



# The Vice



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

**Volume 15 , Issue 6 Summer 2019**

**Inside: Why Malbena Matters to Me, Penstock Weekend, Claret Dun *and much more...***

*Cover shot – Reynolds Neck fire from Theissen Crescent*

## President's Report

Suddenly we are rapidly approaching the back end of the season – where did the rest of it go?

From what I have heard, there has been some reasonably good fishing, with many of the usual culprits reporting very good sessions, particularly on Woods and Little Pine. It is also good to hear that Arthurs appears to be improving.

In late November a small number of members enjoyed a good weekend at Lake Fergus, apparently in company with the Tasmanian Fly Fishers - Many thanks to Randall Trethewey for allowing access to the lake.

January's fishing in the Central Highlands was obviously compromised by the bush fires, with access to several popular spots restricted by road closures. Due to the wonderful efforts of the many Firies on the scene, property losses were largely avoided although huge areas of land have been badly burnt. Apparently it was a very close call at the Tiger Hut, but I expect that the surroundings will be less pleasant for our activities there in the next few months.

Unfortunately, our January meeting, which was to have been held at Miena, had to be cancelled because of the fires.

Despite general reports that the fishing at Penstock has been difficult, several members, particularly our Editor, who attended the recent Penstock weekend, did very well, although others, including your president, struggled a bit. What is not in contention is that it was a great weekend, particularly with another fantastic long-table dinner once again prepared by Steve Butler. Thanks are also due to Mark Aspinall, Malcolm Crosse and David O'Brien for providing and organising accommodation. A highlight of the weekend was the presence of Martin Cottis, a visiting English fishing journalist and guide.

Vigorous discussion and activity have continued around the Lake Malbena issue. Greg French presented his thoughts at our November general meeting and the Club has made a submission to the Central Highlands Council opposing the development approval application. Several members have also made their own submissions. There appears to be quite widespread opposition to the "development", so it will be very interesting to see the outcome, although the issue may run for some time depending on the council's decision and any resulting legal challenges.

Forthcoming club activities include the Western Lakes walking and camping trip being organised by David Young for 19 March, the Salmon Ponds casting and barbecue day on 5 May, the Inland Fisheries weekend at Liaweenie on 18 – 19 May and the Tiger Hut fly-tying sessions on 31 May – 4 June. I urge you to participate in as many of these activities as you can and also to remember the Fowler Trophy if you have not done anything about it yet.

In the meantime there is still plenty of fishing to do and I wish you all tight lines!

**Andrew Hood**

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## Editorial

Apologies for the lateness of this issue, the fires and the winds have made trips up to our beloved highlands difficult and I missed a couple of opportunities before Christmas. I did however manage a couple of brilliant days fishing on Woods before the weeds choked up my favourite bits. Still, there is always some good autumn fishing to come.

Another of the reasons for the lateness of the summer edition is the decision on the Malbena proposal. I am personally relieved that common sense has prevailed for the time being and I am impressed that well over 1300 submissions opposing the proposal were sent in to the Central Highlands council. After the bush fires, the findings that Dove Lake, Perched Lake and Lake Dobson, amongst others, were highly contaminated with heavy metals and Richard Flanagan's Guardian

article about Tasmania 'burning while those in power laugh at us', I feel that the environment and the treasured part of the earth that we love needed a win!

David Young's article on what Malbena means to him is the feature story in this Vice. David writes eloquently and his passion for Tasmania's bush is richly expressed and it makes me want to visit this area, which I have not yet seen.

The Penstock weekend is another important event on the Fly Tyers calendar. It was a great weekend and the famous 'long table' dinner at Malcolm's shack was again brilliant.

It is great to see the favourite lakes once again coming to the fore again with Little Pine and Penstock both fishing very well with magnificent fish caught on the dry. The jassids should be around soon and some and with those calmer days there is still great adventure to be had!

DM



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

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

***This time the award goes to... David Young for his thought provoking essay on Malbena!***

**Have a go**

**Simply send your entry to Doug Miller**

**[55dmiller@gmail.com](mailto:55dmiller@gmail.com)**

## Special - For Sale

Could you please advertise these items for sale in the Vice.

1 Vision wading jacket size XL new.

1 Min Kota electric outboard motor – used about half a dozen times \$300

1 circular float tube and flippers again also used about half a dozen times \$70

Regards Penny Longden

[longdenr@dodo.com.au](mailto:longdenr@dodo.com.au)



Also...



27 February 2019  
Our ref: DA 2018/50

Dear Sir/Madam

**Notification of Council Decision – Refusal to Grant Permit  
Development Application – DA 2018/50  
Visitor Accommodation (Standing Camp)  
Halls Island, Lake Malbena, Walls of Jerusalem National Park**

Further to your representation regarding the above proposal, I advise that pursuant to Section 57 of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* ("the Act") the Central Highlands Council has refused to grant a permit for the proposed Visitor Accommodation (Standing Camp) at Halls Island, Lake Malbena, Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the notification letter sent to the Applicant(s) Wild Drake Pty Ltd for your information.

The applicant has fourteen (14) days in which to lodge an Appeal with the Resource Management and Appeals Tribunal. Should the Applicant lodge an Appeal against Council's Decision then you, as a person that lodged a representation, may become a party to the Appeal.

If you wish to become party to the appeal then you are advised to contact the Tribunal on (03) 6165 6794 or see their website <https://www.rmpat.tas.gov.au/> for further information.

Should you wish to discuss the above further please contact the Development & Environmental Services Office on 6259 5503.

