



The Vice



Newsletter of the Tasmanian Fly Tyers' Club Inc.

Volume 16 , Issue 19 Autumn 2022

Inside: Casting Day, Lees Paddocks, Bamboo Rods and *more ...*

Cover Shot –Tony Abel and 3.5kgs of reasons to fish Crescent!

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Committee	Wayne Bellette
	Dave Long
	Tony Abel
	Tim Urbanc
Vice Editor	Doug Miller

<http://tasmanianflytyersclub.org>

Vice President's Report

Club President Andrew Reed is away doing a little bit of what will eventually become a big lap of the other island, so here are some of my stand in thoughts.

It seems that the season just past has been quite variable. There were some stages of very good fishing and some patches of what is generally known as being 'tough'. Although sometimes there has been very exciting dry fly action.

I have heard the concerns about the water levels in Little Pine are still causing problems. I'm sure that the agencies have been made aware of the issues. If the correspondence that I have seen is anything to go by, there may have been a sharp barb on that particular hook. Let's all hope that it gets sorted out before too long.

On a personal note a couple of highlights of the season were:

My Fowler day in November with Noel Wilson where we were guided by Westy. We had terrific day on Penstock, luckily being there in the middle of very nice red spinner day. We managed to catch some very good fish but proceeded to break off some even better ones!

Then in late March another trip into Lees Paddock to fish the upper reaches of the Mersey. Doug Miller, Peter Trott, Peter Murphy and I had three days and two nights camped at the Hut. Despite all the rain that had fallen on the east coast, it was remarkably dry. The river level was surprisingly low which of course gave the river fish a bit of an unfair advantage. We saw very large numbers of both small and pretty good fish. Any dry fly that was drifted over them gave them plenty of time to have a look to reject most of the tyers art that we presented. Fishing wasn't easy but the company and the place is just splendid.

The process of the survey of the club has been underway managed by the huge efforts of Tony Abel. About 70% of the total membership has replied which is an extraordinary result. The process of collating the responses is now underway and will be reported back soon. I haven't read all the responses but I feel privileged to be part of club which more then exceeds its basic aims and fulfills a very rich array of support for each other, wonderful skill development and an overarching spirit of generosity.

As we wend our way out of these Covid times, I'm very confident that the future of the club is as remarkable, diverse and engaged as the membership. Tight Lines.

David Travalia



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 Tim Urbanc for sharing his Diary once again!

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

Send your stories to 55dmiller@gmail.com

Inside this Issue	Page
President's Report	3
Editorial	4
Casting Day 2022 -	5
Sorell Shack Working Bee	7
The Urbanc Diaries	8
Building a History – Cane in Australia	9
Fly Tying on the WWW	11
Lee's Paddocks Trip 2022	12
Vice Index	14

Editorial

So... the season has come to a close and it is time to get ready for winter. This edition has articles about the fantastic Casting Day held at the Salmon Ponds, where David Hemmings and his team once again came up trumps with their organisation of a great event. The food was pretty great too so David Travalia, John Spencer, Tony Dell and others that contributed should take a bow.

The trip to Lees Paddocks was terrific. The weather was gorgeous and the river surprisingly low. The rain must have completely missed the catchment. It is an extremely beautiful part of our island and is well worth visiting.

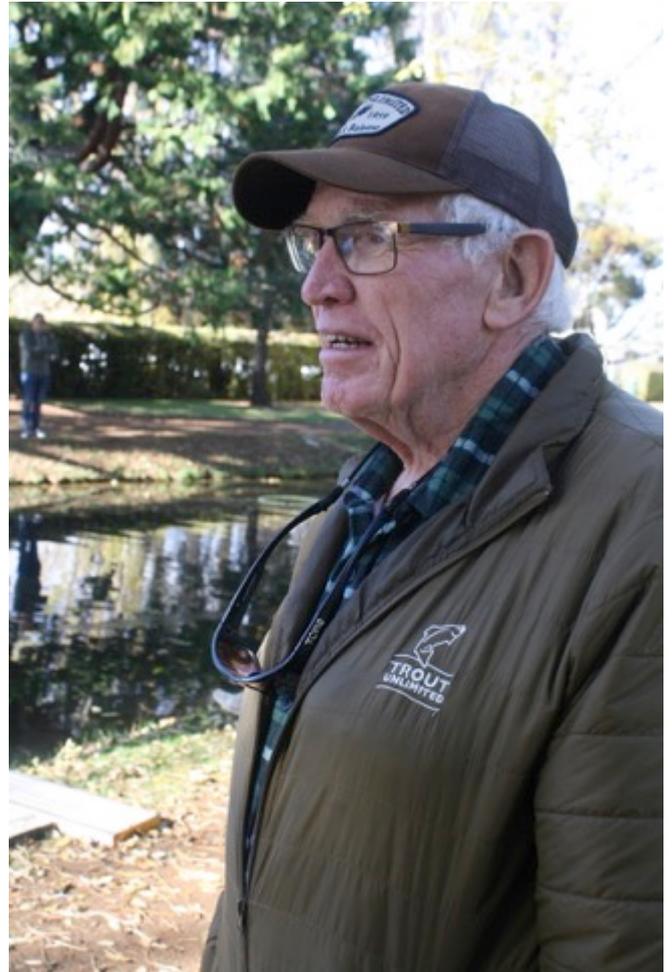
Tony Abel has done a great job on revitalising the Lake Sorell shack and the working bee was a great success. Apologies for the doggerel poetry!

