



# The Vice



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

**Volume 15 , Issue 3 Autumn 2018**

**Inside: *Lunkas from Lake Lunka, Once Bitten Twice Shy, Casting Day and much more...***

*Cover shot – Lake Rotorua Hook-up*

## President's Report

As the winter rapidly approaches, it seems that most members have had a successful season, with the old stand-byes, Penstock, Woods, Little Pine, etc., being productive at different times.

One recent sad note was the death of Ron Ruthven, our oldest member and a great enthusiast for the club.

As the season closes, participation in the Fowler Trophy is probably complete for most entrants. At the time of writing, about half had entered their results, obviously with some having had very good days fish-wise, but also hopefully all having enjoyed the experience and new-found friendship.

Earlier this month we held this year's Salmon Ponds casting day. Again it was a very successful event with good attendance by members and several families and friends. I think it is one of our best activities. Congratulations to all participants and winners, and many thanks to the Salmon Ponds for providing the venue and to members who organised the casting and food so proficiently.

The Tiger Hut fly tying sessions are our next major activity over the last weekend of May. The first session has been booked out for some time and the second session is very close to being full, indicating the ongoing popularity of this event.

This will be my penultimate report prior to our AGM in August. Once again I offer my grateful thanks to my other Committee members whose enthusiastic participation in all aspects of the Club's operation has very largely underpinned the ongoing success of the club. As the AGM approaches I suggest that members consider offering themselves as committee members – it is a great way to get to know other members and to understand the operation and management of the club.

On that note, and as I look out on a decidedly wintery day, I wish you all a reflective and productive tying season.

Andrew Hood

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## Editorial

The season is drawing to a close with only a few rainbow waters and the year round options left and as the rain tumbles down it is a good time to look back over the season.

In this issue there are two excellent reports by David Young about our trip to Lake Lunka – a particularly amazing place to visit. Temperature hovered near 30C for most of the daylight hours and then ice had to be shaken of tents in the morning. The scenery was stunning and the company was entertaining to say the least!

Wayne Bellette presented the second report and details his trip to the North Island of New Zealand, which is both beautifully written and, confirms my suspicions that our immediate past president is a gun fly tyer who has apparently been hiding his light under a bushel!

As usual the Annual Fly Casting Day at the Salmon Ponds was a great success and was again a wonderful addition to the club's activity roster. One day we will score a day with no winds and then watch the scores climb!

I have included a couple hints about fly line cleaning mainly to remind me to do it and another bit about wrapping soft hackle, which I intend to put into practice at the Tiger Hut in a few weeks.

Rug up and enjoy this issue!

DM



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. 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... Wayne Bellette and David Young for their fantastic efforts in providing two very entertaining and informative reports!*

**Have a go**

**Simply send your entry to Doug Miller**  
[55dmiller@gmail.com](mailto:55dmiller@gmail.com)

**Salmon Ponds Casting Day**



The annual Casting Day was held once again at the Salmon Ponds near Plenty in the beautiful Derwent Valley and more than 30 members and their family members attended the event and watched as casters both young and old tested their skills at casting a fly.

There were two events to be decided: The Margaret Knight Dry Fly and the Hedley Griggs Wet Fly competition. It was decided by the organising committee to hold both competitions before the lunch break and I think this was a great idea! So right on time at 10am the first caster walked the plank and began the morning's battle.

