



The Vice



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.

Volume 16 , Issue 18 Summer 2022

Inside: Vale Bill Beck, Boat Boxes, Pedder *and even more Pedder...*

Cover Shot – The Treasure at Pedder

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<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

President's Report

Time has flown since my last report. We have had our Christmas drinks in December well attended by 35 Members. It was a great opportunity to catch up with fly fishing friends. This coincided with the Tasmanian borders opening and that has had a marked impact on the Club.

The average age of Club members is about 63 and that makes for a high-risk group of people. Unfortunately, the Dinner and General meeting in the Central Highlands in January and the famous Penstock Weekend were both cancelled to protect members. This was a very difficult decision for the Committee, as we wanted to keep members safe as well as encourage people to remain active. We did see a reduction in numbers for the events as some members chose to self-isolate to decrease their personal risk.

I strongly encourage you to keep in contact with friends both old and new to maintain your sense of wellbeing. Many members continue to fish with each other and are avoiding large gatherings. I would like to see all those drawn in the John Fowler Trophy to get fishing, I had a beautiful day on the Tyenna River with Pete Murphy a few weeks back. If you have fished this event, please enter your scores on the website.

There is a working bee at the Sorell shack on 12th and 13th March to do some firewood and general clean up. Please see the Club's calendar or speak with Tony Able for details. Apparently, there will be some fishing in Lake Crescent.

Our intrepid Vice President, David Travalia, is leading a walking trip to Lee's Paddock. If this sounds like a trip for you, please register on the Club's website. Membership continues to be fully subscribed, although the Club recently lost the famous (or is that infamous) Bill Beck. He had a long and colourful association with the club and I would like to thank Tony Dell for providing his story for all the Club to enjoy in this issue of the Vice.

The Club also welcomed new member Tom Woolley, who at 28 (Proposed Anna Bellette, seconded by Norm Cribbin) He usually fishes Arthurs and Woods and already knows Martin Exel and Peter Rasmussen. If you see him, please introduce yourself, chances are he's the young looking one!

As mentioned in my last report a member's questionnaire is almost ready. It will provide the Committee with a good idea of what you are all

thinking. It will be an emailed Word document that you can edit and return. If you have any trouble with this process, please give me a call and we will sort it out for you.

Enjoy the remaining warm days of the trout season. Tight Lines.

Cheers Andrew.



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

This time the voucher goes to Martin Exel for his magnificent account of his trip to Lake Pedder.

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

Send your stories to 55dmiller@gmail.com

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Editorial

This edition has been a challenge in that some of the major events such as the Penstock Weekend were canceled due to the dreaded 'Rona'. Thanks to Martin Exel and Tony Dell for sending in their contributions at short notice.

The Treasure and I went to Pedder and found fish and experienced a wonderful fishery that is only a couple of hours from Hobart. There are squillions of fish out there longing for flies to be thrown at them. There are also march flies...

Just after I had written up our trip to Pedder, Martin Exel sent in an amazing article about his trip up to Pedder. We fished different areas and caught seriously different numbers of fish. (Martin won hands down!) It should whet your appetite for visiting this remarkable water.

Being organised in the boat is important for a good days fishing. You need to be able to find what you want and what you need easily and quickly. The boat box is one way of doing this, especially for those who believe they need an extraordinary number of flies for a basic trip where, realistically, two or three patterns would suffice. But, where's the fun and obsession in that!

The English, the Scots and the Irish seem to have a monopoly on inventing wet flies with bizarre names and they all work, to some degree in Tasmania. We should invent our own. Check out the basic structure of the wet fly article, invent your own and send it in to The Vice and potentially receive fabulous prizes!*

*undying respect from the Editor is indeed (and legally) a fabulous prize.

DM



February fishing at Lake Pedder

- March flies, mozzies, and wind lanes

The trout slid along just under the surface, heading directly for the fly. We both peered intently, held our breath at the same time, and watched the mouth open, the move of the head to 'that' angle...and then the turn as it slid away, having totally rejected the fly! Damn!

WTF? It's Lake Pedder (in Huon Inlet for those who know the Lake) in the middle of nowhere, with trout which probably have never seen a fly. It might not have been a perfect imitation, but how could it have rejected a #14 Royal Wulff? It was perfectly presented. It looked so tasty. Oh well, it must have been a weird fish. Onto the next riser – another beautiful cast, perfect presentation (Michael was on point, not me, LOL!) and rejection again. Not good.