James 'Jim' Jones has supplied an article on bamboo rods from Australia written by Freddy von Reibnitz and it certainly is a fascinating read. Jim is really doing a thorough job on researching and developing his understanding of bamboo in Australia and even around the world. He will probably end up being a world authority at this rate!

Once again Tim Urbanc has been generous enough to share his Diary with us and, if you want to get an idea of where to go, when to go, and what to use this is worth memorising!

Enjoy!

DM



Congratulations Malcolm Crosse – Life Member of Trout Unlimited!

Casting Day – Salmon Ponds 2022

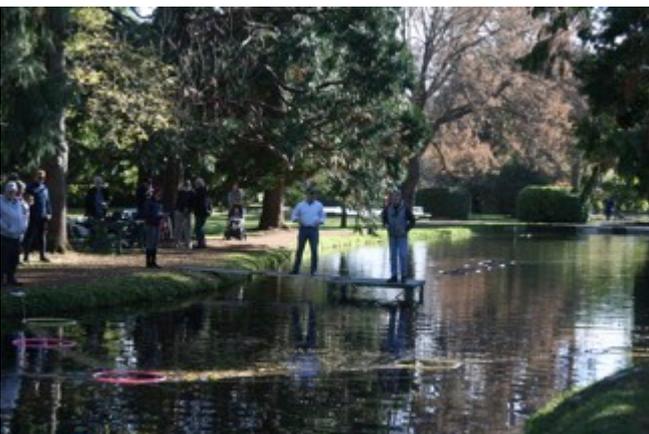


The weather was perfect, the casting beautiful and the food was fantastic. The annual casting day at the Salmon Ponds was a great way to farewell the 2021/22 season.

As usual David Hemmings and his team of casting gurus set up the targets for the Margaret Knight Dry Fly and the Hedley Griggs Wet Fly competition whilst John Spencer and David Travalia set up the Barbecues and the long lunch spectacular.



The first competition was the Dry Fly - Five targets with three attempts at each. A false cast between each attempt was the other main stipulation; Five points for the first cast, three for the second and two for the final attempt. There was only a slight breeze it certainly had an effect on the casting.



The judges were strict but scrupulously fair in determining whether the fly landed in the target – task made more difficult by bright reflections and the multitude of autumn leaves.

After all competitors had completed their casts we moved on to the Hedley Griggs Wet Fly Competition. Targets were arranged in a straight line about a metre apart. False casting was permitted for the first cast at the first target only; from then on no false casting at all. This is, to say the least, very challenging. David Hemmings suggested that a well-timed haul on the forward cast might improve chances. This was good advice but still it proved difficult.



There were a number of spectators from the Club and interest was certainly shown by the paying public too. Each competitor was encouraged and not too much heckling occurred!

At the conclusion everyone moved down to the lunch area where John Spencer, David Travalia and Tony Dell and even the Editor had combined to produce a superb lunch of Hot Soup, Roast Pork, Jacket Potatoes, Mushrooms, Sausages and Salad. There were also contributions of salads and desserts that rounded everything off beautifully.



At the end of the meal' the results were announced by super casting guru David Hemmings. He said how impressive the casting was and suggested a club team could win State competitions! David actually won both the wet and dry fly competitions (not really surprising) and Tim Munro, Chris Hilton, Chris Medwin and Noel Wilson were very worthy place getters.

It was a great day and another wonderful Club Event.

DM

Sorell Shack Working Bee



We all did well
At Lake Sorell
When we tidied up the shack.



There were trees to lop
And wood to chop
And brush to cut out back!