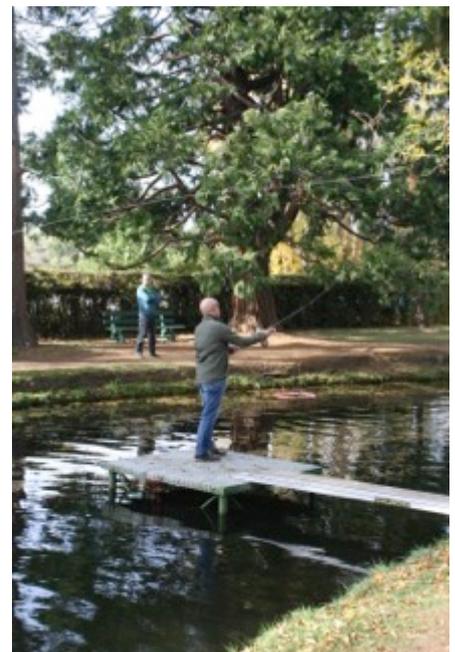


The rules for the Margaret Knight Dry Fly were relatively simple – you simply had to land your fly in a series of hoops at various distances with at least one false cast between each attempt. 5 points were scored for your first attempt then 3 and 2 respectively before you went on to the next hoop. It certainly looked eminently achievable when chief organiser David Hemmings demonstrated what to do. However, the wind and trout rising splashily in your peripheral vision soon had an affect on accuracy generally and made the competition quite tight.



It was interesting to note that the Salmon Ponds hold the largest collection of trout in the state that haven't been caught by Tim Urbanc! (Yet)

After everyone who wanted to cast had their turn it was straight into the Hedley Griggs Wet Fly competition, which looked deceptively simple but was an extremely



challenging event. The 5 hoops were set out in a straight line with around a metre separating them and you had 3 casts at each. The catch was that after the very first cast there was to be no false casting at all. It sounds simple but was a real test of both accuracy and technique.



All the time this competition was going on there were others quietly going about cooking up a storm on a bank of Webers for the traditional lunch. There were two different meats perfectly roasted and a range of mouth-watering vegetables and gravy waiting to greet the hungry competitors.

You could tell that the meal was a success as there was virtually nothing left at the end and everyone looked extremely satisfied and happy.

David Hemmings then announced the placings and presented the trophies and certificates to those who came in the top 3 of each competition. He observed that he thought that the general standard of casting had really improved over the last few years due in no small part to the efforts of all the members who have completed their casting instructors certificates and who have so generously given their time to helping others improve their techniques.



The day finished off with an opportunity to try out different rods and lines. It was fascinating to try out a 'Skagit' line and to try and get the hang of Spey Casting.



The Final Results were:

**Margaret Knight Dry Fly Trophy**

- 1st Adrian Scott 35 points
- 2nd David Hemmings 31 points
- 3rd Wayne Bellette 28 points

**Hedley Griggs Wet Fly Trophy**

- 1st David Hemmings 28 points
- 2nd Eric (Zuie) Howard 16 points
- 3rd Chris Hilton 15 points

**Overall Combined**

- 1st David Hemmings 59 points
- 2nd Adrian Scott 42 points
- 3rd Wayne Bellette 36 points

Head organiser thanked all those who helped make the day a success and noted that if the casting rings had been 10 cm wider the scores would have been terrific. Congratulations to all that attended and had a cast.

DM

## 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.*

I found this article after going to the Liaweenie meeting where guest speaker Mike Stevens mentioned the benefits of cleaning your fly line on a regular basis. It is from a 2013 article by Alaskan fisherman Jordan Sly from Deneki Outdoors.  
<https://www.deneki.com/2013/10/cleaning-fly-lines/>

### Clean Lines

One thing that is often neglected, but is super simple, is cleaning one's fly line periodically. I do this at least a couple times a year, and here is the process I use.



First I remove my leader and normally just discard it unless I know it is almost brand new. I fill the sink with some warm water and a SMALL amount of very mild dish detergent. I then strip the line into the sink and allow it to soak for a little bit. If it is really dirty I will let it soak for a couple hours, maybe more, but normally I do this while I am changing lines, so I will just remove it from the reel, wind the new line on, then go onto the next step. You should end up with your line piled in the sink, leader end down, and backing end up.

The next step is to grab a washcloth, dunk it in the sink, wrap this wet cloth around the backing end of your fly line, and start stripping it through the washcloth towards the tip. You should end up with your line now piled on the floor, backing end down, and leader tip up.