Yours faithfully

  
**Jacqui Tyson**  
Planning Officer

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## Why Malbena Matters to Me

Of course, I could have called this piece simply, 'Why Malbena Matters'. But that's already been done. Besides, I want to write something personal, less informed by the objectivity and legalese employed by many who've weighed into this vexed debate. I also want to sort out my own ideas on the subject. And in doing so I need to write not just about the importance of 'wilderness', but about fishing in wilderness, and why that's important to me. Because, the more I've thought about it, the more I've come to the conclusion that fishing – fishing in the unique Tasmanian wilderness landscape – is at the heart of the matter.

I don't imagine that this view will be shared by many of those opposed to Daniel Hackett's Malbena proposal: probably not by most bushwalkers and certainly not by deep-green conservationists. However, it may strike a chord with fly-fishers, including those who've never ventured into the Western Lakes. I hope it does. And, more importantly, I hope it succeeds in recruiting a few more voices to the campaign against what I believe to be an abomination. As we used to say in the 1960s: 'The personal is the political'.

Sticking with the 1960s (well, 1970 to be precise), it's worth quoting Joni Mitchell's song, Big Yellow Taxi: 'You don't know what you've got till it's gone'. Yes, absolutely: it is very easy to take for granted something you've enjoyed for many years without considering the possibility that one day it may be taken from you for ever.

I first walked, camped and fished in the Western Lakes in 1997. It was a solo trip lasting about a week. I fished almost a dozen lakes south of the Great Pine Tier – Antimony, Silver, Sally, Sonya, Solveig, and so on – camping each night by a different lake. I caught one trout.

Strangely, that didn't matter. The experience was the start of an addiction. I've been back to the Western Lakes every year since, sometimes in company, often alone. I've fished many different parts of this large, complex area. Some years, I've made several trips. Generally, my catch rate has improved, but sometimes I still blank.

But whether I catch fish or not, the experience is always a joy; although it's something I haven't reflected on a great deal – until now. Nor, until recently, have I felt concerned that someday this type of fishing might no longer be available to me, except by the natural process of growing too old to carry a pack. But, even then, the wilderness and the lakes and the trout would still be there for others to enjoy. Or so I believed.

Of course, the Lake Malbena proposal – if put into effect – would not in itself destroy the experience of wilderness fishing throughout the entire Western Lakes; Daniel Hackett doesn't exactly intend to 'pave paradise'. Yet what he has in mind would unquestionably start a process, a process based upon the philosophy that the ultra-rich should have the right to purchase whatever they choose, no matter how much that might stuff things up for the rest of us. And this process will not stop at Lake Malbena. For if the Malbena project is financially successful, other similar projects will follow as night does day. In December 2018 the federal government approved up to eight helicopter trips for each of the thirty parties that Daniel Hackett plans to ferry to Lake Malbena every year. Add on the number of flights approved to service the 'standing camp', and you have about 260 flights each summer, rather more than the 120 flights that the Wilderness Society and others had been conservatively predicting. What's more, the Hodgman Government's TWWHA Management Plan 2016 allows for up to five helipads on the Central Plateau to service the tourism activities presently under its consideration. Simple arithmetic tells us that could lead to 1,300 chopper flights buzzing over the World Heritage Area each summer. Think about that!

So the Lake Malbena proposal, despite being presented by its proponent as 'small-in-scale', is of considerable consequence. And until a few weeks ago I had never been there. Clearly I had to go, if only to allow me to deal with any suggestions that my not having been there somehow diminished my right to hold a view on the subject.

As an aside, let me say that any such suggestions would, in my view, be specious nonsense. In fact, some of the most eloquent arguments against Hackett's proposal that I've come across in the media have been put by people too old or infirm to walk anywhere in the Western Lakes, but who would never in a million years fly in by helicopter – simply because they believe that to do so would be wrong.

\* \* \*

The weather in the few days leading up to Christmas 2018 looked good. A fellow fly-fisher who knows the Western Lakes like the back of his hand marked the route to Lake Malbena on my 1:25,000 Olive map, and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, which controls access through the Gowan Brae property, provided a key to the two locked gates you have to drive through to get to the start of the walk. Anyone can borrow this key (the Centre calls it 'the fishing key'), and all it costs is a \$20 returnable deposit.

I left home early on 22 December. To get to Gowan Brae you drive past Pine Tier Lagoon. Then it's a long, slow journey down a deteriorating 4WD track. The

two locks you have to deal with are very testing, somewhat like Chinese puzzles; small hands would definitely be an advantage. It's also quite easy to take a wrong turning. I did, and left my car on the wrong track nearly three kilometres from the southern end of Olive Lagoon. From the car, it was a scrub-bash of about two kilometres till I stumbled onto the 4WD track I should have been on. This led to a sign marking the boundary of the World Heritage Area.



There's something about such a marker. It clarifies the significance of the place you're about to enter. It's World Heritage; that's pretty important. And even though what you walk along after you've passed the sign continues to be a 4WD track (albeit a long-disused one), it's soon apparent that the nature of the landscape has changed. Olive Lagoon, alongside which you walk for about a kilometre, is clearly an area worthy of protection. It's also full of trout.



The markings on my map only gave me a rough idea of the route I was to take, but I found the turn-off to the walking track easily enough – it took me up a gentle grassy slope, heading east. Cairns quickly came into view. They led steeply upwards, the track gaining about 70m in half a kilometre. Then I lost the way, and found myself in scrub. After an uncomfortable slog, I came upon the place I was looking for: open grassland with a creek running through it. When that gave way to forest, the route forward wasn't obvious. I found more scrub and battled with that till I hit the saddle that the map told me I wanted. From there it was an easy half-kilometre amble down another grassy slope to a small lake just east of Mary Tarn: the camp site.



So far the walk had been much like a standard bushwalk. I had a destination I needed to reach, a rough idea of how to get there, and the usual sense of satisfaction once I'd arrived. But from now on, the experience would differ from bushwalking. I would have two and half days with no destinations, no routes I needed to follow. But I would have an objective: to find and catch trout – the wilderness fly-fishing experience.