I hastily tied on a #16 for my shot, in the hope it was just that 'size mattered'. Surely they'll eat this, given it's worked so many times before for me at Lake Pedder? A few minutes later, not quite so perfect a cast and presentation, and we both watch as *exactly the same thing* happens to me. Another refusal. Bloody hell, these fish are picky.

Maybe not unexpected, as we're drifting around in the middle of 'caenis soup', with my sounder recording water temperatures at a balmy 26 degrees Celsius. Better match the hatch, or beware those refusals will keep coming! The fact trout are moving on the surface at all is a bit of a miracle, we reckon. And that they are fussy – well, that's fishing aye!



Caenis 'soup' around the engine!

We're at the south end of Lake Pedder – camped at Scott's Peak and on the water at daybreak to see what action we can find with flies. I'd been fishing with another great mate (Laurie) over the Australia Day (extended long weekend) competition, mainly with lures, and found some great spots for fly fishing. While it was tough during the hot daytimes, we hopped off the water each day for a 'rest' for several hours. Daily temperature maximums of 32, 30, 29, and 27 ensured it was too hot for us!

Another day, another story, about how many March flies didn't realise it was January – they were in plague (dare I say it, pandemic) proportions at all the camping grounds, and up at Strathgordon. Thankfully, they disappeared on dark – just in time for the mozzies to zone in on the unsuspecting camper. Not much fun in a swag, I can assure you. The best place was on the water, where they kept a healthy distance away from us. Phew.

Back to the fishing. In January, the Return to Pedder event is a 'catch and keep' competition with part of the aim to help in a very small way to reduce the (over) population of fish in the lake. Laurie and I weighed in 87 fish over four days, and released about another 20. And missed many more. But only a few of those were on fly, and this trip was to make amends!

Pedder has suffered the fate of too many fish in the lake and not enough feed, with the average sizes dropping away significantly from the days of double-figure behemoths. Recent years have seen the average size creeping up again (at least in my catches) and many fish are now in a respectable size range of 700 g to 1 kilo whole weight. Laurie won the prize for 'largest fish by a veteran' (we're both over the hill these days) which was over 1kg gilled and gutted, although it started as a respectable 1.5 kilo specimen.



A lovely Lake Pedder fish – not many get to this size these days!

Back to the fishing in February. It was hot - Really hot. It was also too calm, by far. The wind lanes were massive, and the caenis were hatching everywhere, with fish dotted amongst them, which we could see when their tails or fins, broke the surface.

We chased the fish with an electric motor from one end of the bay to the other, and around islands. Isn't it amazing how, as you sneak up on a rising trout in a wind lane, it will steadily move away from you at the same speed as the electric motor is going? And then, just as you get close enough for a decent cast, they drop out of sight. Bugger!! Maybe it's something that only happens to me, but boy it's frustrating!

Fortunately, I'd brought along my secret weapon – Michael, an all-round great bloke who, in a previous life, was a guide with Peter Hayes and a comp fly fisher in the UK. He also had some great flies, which we'd tried in past trips to Pedder. In fact, we'd worked out previously that Pedder trout only liked dries that were 'static' and successfully fished three fly rigs when there was nothing moving on the surface. Let it sit for a fifteen or twenty count, then pick up and move again. And yep, we were getting many on the Royal Wulff then, too. Not this time.

Out come the alternative flies! The first 'miracle' fly turned out to be one we reckon imitated the honey bees from the commercial hives seeking Leatherwood, that surround the southern part of Lake Pedder. The bees were on the surface every now and then. But, for whatever reason, the trout snorted the (Fulling Mill) Sedgehog first cast. No hesitation. Hard to see on the water, and not good at floating after each fish, but successful. So (after both having caught fish on the same pattern) we kept trying others. Most successful for this trip (and previous ones) was another from Fulling Mill - the daddy long legs. And that keeps floating over and over.... perfect! So good that I haven't got one left, to take a photo of!



