook:** #14 light wire (Charles uses a Gamakatsu #14 S10-2S which is a short shank, chemically sharpened dull dark grey finish hook, I use a Kamasan B170). In my experience, some #12s don't go astray.

**Thread:** Black or dark brown 8/0

**Tail:** Small bunch of silver fibres from either wallaby belly fur, scrotum or base of tail, cut to about 3-4 mm length. (I have just been given some wallaby belly fur and tail by Simon Thompson, before that I used fibres from a patch of bleached possum fur. Charles tells me he has also used white synthetic strand for the shuck.)

**Body:** Plump body ( <> ) of dark possum fur, preferably black. (As well as the dark version, I also tie them in a lighter brown natural possum body fur and they also seem to catch well.) Below are Charles' tying instructions verbatim: "Spin a small quantity of black possum fur onto the waxed thread for the body. Wind a very thin body about one third of the way up the hook. Wind a couple of turns of thread through the body to hold it, returning the thread to the point reached before the extra turns. Then form a bulging thorax with the possum fur spun on the thread, repeating the thread rib as a stabilizer before forming a head and tying off. Varnish head". (I don't rib mine, but just ensure I dub the possum fur very tightly on the thread.)

They are certainly worth a dozen of each size in the box !

Happy tying and tight lines.

Tony Dell

8 June 2011



## Tropical Paradise

### Bonefish at Christmas Island

An amazing trip enjoyed by 3 Club members, David Imber, John Smith, and our organiser (the uncrowned King of Christmas Island) Malcolm Crosse. We joined a group of North West Coasters and a couple of mainlanders for what I thought was a trip of a life time.



*Heading out for a days Fishing*

Christmas Island is part of the Kiribatis Nation which also includes the old Gilbert Islands. It was used by the British as a Nuclear testing site in the 50's and as a staging point for troops during the second world war. Settlement only started recently and permanent residency was not permitted prior to independence in 1979. Residents mainly came from other islands and still largely follow the traditional cultural practices but with the introduction of some 'western technology'. The islanders are people of the sea, they all fish, and while they import goods such as rice from elsewhere fish and coconuts are most important to islanders and their economy. They live a simple communal life. Gilbertese is the main language but most also speak some English. The people we met were delightful with a keen sense of humour.

The Island is located between Fiji and Hawaii in the Pacific and there is only one airflight a week an important social event for locals and visitors alike.



*Lagoons and sand flats galore*

I thought I was going alone, as most of the Tassie boys only just caught the flight to Fiji and quite a few arrived on Christmas Island with no gear. As I had 3 rods my popularity peaked soon after arrival, and went down and down from then on. It is a night flight out of FIJI so you arrive at about 6am, daybreak, travel to the base for a debrief, then off fishing after midday till about 5pm.



*I had a swim with these blokes*

The basic accommodation is right on the water and you walk only 30 metres to one of the 3 catamaran style boats servicing our group of 12. There is a boat man, two guides and sometimes an apprentice guide between 2 or three clients.



A normal day from 7am to about 5pm then back for pre dinner snacks and tea. Good food and yes drink, to buy at reasonable rates, so you will not starve or dye of thirst.

So off to one of the lagoons or one of the numerous sand flats, among the 200 square miles of magnificent water in search of the allusive bone fish or perhaps a cruising trevally. With your guide, you step off the boat in ankle deep to waste deep water equipped with the #5 to #9 weight rod (#6 is best), waders, polaroids and high expectations. The guide will carry an extra rod for you for the giant trevally.



*A typical flat*

The guides all have eyes like hawks and can spot a done fish from over 50 metres in the right conditions. This is most comforting for me with sight and body shape resembling a rhinoceros. Before long the guide is likely to say “bone fish 50 feet 11 o’clock”; and I strain my eyes trying to pick up the bluey green shape of a cruising bone fish as it is much easier to do the job if you can see the fish. The alternative is to go on blind faith with a some what blind cast. So you cast and with a touch of luck you will hear “St... rip, St...rip, strip, strip, strip,.....Fish on!” And it’s on! Straight out to the backing at incredible speed. They are incredible fighting fish.



*Teannaki Our Head Guide*

The guides are great with a keen sense of humour although I did test their patience and I would hear things like:

“Don’t cast that close” –you need to lead them by at least a couple of metres.

“Keep your rod down, they spook easily, and when they first take you do not raise the rod as you might with a trout.”

“Not there! Can’t you see it? Just there! 5 feet!” Good spotting skills will increase your catch although you will still catch fish fishing blind.

“Are those the only flies you have?” - Sparse Crazy Charlies quite heavily weighted were the go, depending on conditions. Lighter weights were ok in slack ebb-tide conditions but you need to get down to the fish quickly. Fish are bottom feeders often seeking out shrimps.



*A nice Bone fish*

Everyone caught plenty of fish with some catching more than others. I caught 14 on our

first half day and probably averaged about ten. The really top more experienced bone fishers were catching over 50 fish a day towards the end of the trip.

There are also Trevally and Giant Trevally which require larger tackle. The guide often carries your heavier rod for use if the need arises. Several large trevally were taken by the group.



*Small Trevally on large tummy*

I shared a hut with Malcolm Crosse who spent a couple of days trying to sort out how to restore the communication system he installed a few years ago. He had many contacts and is well respected by all. I managed one trip with him and we did it a bit differently ending up trawling for Tuna. We managed to get a few - one about 30kg and lost one about twice that size.



*Crossy - the grim winder*

Our friendly guides lost their sense of humour when I suggested we release the fish so we agreed that they be kept to feed the village. All bone fish are released and a fish de-hooker is used to minimise fish handling. Recreational bone

fishing is important to the economy and bone fish are fully protected for this purpose.



*The fish Crossy helped to wind*

David Imber and I shared the same boat a few times and David caught heaps of bone fish. He shared his rod with his guide and they took it in turns to catch fish.



*Off to the flats with Dave and Pat*

All in all a great trip, and I will do it again hopefully with a group from the club. Oh and the food was fine and on return home you could get a drink at reasonable prices from our friendly bar maid Tanaea Tiitu.



**Wanted**

**Public Notice**

**Vice**

Warning: This might upset  
Some members

**Editions 1 of fly life for Heather Noga to make Mothers set complete Contact Heather on**  
(03) 6225 2198

Purdon Dinghies 10'6 and 12' Contact John Smith.

**Articles, stories, feedback, letters to the editor profiles, anything of interest to members for vice** Contact John Smith [nib1943@iinet.net.au](mailto:nib1943@iinet.net.au).

A look in Jason Garretts fly box

**For payments to the club**

BSB: 807 007  
Account No: 12130456  
Name: Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club Inc  
Then email the details to Tim Munro  
[tim@theatreroyal.com.au](mailto:tim@theatreroyal.com.au)

**I looked for books on fly fishing in this shop but could not find any. I wonder why not?**



**Wanted**

Jason is Missing his Boat!



If you have it or one like it contact Jason Garrett

**For Sale**

Don't Miss this one.



Three bed room cottage with magnificent rural views. A lovely open air feel pervades this charming old cottage on a small block. Close to pristine trout stream and toilet facilities. Only requires minor renovation. Be quick only \$.300,000 PH 620410E

**Community Notice**

**Your New committee**

President Dave Hemmings  
PH (03) 6224 4006

Vice President Malcolm Crosse  
PH (03) 6244 7009

Secretary Peter Murphy  
Ph (03) 6243 0288

Treasurer Tim Munro

Committee Members  
Malcolm Crosse  
John Spencer  
John Smith  
Peter Trott (shack man)

Please contact with any suggestions