But that's not to say that the walk in wasn't an integral part of that experience. The time taken to get to the campsite, the climb and the effort involved, the different types of vegetation passed, even getting lost, all contributed to a sense of separation from the civilised, technological world I normally inhabit. And I can't deny the fact that my being alone also helped me feel that I had arrived in the – for want of a better word – 'wilderness'. No way would I have felt the same if I'd been deposited there by helicopter. So what is the 'wilderness fly-fishing experience'? Well, perhaps strangely, it's not essentially about catching trout. Though it is about hunting trout. According to the Western Lakes expert who had advised me on this area, the little lake I was camped by was full of them, all weighing about 2½ lb. It was almost 4pm by the time I'd pitched my tent and assembled my rod. I scrutinised the lake. It was deep, dark and impenetrable. I saw no fish.

Then to my right, at the northern end of the lake, I heard a splash. The lake's width at that end is no more than forty metres. I looked. A trout swirled there. Then again, near some bushes very close in. This was too good to be true. I crept round until I was within casting range, staying well back from the bank. I noticed one or two black spinners in the air. The rapid swirling rises, the flash of the trout's back showing above the ripple, suggested that the spinners were what it was taking.

Among the flies in my box were two new black-spinner patterns: one had been given to me by the Western Lakes expert, accompanied by a strong recommendation to tie it on; the other was my own attempt at the pattern. I tied on the latter. As I was doing so there were more rises to left and right, all close to the short northern bank.

Perhaps my fly wasn't quite right. Perhaps the fish saw me, or maybe my rod or my line. Perhaps I was just plain clumsy. For whatever reason, no trout rose to my fly. And then, within half an hour, they stopped rising. Well, I said it was too good to be true. But it was an encouraging start.

I began to plan the next two days. There were a number of waters to cover, and I had to get to Lake Malbena. I studied the map.



There were a few hours left before it would get dark, and there were only about a hundred metres of open country between my little lake and the eastern shore of Mary Tarn. I vaguely recalled what Greg French had written about this lake in Trout Waters of Tasmania. His exact words, before me as I write, are: 'Never expect big bags – you can often circumnavigate the lake without spotting a single fish – but very good rises occur at times, especially near the inflow from Lake Nugetena'. Very well, I would walk to this inflow, polaroiding as I went. The evening was cloudy, windy, and cool, so I didn't anticipate that there would be much of a rise.

There wasn't. Nor, as I threaded my way up Mary Tarn's wooded eastern shore, did I spot a single fish. Admittedly, the water looked promising, especially near the inflow from Lake Nugetena. The inflow itself was wide and little more than a metre deep, offering much better polaroiding than Mary Tarn itself. I followed it north. I could easily scan the entire bottom despite the lack of sun. There was structure: rocks, fallen trees. But - no trout.

And then I was at Lake Nugetena. It is a large lake with a shoreline of about 4½ km and an area of nearly sixty hectares. I noticed that the southwestern shore was an intricate system of small inviting bays; they would provide useful shelter on windy days. Greg French's book, I vaguely recalled and can now confirm, describes the lake as 'a deep clearwater impounded by rocky, lightly wooded banks. Although the fishing can be very difficult, patient polaroiders ... have their share of success. Most fish weigh 1-2 kg and a few exceed 3 kg.'



Suddenly, on the far side of the outflow, up the bank a little way and about forty metres distant, was a rise, then a second, from the same fish. But my attempts to put a fly anywhere near it were futile. All I hooked was a bush.

I made a mental note to explore Lake Nugetena later. For now I figured that if I completed the circumnavigation of Mary Tarn, I would just about get back to camp with enough daylight remaining to prepare dinner. I found easy stepping-stones across the inflow, and open woodland around the tarn's western shore. There were also many rocks suitable for polaroiding. But as Greg's book warned might be the case, I didn't spot a single fish.

The following day I would walk to Lake Malbena and maybe south to Lake Ingrid. A vague route from my campsite, running south of Mary Tarn and Lake Loretta, then along a creek to the eastern shore of Malbena, was marked on my map.

\* \* \*

The walk along the southern shore of Mary Tarn is scrubby, south of Lake Loretta delightfully open. It being December, the wildflowers were in bloom: melaleuca, red waratahs, masses of white scoparia.



After the outflow from the southwestern corner of Lake Loretta, the landscape changes. It is less than 1.5 km from there to Lake Malbena, but the scrub is thick, and – once again – I didn't follow the route as meticulously as I should have. Eventually, though, I emerged on a coral-fern plain that led up to a rocky outcrop. The map below shows my GPS track. I've positioned a waypoint at 442409E 5355287N, these being the coordinates given by Daniel Hackett in his Parks and Wildlife Service 'Reserve Activity Assessment' (RAA) application, for the spot where his helipad would be sited.



As you can see, it's bang on the route I walked. Also, along a line pretty much coinciding with my route, Hackett proposes to build a track leading to an 'informal boat mooring' close to where I reached the lake. The track would lead from the helipad up the coral-fern plain, over the rocky outcrop and down through light forest to the shore. The plan below shows the proposed route marked in yellow.



The photo below shows the stretch of water across which Hackett's dinghies would ferry his clients to the Halls Island luxury camp. As most of you will know, the Hodgman Government has granted Hackett a forty-year lease on the whole of Halls Island, effectively privatising almost ten hectares of the World Heritage Area.



I had thought of swimming to the island if for no other reason than that, if Hackett gets his way, it will soon be out-of-bounds to me. Unless, that is, I either write to him begging to be one of the sixty 'members of the public' he's apparently going to allow to go there each year, or I become one of his clients. Unsurprisingly,

neither of these options appeals. Despite this, I decided against swimming.