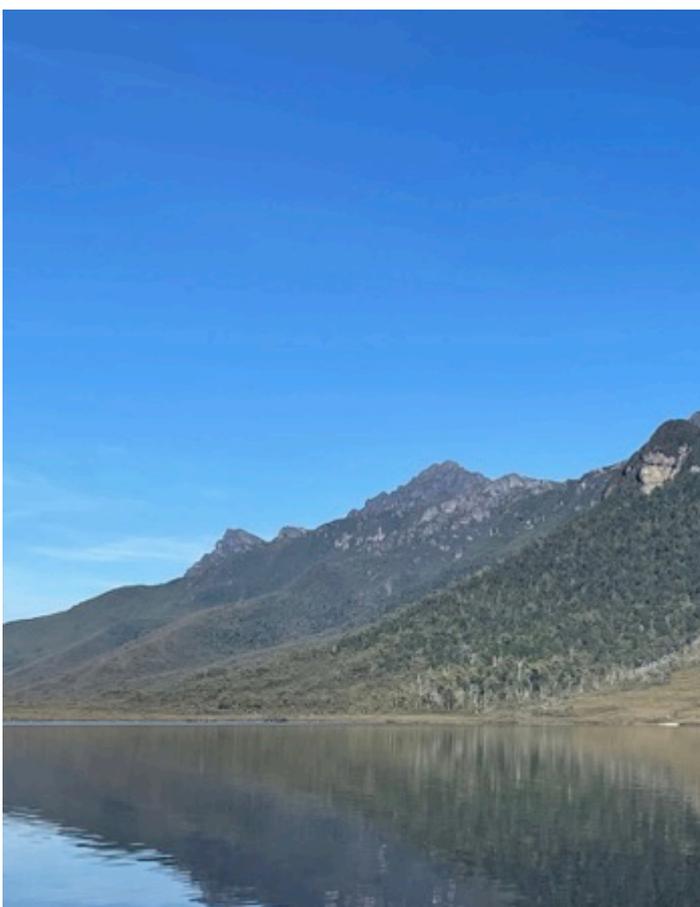
Three that did the trick on the day.....Sedgehog, skinny damsel, hot rod parachute

We spotted the occasional dun drifting in the soup, too. Time to try out a "Hot rod parachute" (one of 'Stu's superior flies' from NZ). That went down a treat, and I started to claw back some self-respect, as opposed to just watching Michael clean up fish all around me. Ahh, it's not a competition though, right?! Hmm...easy to say if you're the one catching all the fish!

The wind lanes (what few there were in the dead-calm water) proved a load of fun, but couldn't sustain a full day of fishing. Time to move, and we headed to a spot known as 'Gorilla Head', which is where the damsels love to dry out on twigs, and hover around in the shallows. That action tends to start around lunchtime, once the damsels get active, and can last for hours.



Gorilla head – easy to see how it got its name!



A tough day to be fishing – but perseverance pays...

For the first time, after years of trying, I finally caught a trout on a damselfly imitation (a #12 blue skinny damselfly from Stu's flies) in that dead calm water, on a totally bright clear day. When there's a breeze (not this day!) I've had loads of fun 'dapping' and skipping

the skinny damselflies across the surface, where they look excellent. Never caught a fish doing it, but wow they look great. Sigh.

Instead, today I looked for fish doing full body leaps to grab damselflies mid-air, and slapped the fly down (gentle placement of a fly has never been my strong point!) in the hope they'd see it and mistake it for a 'real thing'. It was so nice to finally connect to a part blind, suicidal trout, and I can now retire those flies to the corner of my box as one of the 'these flies look really nice, but hardly ever catch a fish' spots (I've got a LOT of flies in that spot!).

Aside from that one crazy fish though, we had zero success with 'static dries' drifting them around – every now and then we'd get a fly on the nose of a damselfly chaser, and that'd work. Then we started fishing with two dry flies and using the 'roly-poly' retrieve. You guessed it – in total opposite to our previous experience, they happily smashed moving dries on a calm day. Go figure. Michael had one of those 'submarine' chasers which went for at least 20 feet behind the flies...magic to watch.

We got a few more with moving dries and damselfly feeders in the shallows, even though we both had extended times retying tippets following the inevitable interface between 'sunken stick and acrobat trout'. The key was to be flexible. When it got too hot, and things slowed down even for the damselfly leapers and moving fly munchers, I pulled out the lure fishing gear. Rather than stripping wets, we cast lures around in the shallows and managed to add a few to the tally (the fish seemed to be sitting between 1.2 and 2.5 metres of water, so perhaps there was a thermocline at that 1.2 metre depth, which the fish wisely sat underneath?).