We'd all arrive
By 10.05
With chainsaws gloves and gear

Our cheery bunch
Worked hard 'til lunch
When we stopped to have a beer



Then on we went
All hell bent
On making things all fine.

The final task
That one last ask
To reinstall the sign



So thanks again
To those brave men
Who volunteered their time

Who bent their backs
To make sure our shack's
Once again sublime!

The Urbanc Diaries 2021/22

Once again Tim Urbanc has kindly contributed his summary of his season and the flies he used and the fish he caught. I'm sure we can all learn from this (I know I can), so thanks Tim for your generosity!

DM

A Summary of my Season on the Fly

Please note that all the fish recorded are fish of 30cm and over, as I do not count the small fish, (never have).

A total of 336 trout were caught throughout the season, over 48 trips, totalling 79 days fishing. There were no days where big numbers were caught this season. I shall break the season into three stages, that being early season (wet fly), mid season (dry fly), and late season, (a mixture of dry, nymphing and wet).

Early Season from 08/08/2021 thru 02/11/2021

Penstock Lagoon,

Total of 8 days fishing for 40 trout, 30 Browns and 10 Rainbows caught on wet flies.

Flies being Magoo with copper bead, Bitch (red & black) with gold bead, and Tim's Olive and yellow Yeti # 12. Lines used- type 3 sink, and ghost tip.

Little Pine Lagoon,

Total of 7 days fishing for 35 Browns caught on wet flies. Those flies being Magoo with copper bead, and also with a red bead. Black woolly Bugger with chartreuse bead, Humungus and also Tim's Olive/yellow Yeti.

Currawong Lakes,

Total of two days fishing for 14 trout, 5 Brown and 9 Rainbows, caught on Bitch and Magoo with orange bead. I used a Ghost-tip line.

Lake Leake,

One day fishing for two Browns caught on a Black Shrek with chartreuse bead, and Magoo.

Four Springs Lake,

Fished for 5 days for twenty fish, 7 Browns, and 13 Rainbows. Fish caught on # 14 nymphs and also emergers and foam orange spinners.

Mid Season - 05/11/2021 thru 25/02/2022

Lake Samuel.

Fished 11 days or part there of, for 42 trout, 27 Browns and 15 Rainbows, all caught on Emerger nymphs, Orange Spinners and Dun patterns.

Penstock Lagoon

Fished a total of 17 days during this period, and caught 71 trout, 60 Browns and 11 Rainbows. Most of these fish taken on dry flies, those being # 14 claret emergers, #14 foam orange spinners, #14 Claret duns. One fish was on nymph under a dry, and one on a stick caddis.

Little Pine

Five days on this water between above dates for a total of 20 trout, 10 on dry fly and 8 on nymphs and stick caddis patterns, and 2 on small wets. Best dries were #14 Foam Black Spinner and #14 Claret dun. One fish from Pine was the best fish of the season, 5lbs, not the largest it best conditioned fish, and taken on a #14 stick caddis.

Late Season from 02/03/2022 thru 13/05/2022.

Penstock Lagoon Fished 12 days during this period for a total of 63 trout, 58 Browns and 5 Rainbows. Of these only 12 fish taken on dry flies, Claret dun and Jassid pattern, and a further 32 fish taken on stick caddis patterns. A further 19 fish taken fishing the Olive/yellow Yeti.

Little Pine

Two days fishing this water for a total of 15 trout. Flies used in early March were stick caddis and small wets, Olive/yellow yeti and black yeti pattern in size 12.

Lake Samuel f

5 days, (really only half days 3-4 hours), on this water for a total of 14 trout, 11 Browns and 3 rainbows. All but one fish caught on dries- Jassid and my new gum beetle creation which worked a treat as I had only just tied it and was putting it to a trial with good results especially as there were almost no insects on the water. Looking forward to next summer to give it a try out on other waters.

Tim Urbanc

Building a History

The Early Australian Bamboo Rod Makers

Club member and Bamboo rod restorer James Jones supplied this article from Freddy von Reibnitz. Thanks Jim!

Living in Canberra, I have fly fished for over 50 years, mainly in southeastern NSW: the Monaro district southeast of Cooma, rivers like the Kydra, Kybeyan, MacLaughlan and Bobundara, and the lakes and rivers of our high country. I collect bamboo rods, and for the last 20 years or so I have fished almost entirely with bamboo, love the feel of bamboo rods under load, and casting them on water or grass is for me a pleasure in its own right.