Next, grab your favourite fly line lube, and put a little of this on a dry cloth. Now wrap that cloth around the leader section of the line and start stripping towards the backing section. You should end up with your pile moving, and also flipping over with the backing end now on the top.

Next attach to your reel and wind on your clean, lubed, line.

### A Few Tips

- While doing this I find it easiest to remove the line from the reel and backing. I make this easier by tying large loop knots in all of my backing so I can slide the line off easier.
- Try to coil the line as best you can in the sink and on the floor. The sink is the hard one – your line will want to float, but with a little patience you will get it down. With the floor, just make your loops really big – this will help a lot.
- Save the twist ties from old lines, or from bread, to organize and label lines that are being put away for the season.
- Always clean and lube them before you put them away.
- On that note, **always** label, and make your coils pretty big, but uniform. Big coils will help with tangles, and line memory, and if you need it to be smaller just grab the coil with both hands at opposite sides and twist 180 degrees so you get a figure eight when the middle crosses... your coil is now half the size if you fold it in half.

## Lunkas from Lake Lunka

### Lunkas from Lunka Lake and elsewhere

Given the author's well-known penchant for causing unintended offence in articles published in this august journal, this report will start with a standard disclaimer, to wit:

All characters mentioned in the following story (with one notable exception) are entirely fictitious and bear no relationship to anyone living, dead, or ever likely to live.

*Noms-de-pêche*, then, will be the order of the day, with the lead characters dubbed 'Elderly', 'Junior', 'Spud', 'Ecto' and 'Titch', names deliberately chosen to disguise the real participants – who would, in fact, be pretty hard to identify anyway, since almost all of them were called 'Pete'. As you may notice, photos have also been subtly disfigured.

And so on Monday 5 March 2018 the aforementioned 'Elderly', 'Junior', 'Spud', 'Ecto' and 'Titch' gathered in the Miena shack, 'Elderly' having dutifully left behind his beloved dog 'Tulip' (not her real name), in order to eat something approaching real food at the Lodge and to drink copious quantities of red wine; for over the next four days food would closely resemble plastic, and alcohol would be in very short supply.



### 'Spud', 'Elderly', 'Junior' and 'Ecto' at the Lodge

Finally and at a late hour, the merry crowd – filled with glorious anticipation and the best part of a bottle of wine and a few beers apiece – tottered off to their cots.

Tuesday dawned bright. Nursing hangovers, the happy band set off, driving first through no fewer than four sets of traffic lights (no lie this!) to Liaweenie, before converging on Lake Ada car park. From there it was going to be a foot-slog of 4½ hours to the magnificent campsite at the top end of lower Lunka Lake.



### The party sets off

'Elderly' (as organiser) took the lead, graciously bowing to demands that he refrain from taking any of his famed 'short cuts'. In fact, he excelled himself, only managing to lose the way five times.

The party consequently split into two groups, those who forged ahead claiming to have polaroided a trout of massive proportions in a narrow arm of Lunka Lake, which 'Junior' inventively dubbed 'Horse Bay'. Although not fished to and never seen again, 'Horse' fired the enthusiasm of the party; all were now as keen as mustard.



### The magnificent campsite

As it was only about 2pm when the last dribs and drabs of the team arrived at camp, there was plenty of time to fish once the tents were up. 'Titch' promptly found a rock about five metres from his. There he positioned himself and could scarcely be prised away over the following two days, staring expectantly into the inscrutable depths.



**'Titch' waiting patiently on his rock**

The remaining four anglers scattered to different parts of lower and middle Lunka, 'Elderly' and 'Ecto' opting for the latter. For the first hour, they saw nothing. Then, suddenly, about two kilometres in the distance, 'Ecto' claimed to spot rising fish. It was a race to see who could get there first. Despite his age and prosthetic bits and pieces, 'Elderly' must have won for, almost as soon as he arrived, he saw – within his limited casting range – a tiny disturbance. Could it be a rise? He cast to it! Would it eat his fly? It would!! Eons later the aging angler had a 6-pounder on the bank, 65cms of golden deep-bodied, hook-jawed trout.