As mentioned, fly fishing is tough for wets in Pedder as there are a lot of drowned timbers, but we're keen to give nymphs a go, or some of the smaller wets perhaps. Having three wet fly rigs would be a serious challenge in almost every spot I can think of. A guru of the wind lanes at Pedder, and incredibly good fisherman (not to mention creating the legendary 'Cubit Mud-eye' fly) Leon Cubit used to fish at McPartlan Canal area where I was fortunate enough to meet him. Leon would be on the water before dawn, and use a torch to find the wind lanes. Then he'd drift around and listen for a rise and cast a gold bead-head nymph in front of the fish. Pause to let the fly sink a bit, and strip it back flat out....worked time after time!

In Pedder, the fish have the option of eating yabbies too, which help keep the fish healthy, the flesh a deep red colour, and make up for the lack of larger insects as feed. The trout ate out the Pedder galaxias years back (the galaxias now only survive in a small dam near Strathgordon and Lake Oberon in the Western Arthurs, where they were moved to prevent them going extinct). A damn shame, but gives me just cause for 'payback'!

In keeping with my payback theory for the galaxias, I kept eight fish from about 37 we landed in that day and a half "between us". That's my way of saying Michael landed loads more than me, but we both kinda lost count. The vast majority of those were on fly. I smoked six of them – you can see from the photo of them draining before smoking, that they're healthy solid fish.



Revenge of the Pedder Galaxias – about to be smoked (several with trimmed tails to fit in smoker)

For those tempted to head up there next fine day, please recognise that Lake Pedder is a huge body of water, really easy to get 'lost' on, and can flip from dead calm to the meanest bit of water you don't want to be out on, in a very short period of time. But once you know the place, and understand how fickle it can be, it is a magnificent part of the world. There are virtually no other anglers on the water. In the six days of fishing I've talked about here, in total I saw three other boats - And then only for a short period of time. I've seen more kayakers and snakes than fishers. Amazing.

If you don't like march flies and mozzies, the Pedder Wilderness Lodge at Strathgordon (ph 6280 1166) is exceptionally well set up these days; has great food and bar facilities; and renovated accommodation. Fuel, ice, even Wi-Fi are all available too. It's not a cheap place to stay, but the luxury of it can be awesome, particularly after a tough day of fishing.

I've been asked to organise a Fly Tyers trip to Pedder, and I'll do that (may have to be next season unfortunately). Meantime, tight lines wherever you're fishing!

Martin Exel

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.

Picture the scene. Trout are rising but are not taking anything you have thrown at them. They are obviously taking a very specific fly. It is up to you to work out which one it is. You try numerous patterns until finally you solve the problem. You land a fish and are happy. You return home and put away your gear and regale anyone who will listen of your success.

However...

Your fly box now contains wet flies. Moisture is building and telltale signs of rust are beginning. You do nothing, as normal, and next time you go fishing you have a box of rusting flies, their integrity is compromised.

Keeping your flies dry and rust free can be an issue and this advice is from Troutbitten.com

'There's an easy, cheap, DIY solution to all this. Silica gel.

The Stuff

Silica gel is the pellet-form desiccant found in the packaging of electronics, medicine bottles, luggage, camera bags, etc., where they absorb moisture and limit corrosion. It's a perfect fit for a fly box. I usually round up silica gel packs from vitamin bottles and various packaged electronics, but they are cheaply purchased online as well. I store the extra silica gel packs in an airtight container until needed. (Most of the go-to flies in my nymph box have a bead) READ: Troutbitten | Beads are the Best

The Box

Airtight and watertight. That's the best way to store any and all flies with bead heads. I use waterproof boxes to lock out extra moisture, eliminating most issues with rain, river fall-ins or excess humidity. But remember, while waterproof fly boxes keep moisture out, they also keep it in. Whatever humidity conditions are present when the box is closed will stay that way until opened. It's a sealed environment in there. And even on a dry, sunny day, while standing mid-river to change a fly, some unnoticed water splashes or drops of sweat may drip into the box. If that's sealed away for just a day or two, you may later open the box to find beads that have lost their luster, or worse yet, rusty hooks.