In the last decade I have been coming to Cressy Cane, a gathering over three days (usually in October), on the banks of Brumbys Creek in Tasmania, at "Hayes on Brumbys" where it is hosted by master casting instructor and guide Peter Hayes. Founded by Dave Hemmings, who wanted to share his own love of bamboo with others, Cressy Cane is a celebration of making and fishing bamboo rods. Most attendees are makers, but even those just passionate about or interested in bamboo like me have been welcomed. Topics include all aspects of rod making, casting and fishing bamboo. Transferring knowledge, sharing information and supporting the craft of bamboo fly rod making for posterity is something embedded in the spirit and culture of Cressy Cane. And for a number of years, Australasia's leading bamboo rod maker Nick Taransky has conducted rod making classes in the weeks before and after Cressy Cane.

James Jones, a Hobart architect who shares my passion for bamboo rods and restores them, was told by Dave Hemmings that the history of Australian bamboo rod making and rod makers had never been a topic explored at Cressy Cane, probably because its focus has been on the body of practical knowledge gleaned through the American masters (makers such as Payne, Young, Garrison, Dickerson, Gillum), which has supported the work of contemporary Australian makers. The literature is largely silent on the history of Australian bamboo fly rods and their makers, and their processes for making and repairing bamboo rods.

James, Dave and I have since started a project to develop a database of knowledge about this, focusing initially on the rod makers of the 1930s to 1970s. Our focus is driven by the certainty that time is not on our side for gathering information.

The big names of that era were William Southam in Sydney and J. Malcolm Gillies and J. M. Turville in Melbourne. There are brief biographical notes on Southam and Gillies on the Australian Fly Fishing Museum website, and internet searches have revealed some further details. In John Brookes' *Lifelong Pleasure – Seventy Years of Fly Fishing* he writes about Gillies' rods, and he mentions that Gillies also designed a rod for Turville. Peter Wilson, writing about the early Australian makers in *The Cast – From Cane to Carbon*, writes that Gillies and Turville collaborated on the design of rod tapers and that Gillies imported cane rod blanks from the UK for himself and for on-selling to Turville.



Three early Australian rods. From the left: the Gillies 'Peter Pan', Southam 'Ringwood' and Turville 'Victoria'.

All three makers began by repairing, disassembling, and copying rods brought to Australia from the UK; particularly Hardy rods. Their rods tended to be long (8½ feet and up) and heavy (over 5 oz), though there were exceptions in both respects. In his *Angling in Australia – Its History and Writings*, Bob Dunn quotes a lovely description by Peter Leuver of Bill Southam's bamboo rod making that in summary could serve for what is still done today. In about 1930 Southam started making game rods and possibly surf rods for an overhead reel, using the newly available Tonkin cane from China. By 1936 he was sufficiently well-

known for one of his bamboo game rods to have been selected by Zane Grey, eminent author and game fisherman, who was on a fishing visit to Australia. In 1936 Grey pronounced Southam's rod the best he had ever used, an important endorsement. Southam, who also manufactured highly regarded surfing reels and lures, initially set up his factory in Lane Cove, Sydney, but by 1948 he had relocated to larger premises in Artarmon, Sydney, where he produced a range of the order of 30 bamboo rods for all kinds of fishing. Between 1947 and 1955 he had 30 or so people working for him. The 1954 Australian Fly-Casting Champion, he also taught fly-casting; a friend describes being taught by him: "Bill had me out in the front of the store on the Pacific Highway learning to cast along the gutter. He tied a handkerchief to my wrist and off we went."

Southam's bamboo fly rods include the *Monty* (9 ft, three-piece), the *Talbingo* (9 ft 9 ins, three-piece, and 9 ft 4 ins, two-piece), the *No. 1 Fly Rod* (9 ft, three-piece), the *Ringwood* (8 ft 6 ins and 9 ft, two-piece), the *Gem* (9 ft and 8 ft 6 ins, two-piece), the *Alpha Trout* (8 ft 6 ins, two-piece), the *No.1 Balmoral* (10 ft, 7 oz, three-piece, possibly a salmon rod), the *Abercrombie* (two-piece), but also the remarkable *John Rollo* (7ft 6 ins, three-piece, intermediate wraps) hollow-built and just 3 oz, owned by James Jones. Some of Southam's rods had intermediate bindings, but later rods did not, probably coinciding with the arrival of better glues for binding the cane strips. Later in his career, Southam made at least one fibreglass fly rod, the *Fairy*, but in general he did not favour fibreglass for fly rods. We have some images of the *Monty*, the *Talbingo*, the *Alpha Trout*, the *No.1 Balmoral*, the *No. 1 Fly Rod*, the *Ringwood* and the *John Rollo*.