**Subtly enhanced photo of 'Elderly's great fish**

'Elderly' generously thanked 'Ecto' for his superb guiding skills, even allowing him to kiss his proffered hand. And thanks to the mercurial qualities of his acolyte, word of 'Elderly's exploits reached the camp before his return. Thus it was that, as he arrived, the assembled throng greeted him with hearty applause. For none of them, not one of them, had caught a fish. 'Elderly' was 'top rod'!  
'Just like the old days', the vintage angler beamed, puffing away cheerfully on his trusty pipe. He failed to add, however, that the number of 6lb-plus trout he had caught in his lengthy career could be counted on

the fingers of one hand, and that never before had he ascended to the giddy heights of 'top rod', not even when once – surreptitiously and shamefully – he had resorted to the use of the 'garden fly'.



**'Garden flies'**

That evening, the group had visitors, for out of the scrub emerged none other than the legendary Greg French (a real person) together with a fellow angler. Both bore fly rods and wore strangely coloured long-johns. 'Could these undergarments possibly attract trout?' mused 'Ecto' to himself, making a mental note to buy some on his return to civilisation.

Before they could make good their escape, the pair were subjected to interrogation: 'How long had they been there?' *A while.* 'Had they caught trout?' *Possibly.* 'Where?'...

A pause. Then, with characteristic generosity, Greg informed the open-mouthed crew: 'In a creek system on the far side of Pillans Lake'. He even pointed out the place. Coincidentally, it was the very same system that 'Junior' had marked on a tatty old bit of map he carried. It was marked with hieroglyphics. On the small tarns through which the creek flowed were inscribed the letters: BB.

*BB for 'Big Bastards'!*

The party knew exactly where it was going to walk the following day.

Again the weather was perfect. All set off at an early hour, even 'Titch' allowing himself to be lured from his trusty rock.

The day started well. In the first tarn visited, a fish rose out of the blue and engulfed 'Junior's fly. But 'Junior' pulled it straight out of the fish's mouth. Alas, it was the only trout seen in any of the tarns on the fabled creek. Plenty of galaxias were seen, however. And caught! Debate raged over whether they should count in the fierce contest for 'top rod'. 'Elderly' put his foot down. 'No way', he thundered. The party was subdued. At least the scenery was glorious.



**'The scenery was glorious'**

And so to Pillans. 'Elderly' and 'Junior' got there first. And straight away, they spotted fish. Rising fish! 'Junior' presented to one. Both anglers watched breathless as it approached the fly, circled it, sniffed, went away, came back, sniffed again ... and ate it. Again 'Junior' struck too soon. 'Steady, lad', intoned 'Elderly', craftily concealing his delight that he was still unchallenged as 'top rod'. But not for long. For soon the other team members arrived. All spread along the shore. More fish were seen. 'Junior' caught one. 'Damn', thought 'Elderly'. 'Titch' found himself another rock. Before long, he too had a trout, a lovely trout. 'Damn, damn', thought 'Elderly'.



**'Titch's lovely trout'**

And to cap it all, 'Ecto' snagged two. Two! *He* was now 'top rod', for 'Elderly' had blanked that day!! 'Damn! Damn!! Damn!!!' he thought. Back at camp that evening, 'Ecto' morphed from his usual introspective, philosophical self into the new 'Ecto', 'Top-Rod Ecto', 'Ecto Man-of-Action'. A new-found confidence glinted from his steely eyes as he strutted round the camp firmly shaking the hands of his team mates, modestly acknowledging their congratulations with his signature phrase: 'Chaps, chaps'. All present seemed content with the new champion, although later that night a piercing scream resounded from his tent. For in his sleeping bag 'Ecto' had

discovered a specimen of the deadly Tasmanian arachnid, *Venomosi fangii* ('Fang' for short).