A little later, though, when I came across an inflatable raft partly concealed under a pile of rocks, I was tempted to pull it out, blow it up and put it to the test. But before I'd had time to lift a single rock, visions of foundering mid-way across and a watery grave persuaded me otherwise. I left the raft safely buried.



Its presence, though, led me to reflect on the human history of the area. The raft had been put there by humans and used by humans, possibly for decades. And on the island itself stands the hut built by Reg Hall in 1956. I also came across (almost tripped over) a single strand of rusty barbed wire dating, I assume, from the mid-twentieth century.



Daniel Hackett makes much of the human history of the Lake Malbena area. In the Mercury on 30 April 2018, he wrote: 'The area around Halls Island is known as wilderness, indicating it is free of human stories, human use, of even human love of the bush. Free from Tasmanian cultural stories. The facts could not be further from the truth. For this reason, I don't like the use of the term wilderness. The term "wild places" seems more apt for areas such as Halls Island where the naturalness has been altered by use, and in which built-history and human stories exist'. Strangely enough, I find myself agreeing with some of this. Having earned my living as a historian for the past twenty years, I don't seek to deny the human stories of anywhere; in fact, it's my job to tell them. Moreover, I'm absolutely opposed to the obliteration of historical traces left by humans in the World Heritage Area, as advocated by some ultra-Greens. But despite my acknowledgement of the human history of the TWWHA, I have no problem with the

term 'wilderness' to describe much of it. For when I stand on top of one of its many mountains and in every direction see no trace of anything created by humans – no pylons, no roads, no clear-felled areas, no helicopters (!), only a soaring, majestic natural landscape – I find the word 'wilderness' entirely appropriate for what I see.

Nevertheless, I accept that there is a cultural heritage presence around Lake Malbena; and Hackett plans to exploit this for the benefit of his clients. For example, he intends to take them on a walk to a possible Aboriginal petroglyph to the west of Mary Tarn. (Interestingly, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is resolutely opposed, not just to Daniel Hackett interpreting their heritage for them, but to his entire project!) Hackett also states in his RAA application that he plans to take his clients to 'archaeological cultural sites (chimney stack and horse paddock on southern side of Lake Loretta)'. No doubt such a remnant so far from civilisation would be interesting, perhaps even poignant. And undoubtedly Reg Hall's hut – which has been viewed and appreciated by numerous visitors over the years – has heritage significance. So, to a lesser extent, I suppose, has a strand of rusty barbed wire.

But despite all this, Hackett's Mercury article could scarcely be more disingenuous. What it slyly attempts to persuade its readers is that – because there has been a human presence in the Lake Malbena area over many years, and because a few traces of that presence remain – it's OK to install a helipad, walking tracks, steel and timber luxury cabins masquerading as a 'standing camp', and bloody helicopters! Hopefully, none of his readers has been taken in by this piffle!

\* \* \*

As my GPS route indicates, I walked around a fair bit of the western and southern shores of Lake Malbena. My plan was to get to Lake Ingrid and fish it. According to Greg French's book, it's not especially deep, and it's polaroidable. I fought my way through scrub from Lake Malbena to diminutive Lake Joan, about a kilometre north of Ingrid. Joan is a pretty lake, and I'm sure it holds trout. But the thick bush surrounding the water drove me back.



I tried to push on to Lake Ingrid, but soon realised that attempting to force my way through a mass of melaleuca with an assembled fly rod in hand was pretty silly. I also wondered how Hackett's clients would cope in the challenging bush around Lake Malbena. Somehow, I don't see American merchant bankers and corporate lawyers fighting their way through the thick Tasmanian scrub, tentatively inserting their Sages and Orvises between the tangled branches. I think it inevitable that Hackett would have to build tracks for his clients, an 'add-on' to his proposal which the Hodgman Government would no doubt willingly approve if asked to do so.

On the way back from Lake Malbena, I easily found the cairned route to Lake Loretta and wondered why I'd missed it so completely on the way out. It was lunchtime, and so far that day I hadn't wet a line. According to Greg French, Loretta 'holds plenty of brown trout, most of which weigh 0.5 - 1.3 kg'. I spent the afternoon prospected its western and southern shores with a dry fly. But not a fish, a rise or an insect did I see.

I got back to the camp lake by 4pm. Again the fish there were taking spinners. In fact, the afternoon was a replica of the day before – including, unfortunately, my catch rate. I covered several trout and used a number of different flies. Not a fish showed the remotest interest in anything I offered. Then at 4.30pm the rise stopped. I had one day left to catch a fish, and my plan was to circumnavigate Lake Nugetena.

\* \* \*

Christmas Eve was a beautiful, warm, blue-sky day, but very windy. The route I found from my campsite to the southern shore of Lake Nugetena was refreshingly scrub-free. Greg French describes the lake's banks as 'lightly wooded'. Hmmm... Advice to anyone contemplating a promenade around Lake Nugetena: don't do it with an assembled fly rod in your hand!



It took me six hours to get round the lake. It is attractive, no doubt about it. And for much of the eastern bank, you can avoid the scrub. But for long stretches of shoreline, casting is a challenge, with rocks and bushes hampering access. There are a few fishable places though. For example, there's an island

a little over half-way up the eastern shore. This is a terrific area, with drop-offs, overhangs and lots of submerged rocks. Yet there were no fish or insects to be seen there, and nothing rose to my fly.

There's also very good wade-polaroiding running from the northern end of the lake for some way down the western shore. In fact, this section of bank is so scrubby that in places wading is the only way to progress. But again I saw no fish along the flats, and nothing showed any interest in the flies I cast over the drop-off.

The system of bays and inlets at the south-western corner of the lake also turned out to be, as I'd predicted, highly fishable – but again devoid of fish. Perhaps it was because of the wind, which must at times have reached 40kph; perhaps the full moon was to blame. Certainly, there was nothing on the surface of the water to get the fish excited. As I trudged back to my tent, I realised that the small lake that it stood next to represented my only hope of avoiding a fishless trip.