Wilson writes that Gillies was an early advocate of snake guides (instead of the bridge type guides long in vogue in the UK), and that better glues enabled him to remove intermediate bindings from his rods, reducing their weight. Of the fly rods by Gillies, John Brookes mentions the *Water Gypsy*, a 9 ft, 5.5 oz three-piece he made for Brookes, also a *Peter Pan No. 1* (9 ft 6 ins, 6.75 oz), *Peter Pan No. 2* (9 ft 3 ins, 6.25 oz), *Robin Hood* (9 ft 10 ins, 7.75 oz; 9 ft 6 ins, 7.25 oz), and *JMG* (9 ft, 6 oz, two-piece). After WWII the *Peter Pan* was made in several lengths including 8 ft 6 ins, 8 ft 8 ins and 8 ft 9 ins, and the *Britannia* (9 ft, 6.25 oz, two-piece) replaced the *Robin Hood*. We only have images of the *Peter Pan*. Recently I came across images of a 1938 Hardy *Gold Medal* (9 ft 3 ins, three-piece) with the Gillies name on the butt, suggesting co-operation between Hardy and Gillies. Indeed, some Hardy rods were made on order for Gillies.

Wilson writes that Jack Myles, the 1957 Australian Fly-Casting Champion, took over all Gillies' rod building after WWII, and was building rods until 1975. The *Peter Pan* may have been made by Myles, but also possibly under license for Gillies by the famous firm of Walker Bampton & Co, with its many links to Hardy in Alnwick,

The Gillies 'Peter Pan'.

Northumberland.

Brookes writes that the rod Gillies designed for Turville became the *Victoria* (8 ft 6 ins, 5.75 oz, two-piece). It and the Turville *Venus Duracane* (8 ft, 5.25 oz, two-piece) are powerful rods that can put out a



long 6 wt line. The *Fiery Brown* (8ft 7.5 ins, three-piece) was also made from blanks imported from the UK. Other rods include the *JMT Dry Fly*

The Turville 'Rex'.



"*Special*" (8 ft, two-piece, 4 oz), the *Geehi*, the *Hume*, the *Mitta*, the *Perfection*, the *Jenny Anne*, the *Patsy Tee*, the *Mercury* and the *Rex*. We have images of the *Victoria*, the *Venus*, the *Fiery Brown*, the *Hume*, the *Patsy Tee*, the *Mercury* and the *Rex*. Pat Wraith made rods for Turville after the death of Maurie Turville in 1961. Both Gillies and Turville sold cane blanks to amateur rod-finishers, too. We know of a few extant examples of rods finished from Turville blanks.

An interesting question on which we would like information is the nature and extent of links between

the Melbourne-based Gillies and Turville and Sydney-based Southam.



Wilson also writes that W. Carter & Son of Glen Huntly, Melbourne, makers of bamboo fly and spinning rods, were the only other makers to split their own cane, Bill Carter building a machine for this in 1950. They stopped producing bamboo rods in the mid-60s, when the cheapness of fibreglass forced them out of production.

In the latter part of that era, other names of rod makers include Len Butterworth, John McGinn, Tony Young and Peter McKean. Len Butterworth, from Queensland, was a pioneer of Australian commercial rod making. He began producing split cane rods in 1939, making mainly surf rods, until an international cane shortage following World War II and the Korean War forced him to move to fibreglass. In the latter part of the period and into the 1980s, John McGinn was making and selling fine bamboo rods commercially, Peter McKean's rods became highly sought after, and Tony Young is still making and selling his rods. There are no doubt other makers in that period of whom we are not even aware. Just recently I learnt from a friend that he had a bamboo rod made by the Victorian maker Bluey Powell, also known for his saltwater lures. He had run the fishing tackle department of Myers in Melbourne, later worked at the Compleat Angler in the late 1960s and was the rod maker there before starting his own tackle shop in Russell Street, Melbourne.

As well as biographical information, we would like to find more information about all these makers' methods of working, the identity and description of their rods (particularly: length, two- or three-piece, design line weight, weight of rod), and their output of rods. As I've written above, we have some descriptive

information and images of the rods of some makers, but it's patchy.

What will become of all this? It's too early to say, but hopefully at least a substantial journal article and an online repository to which further details can be added. The project was also a topic for a recent Cressy Cane, which gave rise to further information.

We hope that this article may prompt some readers to get in touch with more information or to point us to where we might find it.