**'Fang'**

Who had put it there? No one owned up. 'Elderly' was nowhere to be seen. Innocent snoring issued gently from his tent. But was 'Ecto' alarmed? Far from it. Delicately, the sensitive vegetarian conveyed the lethal creature back to the friendly bush. Tranquility was restored. The following day, the weather was again perfect. All had now caught fish bar 'Spud'. 'How do you feel?' enquired 'Elderly' with lightly feigned concern. 'Terrible', sobbed 'Spud'. 'Thought so', said 'Elderly', a nasty smirk contorting his once-handsome features.

That day, while 'Titch' remained glued to his rock, the other four anglers ventured far to legendary Lake Lepara. Not a fish did they spot in middle or upper Lunka, or in a couple of nameless lakes on the way. But in Lepara, they saw trout immediately, rising, cruising, disporting themselves. Soon 'Junior' had a fish, four or five pounds of fish – his second. He was now equal 'top rod'. Then 'Elderly' caught one. He was back in the race. And almost immediately, 'Spud' had his first.

Sadly, it had swallowed the fly. 'Spud' tried his best to revive it. Mouth-to-mouth was apparently tried. CPR. Even a defibrillator, so the team were led to believe. All to no avail. It was the only casualty of the trip, and that night the anglers ate it.

But before that happened, 'Junior' snared another fish from Lepara, the fourth the lake offered up. With an aggregate of three fish, 'Junior' was now 'top rod'! 'Pah!' snorted 'Elderly', 'would never have been allowed in my day. We'd have made anyone as young as you fish with one arm tied behind his back.' He took a deep pull on his pipe and blew smoke furiously out of both nostrils. Meanwhile, 'Ecto' – who was fishless so far that day – reverted to his normal introspective self.



**Introspective 'Ecto'**

The afternoon progressing, the happy band wandered south to Wadleys Lake. There the prospects were for wade-poloroiding. 'Elderly' was first in the water. Almost immediately, he spotted a fish and put his fly to it. It took and 'Elderly' played it with consummate skill. Would he regain his position of 'top rod', albeit on a shared basis? No, he wouldn't. For no good reason, the fish – a good one – ejected the fly and swam away.

'Doesn't count', squealed 'Junior' in delight. 'I know that, you young whippersnapper', hissed 'Elderly' through clenched dentures. And then 'Junior' and 'Spud' took to the water. The three anglers, forming a virtual cordon, drove the fish south. The strategy must have worked, for within minutes 'Spud' was into his second.



**Two-thirds of the cordon**

He landed it. But it was to be the last that day, for when the team arrived back at camp they found 'Titch' fishless on his rock. No matter. Over the three days, everyone had caught fish, with ten taken in all. They ranged from 2lb to 6lb, with a couple of 4-5lb fish in the mix. Not a huge bag for five anglers over two-and-a-half days' fishing, you may say. But throw in the scenery, the weather, and the camaraderie (yes, the fierce rivalry described above *was* a touch exaggerated), and you have in 'Elderly's humble view a fishing

experience like no other, one that will live in the memory.

Nor was it entirely over. For while the bulk of the party walked out the following day, 'Elderly' and 'Ecto' remained for one more night. They explored new, unnamed waters in weather that was still beautiful. And thanks to yet more superb guiding by 'Ecto', 'Elderly' was able to catch his third and final fish of the trip.



**The final fish**

Did that make him equal 'top rod'? He'd like to think so!

As told to David Young  
Any queries of a legal nature should be addressed to the author's lawyers:  
Flawed, Slimey and Fraud, Grays Inn, London WC1  
(not their real names).



## 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.*

### Preparing Soft Hackle, An Easier Way By George E. Emanuel

Almost every fly tying book you pick up which shows a method for preparing a soft hackle feather will show it done thus.