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I claimed at the start of this essay that I believed fishing in the Tasmanian wilderness to be at the heart of the Lake Malbena question. I realise that I haven't yet substantiated this claim. In the final paragraphs, I'll try to do so.

I think that it's the type of fishing that holds the key, and the key word is 'hunting'. I realise that very little of the fishing that I've described in this essay so far could be defined as 'hunting'. Hunters of fish seek a quarry; having found it they stalk it, and then – taking great care not to scare it – they try to tempt and catch it. The process can be arduous but, in my view, it's the most satisfying type of fishing there is.

'But can't you do that kind of fishing almost anywhere?', some of you may be asking. 'Why does it have to be done in the wilderness? Surely, you can polaroid trout and cast to rising or tailing fish all over the place, can't you?' And those techniques could all be described as 'hunting', couldn't they?

These are all good questions. The answer to them, I think, lies in the relationship between hunter and hunted. In the Western Lakes wilderness fishery, you hunt a trout in what has become its own environment: feral creature though it is, it has bred there and spread there, and there it has established its gene pool. You make a physical effort to get there. You live in what is effectively its environment for days on end. You fish for it on its terms. Often, your search may take you to many lakes in a single day. Generally, you are scanning the water for fish, not just flogging or prospecting. And even when you're part of a group that meets up at camp in the evenings, you often fish alone all day. In essence, you become absolutely locked into the process of hunting fish for

the whole time that you're in the wilderness. And if you stop to think about it, being there – especially if you're alone – is not without its dangers.

In fact, I don't think it's too much of a stretch to claim that the pursuit is atavistic. To some degree, all fishing is, I suppose, but no type replicates the fishing or hunting undertaken by primitive peoples as closely as does wilderness fishing. The fact that generally few fish are caught, and sometimes none at all, underscores the similarity.

Some may find the above theory fanciful. I obviously don't. And I'm damned sure that the presence of helicopters, boardwalks and luxury lodges would destroy the Western Lakes wilderness fish-hunting experience for most of the anglers who practise it, just as much as it would for me.

Enough polemic; back to fishing. Yet there is a link: the kind of fishing I practised at the camp lake on my final evening was more akin to fish-hunting than any I'd carried out on the trip so far.

Among the fish that had risen on both previous evenings was one that had been close to a small bush hanging over the water's north-eastern corner. I'd already cast to it several times without response. I considered what I might have been doing wrong. If my tippet stood out too much, maybe I should tie on a lighter one. I did, adding about a metre of 5X to the 4X that had previously led directly to the fly. Of the flies themselves, I'd tried several. I was sure that this fish was taking black spinners, and I'd experimented with a few patterns. The pattern that the Western Lakes expert had given me came with a strong recommendation. But I hadn't tied it on, only my version of it. I duly attached the original, despite thinking that mine looked neater.

It was still bright at 4pm, and the north-westerly was still howling. I skirted the lake well back from the shore and fell to my knees. No, I wasn't getting ready to pray; I was preparing to fish. However, nothing was rising; though, if the trout were following their usual pattern, they would start soon. I shuffled into a position a little short of where I needed to be, and experimented with a few casts. I wanted to find an angle and a distance that would allow the fly to drift naturally towards the bush, driven by the strong wind. It took a few attempts before I was satisfied. Then I moved closer.

If the fish in this lake were as touchy as I thought they were, I would only have one shot. I sent out the fly. Almost perfect. I watched it as it drifted in the ripple, perhaps a little too far on my side of the bush, but I let it travel on. Slowly, slowly. No, clearly nothing would happen. The trip would be fishless ...

Then there was a neat, confident take. Luckily, the surprise prevented me from striking too soon. And when I raised my rod, the fish was firmly hooked. It

was a strong fish and fought well. But it didn't even reach the 2½ lbs estimated for the average size of trout in this lake. It was barely over two. Still, it was nicely marked and in good condition: a typical Western Lakes trout. I returned it safely to the water. I had hunted my wilderness trout over two days, and I'd finally caught it!

Ironically, the porcupine-hackled black spinner that deceived the fish was a fly designed by Daniel Hackett. Why, oh, why has this talented fly-tyer, fly-fisher, guide and angling writer embraced the lunacy of the Lake Malbena proposal? Some say that he was sooled onto it by the old guard of Tasmania's tourism industry: men who don't fish, who don't give a damn about fishing or the fishery; men governed solely by money and their lust for it. I wouldn't know. I don't even care. I just want it stopped!

\* \* \*

On Christmas Day I walked out. I took great care with my navigation, making sure that I followed the correct track every time I arrived at an apparent fork. I way-marked almost every cairn I saw. As a result, my walk to Olive Lagoon was entirely scrub free.

From Olive Lagoon I followed the 4WD track all the way to where my scrub-bash had intersected it on the walk in. And I continued to follow the 4WD track from there, confident that it would eventually lead to my car, even though I'd parked it on a different track.

The 4WD track I now followed was, I noticed, much rougher than the one I'd driven up on the way in. This one was littered with rocks too big for my Subaru to cope with. There was also a fallen tree blocking the track about two kilometres from the World Heritage Area boundary.

As it happened, I found my car easily. The walk out had taken about three hours, but I'd spent a long time making sure of my route, entering waymarks and taking photos. I reckon I could walk it next time in two-and-a-half hours, maybe two.

And I want to go back in again before the helicopters start, if they start. I'll also certainly go back in if it becomes necessary to mount a blockade. What I'd really like, though, is for someone to drive me all the way to the TWWHA boundary, someone with a 4WD more robust than mine. And a chainsaw. Any offers?