Freddy von Reibnitz
(fvr@webone.com.au)

Fly Tying on the WWW

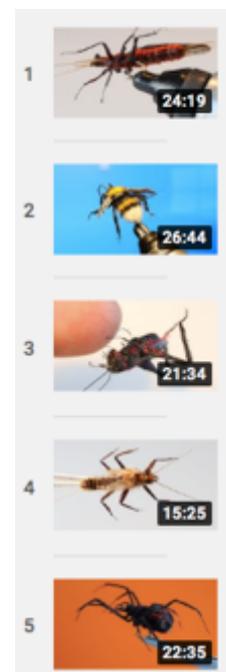


<https://youtu.be/2N1uq9H3p58>

I am a sucker for new fly tying videos and when I come across someone who can create flies that I can only dream of I have to watch everything they do and try to think how I can use their techniques in my tying. Grebe Gabi on *Gabriel Flyart* ties some of the most remarkable realistic flies I have seen. He uses some very basic materials in an extraordinary way and manages to build flies that are truly remarkable. The videos are all on higher than normal speed so they can be watched in a reasonable time frame. Some of his flies take hours to tie!

These are terrific things just to watch awestruck in the comfort of your lounge room or as a challenge at your bench.

Look for his techniques for creating wings for flies using the 'Origami wing method' and his tips for making realistic legs for flies.



But... do check these out!

(<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqPHSVH8gmzBxIGS58ti1QtHLnTaYpc7c>)

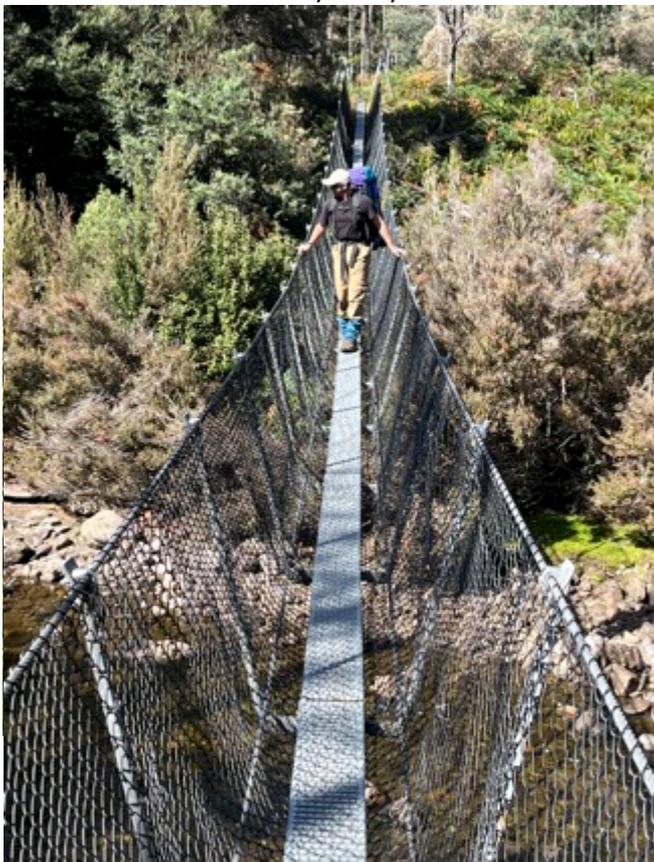
DM

Lee's Paddocks Trip 2022

When we met at the Lodge at Miena for an evening meal the night before the talk was all about the level of the river. There had been a lot of rain falling and Sheffield and we thought the river might be 'running a banker' and be very difficult to fish. Should we change tack and go to Christie's Creek or similar? After some discussion we decided to stay with the original plan and head for Lee's Paddocks.



It still took about two hours to get from the club shack to the start of the track. Peter 'Trotty' Trott was kind enough to take the four of us in his big 4WD which covered the dirt roads very easily.



We set off and walked down the hill for our first glimpse of the Mersey River to cross the swing bridge. Instead of a raging torrent, a very low and slow river greeted us. Little fish darted warily everywhere.

The walk in to the paddocks was about 9km and took us a leisurely two and a half hours. The scenery was magical. It felt like Peter Jackson could be filming a Lord of the Rings sequel around every corner. The track followed the river and we took time to Polaroid fish whenever we could.



Our destination was the Lees Hut, which we would use as a base for the trip. We had permission to use it but really only sat on the verandah. As it is not a national park we were allowed to light a campfire, which is always a wonderful addition to any trip. David and I combined to make Paella for the first night which was a triumph whilst Pete and Trotty produced a wonderful chili con carne with jacket potatoes which was brilliant on the second night!