The instruction will now go on to instruct you to tie in the feather by the tip, concave side toward the rear, and wrap as you fold the hackle to the rear. Using 1-1/2 wraps will yield a delicately dressed fly, which is the object of the exercise. Some books go on to specify three wraps, which results in a terribly over dressed fly.

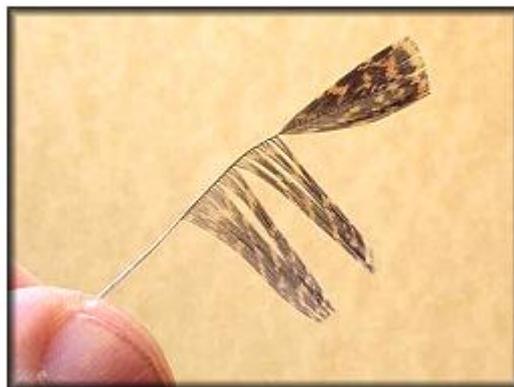
Now, there are a couple of problems with the method presented.

1. Folding and wrapping can be a bit tricky, particularly for the new tier, it is also a distraction we can all do without.
2. The 1-1/2 turns of the hackle would require that we either tie in the hackle, or tie it off, on the top of the hank. The temptation to take an extra half wrap, thus adding more hackle when the object is a sparse delicacy is also unacceptable.
3. It is as mentioned more difficult to do all of that folding and stroking as the instructions require.

The ages only know the identity of the tier who solved both of these problems with this, the simplest of techniques.

Prepare your feather as before, stroking the barbules toward the rear, leaving a small bunch at the tip for tying onto the hook.

Now, and this is the neat part, with the concave side of the feather away from you, strip all of the hackle on the left side below the tie in at the tip from the stem. You should now have a feather with barbules on the right side only.



Next, tie in your feather as before, by the tip, from underneath of the shank. Take three turns with the concave side of the feather toward the rear, if you really must, take a fourth turn, but don't over do this, these flies are intended to have sparseness to them. Tie off the hackle, again underneath of the shank.

Dry flies require many more turns of hackle than do wets and soft hackle types. We could speculate that the tendency to "over dress" these flies has it's origins with the dry fly. This technique allows us to take a fair number of turns, like we are accustomed to doing, without adding as much bulk per turn.

We have also eliminated entirely that darned stroking of the feathers to the rear with each turn around the hook.

This method is easier, faster, and yields a fly of better quality than is possible with the conventional methods, it is just plain easier to control the material. Try it, you will never tie a soft hackle or a wet fly collar the "traditional" way again, bet on it!

Source: Fly Anglers Online  
<http://www.flyanglersonline.com/flytying/tyingtips/part39.php>

## Once Bitten Twice Shy



A tale of two flies ....

Lake Rotorua is truly a unique fishery that attracts anglers from all over the world. It has some amazing fishing all year round, but undoubtedly the best time, for many, would be the summer runs into the river mouths which can happen anytime from December through to March, depending on weather conditions. The other *best of times* is the autumn spawning runs, where big browns and winter rainbows, make their way upstream. On all these runs the fish face a gauntlet of anglers at the river mouths.

It is the first of these *best of times*, the summer runs, which this tale is about...



Lake Rotorua is mostly a shallow lake with only a few deeper holes that approach the 20-metre mark. The deeper parts are mostly in the middle of the lake, which also contain extensive weed beds. These provide shelter and abundant food, in the form of caddis and mayfly nymphs. In addition, the lake also contains a large amount of smelt, which also offers substantial and exciting fishing as large trout ambush and chase these into the shallow water.

As summer takes hold, and if colder conditions don't prevail, the lake temperature starts warming up. Anglers eagerly watch the temperature buoy readings on the internet, as we do with the Lake Levels or River flows back home. When the water temperature approach 21-22 degrees, in the middle of the lake, large schools of rainbows move into the rivers and river mouths to seek the colder water. The surrounding shallow foreshore flats, which are all easily waded, can also hold many fish. The cold river

water flows out into the lake and is like a highway along which the fish move. When the winds blow at right angles or onto the shore this cold water can be held in close to the shore on the downwind side. In this water many rainbows can be found concentrated. Also included into the mix are some big browns, which hold and skulk around the river mouths during these times.