**DAVID YOUNG**

## Fly Tying on the WWW

*The World Wide Web is a treasure trove of information and tips for the fly tyer. YouTube in particular reveals a staggering number of responses to the most basic search. In this section of The Vice the focus will be on some interesting tyers and techniques. If you have any favourites that you think should be shared with our members please send them in.*

The season for crickets and grasshoppers is rapidly approaching. Some of the fish caught on both Penstock and Pine recently had grasshoppers and crickets inside them. So to help you get going I have shamelessly stolen this pattern from Fly Tying Nation – The EA Foam Cricket

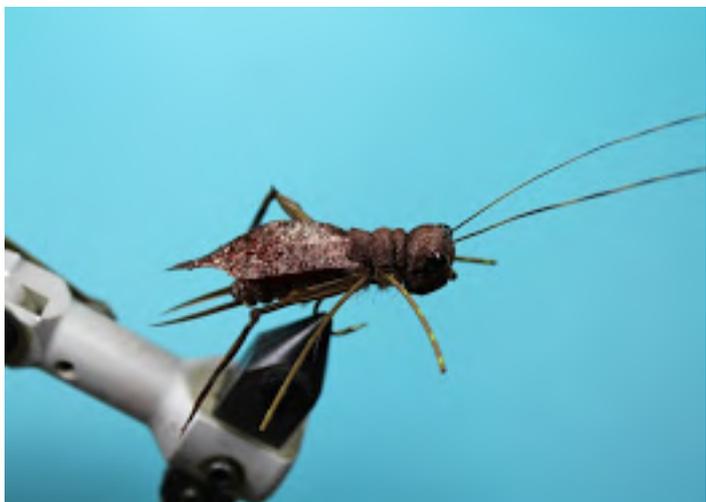
Website for the original article is

<http://dronsworld.blogspot.com/2013/09/ea-foam-cricket.html?m=1>



**Extended Abdomen Foam Cricket**





Looks like the Cricket month is on its way...

**Material:**

- Pheasant tail fiber for Antenna and knob legs
- Close cell foam - Black, Brown, Tan or Yellow
- Tape Wing or Hen Saddle ( cemented ) as Wings
- Hook - TMC 2302 size 6
- Goose biots for tail
- Barred rubber legs
- Markers

**Step by step tying instructions:**



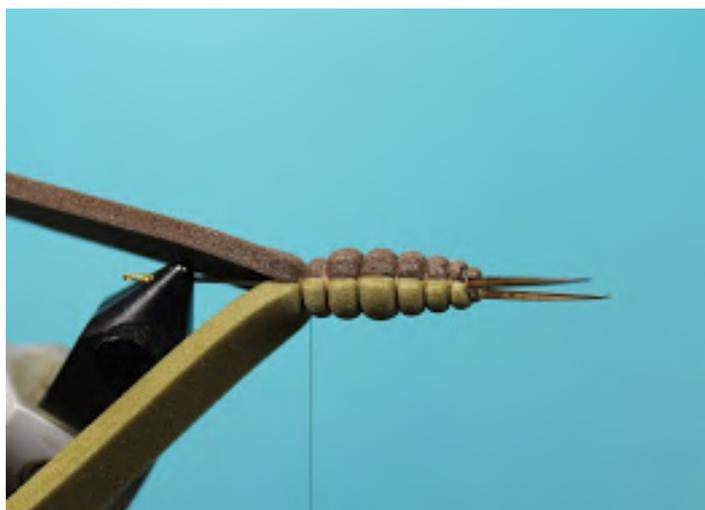
Cut 2 pcs of 2mm or 3mm thick close cell foam ( depend on the size of cricket you are tying )



Tie in the foam as the taper for the abdomen



Tie in the Goose biot, fold over the foam, tie down as the 1st segment of the abdomen



Do a few segment, and tie down at the last... whip finish



Prepare the hook, very important to do a thread base to the hook shank, tie down the abdomen portion



Tie in the legs



Tie down the foam... with the proper thread base, the foam will not spin around



Continue tying the foam...



Take about 8-10 Pheasant tail, knot the fiber to form the legs



Use a toothpick, make a hole on the foam



Fold the foam over the hook eye



Fold the foam over; tie down the lower portion in a figure 8 to create the mouth portion of the cricket (to secure the foam)



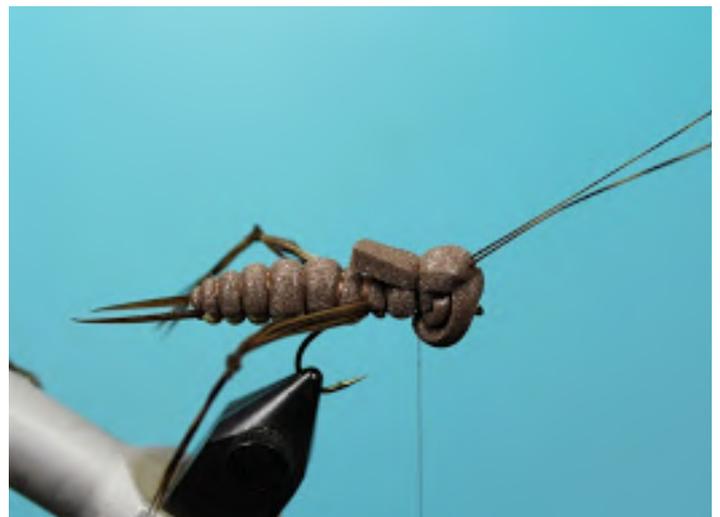
Tie down



Tie on the foam, about same level with the abdomen



Do another hole with the toothpick



Use needle to bring in a pair of Pheasant tail fiber as the antenna, tie down the foam