The fishing was tricky as the river was really just a series of shallow pools separated by logs. The good thing was that access was relatively easy and some pools had quite good flow. The other positive was that there were fish in every pool!





We all managed to catch fish. They were all small but beautifully coloured. Trotty, being the most athletic and daring of our number caught the most.

The walk out was as pleasant as the one in and went without incident after Pete managed to perform surgery on David's boot, which lost its sole (soul?).



Thanks to David for doing all the organising and coordination for this trip. It was great. If you get a chance to do this walk then do yourself a favour and go. It is wonderful!



We visited Wadley's Hut on the second day, which has to be one of the cutest in the area. This little gem was about an hour away but we managed to spend most of the day getting there via very fishy waters and a few wrong turns.



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>

DM

Winter 2012	Page
Presidents Report	1
Coming Events	1
Editorial, Competition	2
Noel's Flies	2
Fly tying on the www	4
Casting Day – Salmon Ponds	4
Snowy Ranges Mid-winter Fishing Day	5
Tips and Tricks	6
Australian Fly Fishing Museum	9
Classifieds	7

Page

Spring 2012

Presidents Report	1
Editorial	2
Casting into a Headwind – David Hemming	3
Fly tying on the WWW	4
Peck's Highland Dun – Charles Peck	4
AdVice - Tips and Tricks	6
Penstock Management Proposal – John Diggle	6
Classic Fly Gear – James Jones	7
Portable Fly Tying Kits – Doug Miller et al	8
Fly Tyers Club Bequests proposal	11
Snowy Ranges John Fowler Trophy	12
Classifieds	13

Page

Summer 2013

Presidents Report	1
Editorial	2
Penstock Weekend 2012	3
Fly tying on the WWW	4
John Fowler Trophy – Snowy Ranges	6
AdVice - Tips and Tricks	9

12-12-12 A Date we won't see again	9
AAT Webcam Project	11

Classifieds	13
-------------	----

Autumn 2013	Page
Presidents Report	1
Coming Events	1
Editorial, Competition	2
Vitamin Dee	3
Fly tying on the www	4
Ad-Vice - Tips and Tricks - Boats	4
February Plains in February	5
A Pom Down Under	8
The Mt Morriston Macquarie Trip	10
Classifieds	13

Winter 2013	Page
Presidents Report	1
Coming Events	1
Editorial,	3
Flies for all Season	4
Ad-Vice - Tips and Tricks	9
Tiger Hut 2013	10
Fly tying on the WWW	12
Casting Day 2013	13
Classifieds	15

Spring 2013	
Editorial	2
If I can Draw it I can tie it Laurie Matcham	3
Fly Tying on the WWW	5
Bamboo Winter Project - Mark Rampant	6
Ad Vice Tips and Tricks	8
Kapten Boat Collar - Dave Tadd	9
Around the Corner - Malcolm Crosse	10
Andre's Flies - Doug Miller	13
Club contacts and Details	14

Summer 2014

Vale Jim Davis	2
Editorial	4
Golden Stickies	5
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Macquarie Trip 2013	8
Tips from the Top	9
Ad Vice Tips and Tricks	

Float Tube 101	10
Penstock Weekend	11
Club Contacts and Classifieds	

Autumn 2014	
Editorial	2
Queenies in Broome Casting Day 2014	3
Ad-Vice—Tips and Tricks Dee Lagoon 2014	4
Casting Championships Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Ad Vice Tips and Tricks Favourite Flies 2014	7
The Last Hurrah and New Beginnings	9
Gourmet Trangia #1 The Back Story	
Our New Facebook Page	13
Club contacts and Details and Emails	

Winter 2014	
President's Report	2
Editorial	4
Drogue Design – Tony Dell	5
Ad-Vice Tips and Tricks	6
Carp on the Fly – Malcolm Crosse	7
Fly Tying on the WWW	9
Fly Tyers Annual Dinner	9
Fly Kashmir – Malcolm Crosse	10
Dying Made Easy	11
Tiger Hut 2014 – A Tale of Vice	13
Annual Dinner Pics	15
Club Details	16

Spring 2014	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3

Christmas Island Diary 2014	4
Ad-Vice - tips and tricks	7
Macquarie River Trip 2014	9
Fly Tying on the WWW	12
Old Timers Field Weekend	13
Macquarie Trip Pics	15
Club Contact Details	15

Summer 2015	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Tying the LM Emerger	4
Ad-Vice - tips and tricks	6
A Trip to Henry's Place	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Casting Session Pics	7
Five go to Halkyard	9
Club Contact Details	12