Tape and Silica

I used to toss a small silica gel pack in my fly box and just let it bounce around. That was okay. I was careful how I opened the box, and I rarely lost it. Then I started using a fly to pin the silica gel pack to the foam. That worked too. But the cleanest method is to simply tape the silica gel pack to the inside of your fly box. I use athletic tape because it's breathable and the adhesive is waterproof.

Some silica gel changes color as it absorbs moisture, but the packs I use rarely do. So I swap out the silica gel pack for a new one every couple times that I restock my fly box at the tying desk.

It's possible to rejuvenate silica gel packs by drying them in the oven or microwave. Google it. I rarely go that route because I seem to find enough fresh packs to have an unlimited supply.

The important thing is that I have no trouble with rusted hooks or tarnishing beads. The flies I tie look good and stay that way until mangled by a fish or sacrificed to a tree limb.

Oh, and don't eat the stuff, right?'



Source: <https://troutbitten.com/2017/11/29/gear-tip-keep-the-rust-away-and-keep-beads-shiny-with-silica-gel/>

Inventing a Tassie Lagoon Fly



I have always wanted to be someone that invents amazing flies. However I end up copying from others. But I believe I have a creative gene that hasn't been exercised yet so I thought why not invent a Tassie Lagoon fly...

Wet flies, English Wets. Loch or Lough flies, Dabblers, Dapplers and Wee Wets are a wide-ranging group of flies that are excellent to use and great fun to tie. There are thousands of different creations that imitate everything small fish to hatching mayflies.

Online fly tyers like our zoom partner Davie McPhail have shown us numerous flies that not only look brilliant but also actually work in the right circumstances. (I still have a number of Balinderry Black variants in my fly box after a wonderful day on Arthurs in the early and late season.)

But what are the main features of these wet flies? What are the essential parts that go to make the whole? If you know these bits then it should be possible for us creative Tassie types to formulate a series of flies that suit our lakes and lagoons.

The basic structure of the fly is relatively simple. Going from the rear to the eye of the hook we have:



Tail and / or tag – you could have one or the other or both. You could even leave that bit out if you wish



Rib – this could be wire, Madeira thread, monofilament, oval tinsel and so on. Its purpose is to secure the body hackle.



Body – there are so many variations of body materials you can use it is mind blowing! Floss, tinsel, peacock herl and just about any dubbing material that you can imagine. You can mix and match these as well including bibio style bodies as well.

Body hackle – These are often ‘palmered’ that is wrapped in spirals down the hook shank. They can also be wrapped normally which shows the body off more. Some designs utilise a contrasting colour such as red or orange to give the fly a bit of a glow.



Front Hackle(s) – These are often hen hackles tied in by the tip and swept back to create the classic profile that these flies boast. Colour here is really important. Often the more markings the better! Partridge, Quail, Guinea fowl and duck are also really useful. Some flies even use a touch of blue in the front hackle and these seem to work really well.

Extras – Beads, jungle cock, tinsel and goose biot eyes are useful on any flies. The addition of legs made out of rubber or knotted Pheasant tail can make these flies even more deadly. Many tiers also include an overwing too for a great looking fly.

How to fish them...

Often the top-dropper fly (known as the “bob” fly) will have floatant applied to it and is drawn through the surface film to create an attractive wake...

Sometimes, being waterlogged or dragged down by the flies behind it, the bob fly pulled along just under the surface.

However, as it gets closer to the boat, the high rod-tip will pull it up through the surface – and it is often “dibbled” (flipped, skipped and wriggled on the surface) for the last moments before picking off to re-cast.

Fish can be attracted to that gentle disturbance and – even if they don’t grab the bob fly itself – being drawn into the area means they often grab one of the other flies on your leader.

Source- <https://fishingdiscoveries.com/wet-fly-fishing/>

Creating a Tassie Lagoon fly should be reasonably easy if you follow these basic ideas and use some of your favourite colours that you know work in your local waters. (Noel Wilson ties flies with numerous ‘trigger points’ and these certainly catch fish!)



Maybe this one – the Stevio- that I prepared earlier will work.*

For more ideas have a look at the flies from and subscribe to my new hero - Irish tyer Scott Jackson who has a series of videos on YouTube that specialize in Irish Lough flies. They all look brilliant and he explains things really well.