Trim the head



Dub in some dubbing



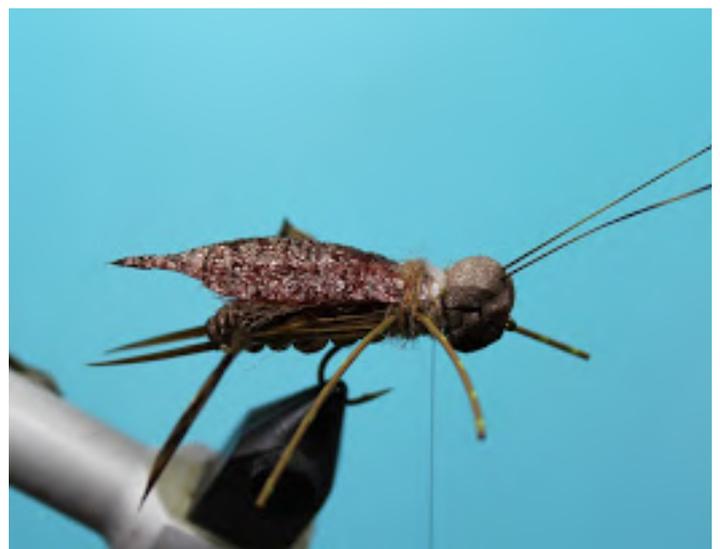
Tie in the rubber legs



Tie in some floating yarn as inner wing (Optional)



Color the foam (Optional)



Tie in the foam wing



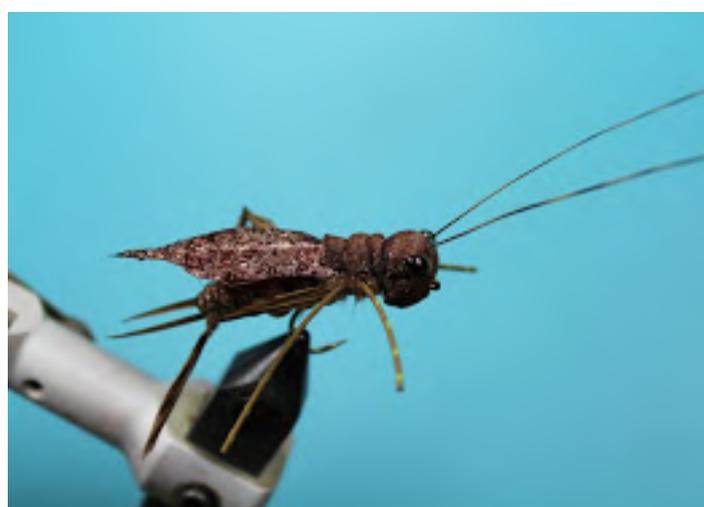
Tie in another foam for thorax



Color the cricket ( Optional )



Tie down the foam



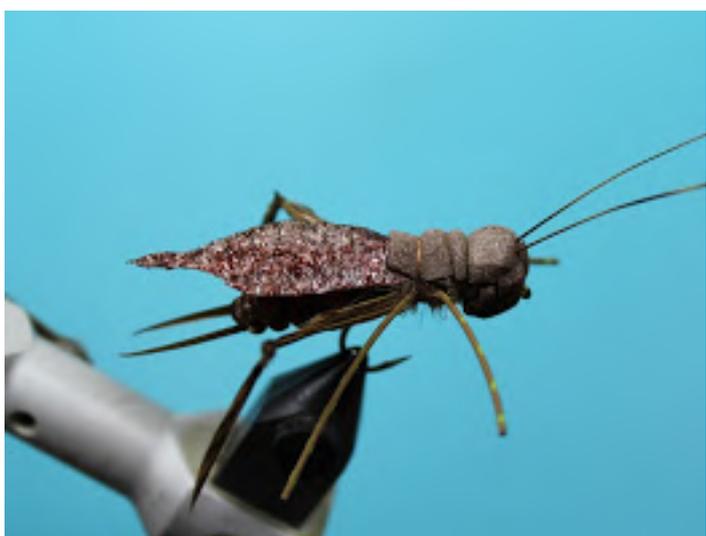
Last step... drop the Loon Hard Head as eye... and...

Take it to the fish....

Again that website:

<http://dronsworld.blogspot.com/2013/09/ea-foam-cricket.html?m=1>

DM



Trim the foam

## Penstock Weekend 2019



It was with some trepidation that I drove up to Penstock for the club weekend. I hadn't been up to the lakes since just after Christmas and the news was full of the horrors that the bushfire season had unleashed upon us. I imagined that place to be a smouldering blackened ruin and those thoughts were not challenged by the first glimpse of damage that I passed about 15 km out of Bothwell. After that bit however the drive seemed quite normal. I reached the Penstock turnoff, marveled at the width and smoothness of the road in and managed to avoid being flattened by the trucks that powered past me.

On arriving in the exclusive part of Penstock, the bit where all the private shacks are it was as if nothing had happened. You could see the burnt trees on the other side of the lake but only around the boat ramp (which was closed due to dangerous trees). I put down the drivers side window to chat with club legend Tim Urbanc and watched as a small jassid landed on my arm – a very promising beginning to the trip!



The deal is to fish wherever you wanted to on each of the three days, provide your own meal on the Friday night BBQ and then attend the 'long table' on Saturday night at 5.30, dress casual. It all sounded brilliant and it was!

The organisers, Malcolm Crosse, Andrew Reed, Mark 'Aspro' Aspinall and Steve 'S' Butler were fantastic. They had allocated a shack for all attendees, organised to have gates left open and showed people where to go and what to use on the lake. I was told that anything claret would work and they were right!

I managed 7 fish and lost 5 on the Friday and they all took a Claret Dun (Laurie Matcham's tie) and were in exceptional condition. Saturday brought me back down to earth with only one fish to show from around 8 hours of fishing – still on the claret dun though. Sunday was a bit better with 2 nice fish in a couple of hours - this time on Aspro's suggested claret possum emerger.