It's not uncommon for anglers to hook and land 30 - 40 fish in a morning or evening session and bags of over 100 fish in a day are not unheard of. These are mostly fit rainbows in good condition and fight extremely well. At an average size between 3-4lb it is exciting fishing by any account. Throw in a few larger size rainbows and the odd big brown then this must certainly be one of fly fishing's *best of times*.

This is a very unique fishing experience and I am not aware of anywhere else in the world where something similar happens on the scale it does here. Anglers come here from all over the world, some who have been making an annual pilgrimage for 15 years or more. They often have semi-permanent bases set up for the summer months escaping the cold Europe and North American winters - Mike from England, Kurt from Denmark, Norman and family from Finland, Don from Canada and our own, Tasmanian Fly Tyers member, Nick Ingles. All these anglers and more arrive each year to fish with the many locals including Warren who had over 500 fish for the season less than halfway in.

The two flies featured in this tale were the result of this year's and last year's season's trip and what surely must be *the worst of times*... For what could be a more *worst of time* than coming to Rotorua for two season in a row, in what should have been the best of times, and to have colder conditions move the fish back from the river mouths to the middle of the lake. All the anticipation of strong fit rainbows and big browns, easy fishing fuelled by the tales of our traveling companions, Nick and other club members who had made the pilgrimage before us. "*You should have been here last year... last month .... last week but it's no good now*"! Is this not the worst of times for any angler!

Last season due to unseasonal colder summer the lake temperature didn't heat up sufficiently for the fish to move into the colder river mouths until several weeks after we left. Commiserations and tales of the worst season in 15 years of coming here from the regular fly in's didn't give us too much confidence but we had invested our holidays and money to come so fish we still did. We managed to catch some nice fish around

the river mouths and fat Ngongataha browns and bows in the rivers. But in terms of the expected fishing numbers it certainly wasn't the best of times. It was in the evenings towards dark when we did have some more success but it took some time to work out what fly and how to fish it. The traditional smelt patterns, woolly buggers were not effective. Danish angler, Kurt, suggested we try some small back nymphs. On looking in my nymph box I discovered I didn't have any having built up an arsenal of smelt patterns, woolly buggers and Shrek variants. I was a bit light on for nymphs. Oh well it wouldn't matter, maybe a HE or PT would do. Anyhow this was river mouth fishing and larger smelt patterns should work.

That night out, Nick, John Smith, our illustrious past president, Anna and I along with several other interstate visitors were fishing the Awahou River mouth. We managed to pick up a few fish but Kurt landed six or more in a short time while most of us only picked up the odd fish. All on black nymphs! Damm I would have to buy some.



For some reason I can't remember we didn't get a chance to get any black nymphs and we ended up again at Awahou River mouth the next evening. This time Smithy managed to catch six fish while everyone else struggled. He was a bit vague when the question was asked of what fly he was using. Some mumbled comment of a "scruffy black thing". Now this may have intrigued those who don't know Smithy but for those who do know him it didn't give too much away as scruffy was a trait that Smithy incorporates into many of his flies. It was only when we were back at the cabin and Smithy was basking in the glory of being top rod, and no doubt aided by several whiskeys, confessed that he had tied up some scruffy black (marabou) nymphs during the day unbeknown to his fellow club members on this trip.