Tying a trout fly, Clan Chief, with Scott Jackson

261 views... 31 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo7Be_Ay2mY

* Not as yet but ... you never know

Boat Boxes and Storage



I was lucky enough to fish with immediate past president Andrew Hood on Lake Leake just before Christmas and apart from watching him catch some enormous trout I was inspired to organise my fishing gear in the boat a bit more efficiently than in the old bag that I had crammed everything into.

I bought the bag from the Ouse supermarket in 1994 and it was great for a long time but the zips had gone and the handle had torn off. Whenever it rained everything got wet and I could never find all the millions of flies that I imagine I might need on any trip. (Usually I never really have the right one anyway and this still hasn't changed!)



The Hood solution was a simple plastic box of the kind you can get from dollar shops and this appealed to me very much. Everything was contained, easily accessed, was a cinch to carry and remained dry in the rain. As a bonus it also provided an easy platform for lunch, coffee and general snacks!

I was sure that Simms, Orvis or Sage would put out perfect examples of boat boxes that would cost more than the national debt so I decided to raid Bunnings.



I had to get containers for all the flies I take as well as the various reels and lines, leader materials, sunscreen, floatant first aid kit and general repair stuff. Bunnings had the main box and a series of smaller waterproof boxes that all fitted in really well. The main box cost \$12 and the smaller ones were \$3-\$5.



The biggest purchase was from Anaconda and was a classic lure-fishing box with a top section and space for 4 boxes all with partitions. (Laurie Matcham told me that dry flies sit better in this style of box rather than the ones with separate slots). The top section of this box is brilliant for holding the main flies for the day as well as floatant, forceps, sunscreen and scissors.

I keep a special boat box for nymphs and one for Shrek style flies for early season fishing so these had to fit in as well. Throw in a wooly hat and a neck gaiter for cold snaps and my collection was complete!

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

A good Bodkin is an essential tool for the fly tyer. They are great for everything from roughing up dubbing to applying head cement. You can buy them from fantastic shops like our favourite Spotton and as usual they range in price from quite cheap to top of the range.

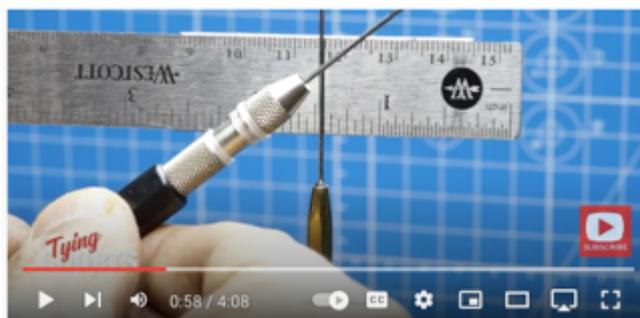
There are some alternatives too that you can make for yourself and these range from simply using a wooden toothpick, to needles stuck into a piece of dowel. They work well and can be replaced quite easily too.



Creating Your Own Custom Bodkins For Fly Tying - By Herman deGala

<https://youtu.be/ngyQKwb3BdE>

This video from 'In the Riffle' however suggests using a pin vice (which you can apparently buy from Jaycar for around \$13) and making some more specialised needle points for activities such as applying and spreading glue and UV glue.



DM

Vale Bill Beck



BILL BECK (1939 -2022) - FLY FISHING LEGEND

(Photo from The Mercury)

When Bill Beck died on 1 January 2022 he was already a legend in Tasmanian fly-fishing circles.

He was one of the early Tasmanian fishing guides, introducing his clients to the great trout of Lake Pedder from his camp at Huon Inlet.

His original shack at Little Pine, "Hiccup Hall", was always a gathering point for friends and anglers seeking Bill's "secrets". The 'new' shack was likewise a social Mecca for anglers fishing the Pine and was the focal point for the immensely popular Cane Rod Day. Bill joined the Fly Tyers' Club before 1966, one of the earlier members of the club and part of a group of 26 who joined after 1958 and before 1966 joining the 30 members who had joined prior to that date. Bill was probably among the Club's first 50 members. He was a member when I joined in 1980 and was a legend then.

The first Club field weekend I attended at Silver Plains, Lake Sorell, Bill was in charge of the beer. He was, at that time still the licensee of the York Hotel at Granton. The 9 gallon keg duly arrived but, when the time came for drinks, Bill discovered that all the tapping gear was still at the pub.