The long table dinner was exceptional with a 3-course meal prepared and conceived by Steve Butler with a welcome addition of blackberry pie from Chris Berndt. Steve's culinary ability, with assistance from Aspro and others, to cater for 20 plus people just using a barbecue and Malcolm's kitchen facilities was superb. The pairing of peaches and prosciutto for example was stunning!

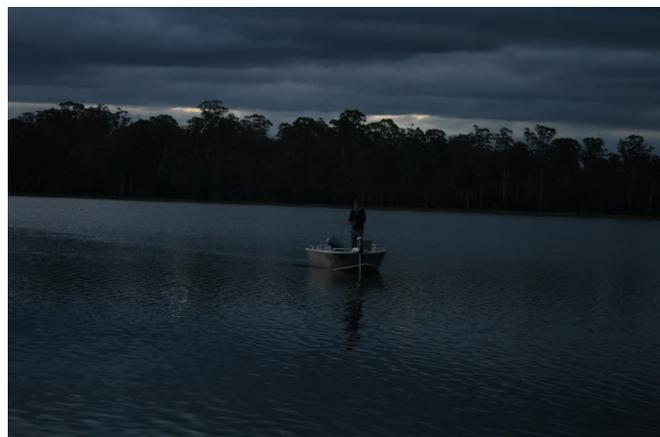


With a table full of fine food and great wine sourced by our beloved president it was left up to the lucky attendees to fill the evening with chat and humour, a challenge which was accepted with great verve! The evening ended with a speech from the English fishing

writer and great friend of Malcolm's, Martin Cottis, and his stories were very well received by all.



The fishing was generally good for the weekend and life members Macca and Delly regaled us with how successful they were at Little Pine with wonderful fish coming to hand, seemingly at will. It's the way they do it I guess.



Many thanks to Malcolm and all the organisers for their efforts in making the Penstock weekend one of the main events on the Club's calendar!



DM

## Advice Tips and Tricks

*Gadgets, gear and good ideas are always close to the surface whenever fly tyers get together. This section of The Vice features recommendations, quick reviews and tips to make the fishing experience even richer. Please feel free to send in any tips you might like to share.*

As mentioned in the previous article the fish on both Penstock and Pine are loving claret coloured flies and possum fur seems to be the go-to material.

Using possum fur as a dubbing and as a wing material has been standard for many years and it seems to be one of the most versatile and plentiful materials available. You can buy it ready made and packaged from our dear friends at the Fishing Connection but if you want to make your own then there are a few easy ways to do it.

### Dubbing

To make your own possum dubbing you can use an electric coffee grinder, preferably purchased specifically rather than pinching the one from the kitchen. Simply cut off the amount of possum fur, stick it in the grinder, give it a pulse and you've got your dubbing. If you are lucky enough to have attended some of Macca and Delly's special dying demonstrations you will have enough samples of dyed fur to last a lifetime and this can be mixed and matched to suit whatever colour your heart desires!

This is Laurie's tie of the claret dun. I used some basic Veniards claret mixed with a bit of red.

### Matcham's Claret Dun



Hook: Up-eye dry size 12 or 14  
Mustad Special Sproat  
Thread: Black 8/0  
Tail: Brown

cock tied same size as the body

Body: Claret possum (or seals fur)

Hackle: Ginger cock and Dark Chocolate Partridge trimmed to size

### Method:

Tie in the tail and dub on the body forming a carrot shape.

Wind on the brown cock hackle and tie it off.

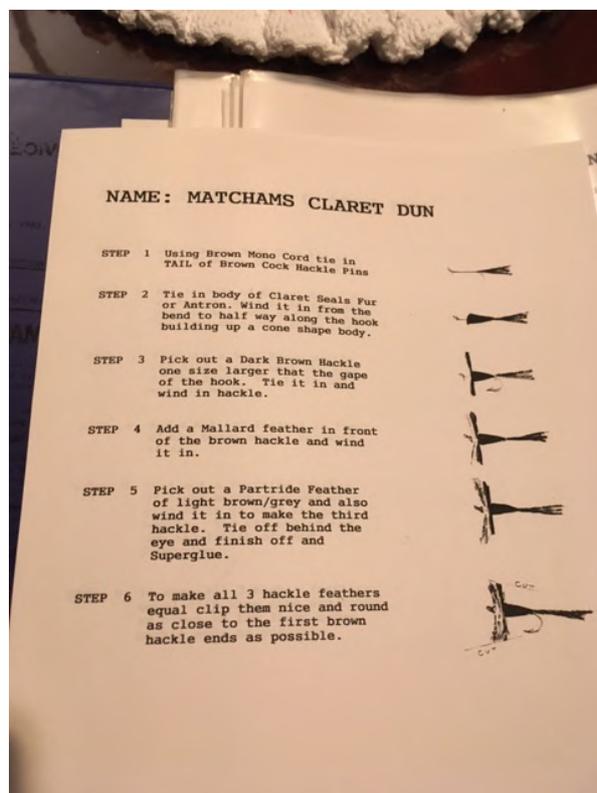
Wind through the Partridge hackle – about 3-4 turns.

Tie off and trim the partridge to the same length as the cock hackle.

You can trim the bottom of the hackle into a V shape or even flat to help it sit lower in the film.

Many thanks to Laurie Matcham for providing the pics and extra details.

DM



## 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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## For payments to the club

BSB: 807 007

Account No: 12130456

Name: Tasmanian Fly Tyers Club Inc

Then email the details to

Andrew Blackwood: [andrew.blackwood1@bigpond.com](mailto:andrew.blackwood1@bigpond.com)

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

## Club Website



*Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc*

*Established in 1956, this club aims to encourage the arts of fly tying and fly fishing*



<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>