Not having our own fly tying materials, it took some convincing and bribery but John did tie up some black scruffy nymphs and a variation with a lumo bead. Over the course of the following weeks Smithy's flies did account for most of the fish we ended up catching in the evenings. "What did you get it on" was the call when a fish was hooked along the picket line and "Smithy's fly" was the reply. If it wasn't the plain black nymph, it was the lumo bead nymph fished in tandem that did the trick. Smithy graciously kept us in supply of Black Scruffy and Lumo bead nymphs although we had to raid the tackle shop for more beads and black marabou. Either way it was Smithy's fly that saved the day and ensured we all did manage to catch some nice fish in what was the *worst of time* for that year. Fast forward one year to February 2018 and again what should have been another best of times....

The tail end of a cyclone and 120 mm of rain on day one brought the lake temperature back down well under 20 degrees. Most of the fish in the river mouths moved back out into the middle lake. It was hard going in the lakes and river mouths with not many fish coming to the net. The streams were chocolate and it took over a week for them to become fishable. We did have three good days on the rivers and on one day landing eighteen nice fish including some browns. However the river mouths were hard work and smelt patterns or black nymphs did not work as they did the previous year. While we picked up the odd fish each, moving around the different river mouths, it was when John picked up a number of fish in one session that questions were asked again. He was very cagey on the pattern and it was several fish later that he acknowledged it was just a brown woolly bugger. I tried a brown woolly bugger and a Shrek variation but had no success.



Back at the cabin we inspected John's "Brown Woolly Bugger." It had a variegated red and brown chenille body, brown marabou tail with no flash and reddish orange wire holding a brown/black hackle down. The head wrap used was the same body rib wire. It was an unusually dark fly when compared to most of the

smelt flies. These were lighter olives and greys but they had not been working as well as expected due to an absence of smelt and smelt feeders this year.

The next day John presented all of us with one of his Brown Woolley buggers that he had tied up during a slow period. We all took one and headed out for afternoon session. It did take John catching a couple more fish that day before I decided to put it on. Once I did, it didn't take long and I was onto a fish quite quickly. Anna and Nick also changed at some time and we all started to catch fish consistently though not in great numbers. Smith's fly did certainly work much better than most of the other angler's flies and when one of us got a fish and the call went out "*what pattern*", "*Smithy's Fly*" was once again the answer.



A normal brown woolly bugger was not as effective; maybe the red wire head and body rib was the key. Whatever the reason it did work better than any other patterns we tried. Smithy's Fly saved our day again and enabled us to catch some nice fish in the worst of times when many around were not. In talking to some of the locals, who were interested to see what we were catching the fish on, it seems that while the smelt were not around there were a few Bullies present. These are common to the area, having a larger body than the smelt and slim tail, and that trout do feed on them. It seems Smithy's Fly represented these Bullies very well and helped account for most of our fish during this week.

John is much too modest to take credit for these creations, and given we can't have two different patterns with same name I have called the black marabou nymph **Smithies Scruffy** and the brown woolly bugger as **Smithies Bully Blaster(BB)**. Smithy was not all that keen to tie up too many of these and when I lost the only one he gave me I had to negotiate to ensure a good supply. It seems Smithy does enjoys eggs and sausages for breakfast, though not that keen to make them, a small price to pay

surely for the right fly once again in the *worst of times*. I lost all my Smithy's BBs one night and yelled out to Smithy if he had any more. He said yes and I came up the picket line to get it. Anna later told me he had cut it off his line as he didn't have any others. I must make good sausages and eggs... or Smithy's is just a great mate. How many fishing mates would do that...I am not sure this writer would!



So this tale comes to an end but not before another *best of times and worst...* Anna and I were leaving Rotorua for 2 days on the Tongariro, while John and Nick decided to stay at Rotorua after initially thinking they would come with us. We managed some nice fish in the final two days. The locals were all saying the river fishing was tough as winter river levels were in place and not that many fish were holding in the normal spots. It seems the worst of times was still with us...

We phoned John and Nick on the last evening, regretfully they informed us they had landed 30 plus fish in a couple of hours on the day we left and more that day we phoned... The fish had moved back in and the *best of times* had returned! We didn't ask what pattern, Smithy could shove his flies...

## 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>