Fortunately he had taken the precaution of adding several cartons of cans to the inventory and, with those plus the carton of Black and White whisky supplied by President and Club founder, Bob Peacock, no drought occurred!

Bill, however, took some time to live down that episode.

The Club under the old constitution was a fairly unsympathetic environment. If you missed a certain number of meetings you could be asked to consider your future in the club. If you moved away from

Hobart you had to resign (although you would be automatically reinstated if you returned) and if you had any commercial interest relating to trout fishing you were either not accepted into the club or encouraged to resign.

This fate befell Bill when he became a trout guide. However, after the Club Constitution was re-written and some of the more onerous requirements were scrapped, a couple of us convinced Bill to rejoin the Club and I re-nominated him.

As a guide, Bill never forgot his 'enthusiast' angling beginnings. He always had time at the ramp to talk to every day anglers, tell them what flies were successful and how he was catching fish,

He was also unusual as a guide in other respects, particularly in that he always fished with his clients and, if their skills weren't up to the mark, he would delight in showing them how to catch fish - often the one they had been casting to! He was a great fly tyer and was always generous with his patterns. He was also scrupulous in giving credit to the originators of the flies he tied, sold and used, even when he had modified them considerably to improve their effectiveness.

There would not be too many local fly fishers or visiting anglers, over the last 30 plus years who haven't laid their hands on at least one of Bill's ties from the Miena Shop, the Fishing Connection or directly from Bill.

The Cat, the Crystal Cat and the Green Machine will always be linked to Bill's name.

We at the Fly Tyers Club will certainly give a nod of fond remembrance to Bill whenever we tie one of them on.

**Tony Dell
February 2022**



Bill's Lurex Cat Fly

Lake Pedder – McPartlan Pass



Please note that I had written this story before Martin Exel wrote his masterpiece. We only managed 6 fish but will return in the future.

There are so many stories about Lake Pedder and the monster fish that were caught there in the early days after the flooding. Fish grew to ridiculous sizes because of the abundant food and amazing conditions. Fish of 20lbs plus were certainly not uncommon.

These days however the fish are much smaller but are certainly plentiful. The lake is huge with many areas to explore. I headed up there with Club Treasure Blackwood who has climbed just about every mountain in the region but hadn't fished it very often. I hadn't fished it at all.

The scenery from the turn off at Westerway was just brilliant. It changed from mainly dolerite to quartzite and the resulting flora gave the place a feel of being in the true southwest. Although it was only an hour from Westerway felt like it was a million miles away!



Camping was the go and we set up at the McPartlan canal boat ramp on a 30-degree day under cloudless

skies. We didn't have to share the site, or the lake really, with anyone apart from several million march flies that, considerably, merely chose to swarm rather than bite.

The views were spectacular!



We fished the Helder Basin, which was shallow and sheltered from the winds. There were enticing weed beds and some great drifts along tree-lined shores. Fish were rising sporadically and small red tags seemed appropriate flies. The fish took these enthusiastically and put up a good fight despite their initial lack of size!





We moved out towards the main lake but the winds were a bit strong so we sought the more sheltered shores and tried out the many wind lanes.



There are many small bays and some excellent edges to fish. There were frogs, galaxia huge numbers of duns all around the place. Although it was blue skies, incredibly hot and still the fish continued to rise. This may be due to lack of angling pressure!

The area north of the McPartlan boat ramp was very shallow and fish rose in the weeds all day. They were hard to get a fly to due to the shallowness of the water but the potential of this amazing area will certainly bring us back!



The evening came, the march flies disappeared and there was a brief, but wonderful time before the mosquitos came swarming in. Mental note – bring Deet!



There were fish rising everywhere near the boat ramp but somehow managed to stay just out of casting distance.



The morning saw fish mopping up spent flies and midges. These were plentiful but challenging and only lasted until the sun came over the hills. The rest of the day was similar to the previous day. Some good dry fly action but the fish were a bit more timid due to the bright sunshine. The water temperature was the warmest I've been in. I'm not sure what it was but 'bath-like' is a good description. It is the only lake that I have swum in for quite a while and certainly not something that I would have imagined doing in the southwest of Tasmania!

We left around midday vowing to return and explore this massive water more often, and maybe even recover the Treasure's wallet which is probably lying in the mud on some far flung shore – the cards and the moths well and truly destroyed!

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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