Autumn 2015	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Burbury Trip	4
Ad-Vice - tips and tricks (Ticks?)	6
Fowler Trophy – Fishing in Friendship	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Penstock 2015	8
Casting Day – Salmon Ponds	9
Plastic Fantastic – buying a new boat	11

Echo Weekend	13
Club Contact Details	14

Winter 2015	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Tiger Hut 2015	4
Ad-Vice - tips and tricks	6
Great Lake Beetle – Neil Pinkard	7
Fly Tying on the WWW	9
RSL Tying Day	10
Annual Dinner – Cascade Gardens	11
Opening Weekend – Lake Crescent	12
Club Contact Details	13

Spring 2015	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Plonking for Beginners	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	5
New Boats	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Killer Bug	7
Twin Lakes Adventure	8
The Shack Working Bee	9
Activity Calendar 2015/16	10
Club Contact Details	11

Summer 2016	
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Macquarie Weekend 2015	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	5
Henry's Place	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Lake Burbury Adventure	8
Lake Silver Trip 2016	10
Club Contact Details	13
Where are they now	13
Vice Index	14

Autumn 2016	
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Lees Paddocks or Christies Creek	4
AdVice – Tips and Tricks	6
Redemption	6
Penstock 2016	8
Fly Tying on the WWW	9
Time for a New Dinghy	10
Casting Day 2016	12
Vice Index	14
Club Contact Details	

Winter 2016	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Tiger Hut 2016	4
Australia's Best Trout Flies Revisited	6
AdVice Tips and Tricks	6
A Season That Was	7
Champagne on Tooms	9
Fly Tying on the WWW	10
Fly Tying Day Lenah Valley RSL	10
Tasmania's Large Grey Dun	12
Vice Index	17
Club Contact Details	20

Summer 2017	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Henry's Place Revisited	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	5
Cliff – Club Legend	6
Miena Field Trip – The Crocks!	8
Fly Tying on the WWW	8
Casting Tips with Zuie Sensei	9
New Zealand North Island	10
Talbot's Lagoon Trip	12
Vice Index	14
Club Contact Details	18

Spring 2016	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Modifying a Small Boat	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	5
Our Newest Life Member	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
The New Committee Q&A	8
Fly Tyers Dinner Pics	11
Vice Index	12
For Sale	15
Club Contact Details	16
Activity Calendar 2016/17	17

Autumn 2017	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Christy's and Lunka Trip March 2017	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	6
Fowler Fishing and Friendship	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	8
My Valentines Day – Rotorua 2017	8
Casting Day Salmon Ponds 2017	10
Wanted to Buy and Sell	12
Masters Fishing Competition	12
Vice Index	15
Club Contact Details	19

Winter 2017	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
A Bamboo Tool	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	7
Penstock Wine Appreciation Weekend	8
Fly Tying on the WWW	9
Lenah Valley RSL Fly Tying Day	9
Penstock Tips from Tim Urbanc	12
Vice Index	15
Club Contact Details	18

Spring 2017	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Four Springs	4
AdVice Tips and Tricks	5
Tim's Great Start	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Great Lake Tie In 2017	8
A Dam Fine Weekend	9
Vice Index	12
Club Contact Details	17

Summer 2018	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Lake Fergus Weekend	3
AdVice Tips and Tricks	4
Lees Paddocks	5

Fly Tying on the WWW	6
Unwelcome Guests	8
Penstock Weekend 2018	9
Vice Index	12
Club Contact Details	16

Autumn 2018	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Casting Day 2018	3
Fly Tying on the WWW	5
Lunkas from Lake Lunka	6
AdVice Tips and Tricks	10
Once Bitten Twice Shy	11
Vice Index	14
Club Contact Details	19

Winter 2018	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Tiger Hut 2018	4
Fly Tying on the WWW	5
RSL Tying Day – The Flies	6
AdVice Tips and Tricks	8
Lake Sorell perhaps...	9
Vice Index	12
Club Contact Details	17

Spring 2018	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Farm Dams Weekend	3
Fly Tying on the WWW	5
Third Time Lucky	6
AdVice Tips and Tricks	9
How Much Wood...	10
Vice Index	11
Club Contact Details	16

Summer 2019	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Why Malbena Matters to Me	4
Fly Tying on the WWW	10
Penstock Weekend 2019	16
AdVice Tips and Tricks	18
Vice Index	19
Club Contact Details	25

Autumn 2019	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Western Lakes Trip 2019	3
Fly Tying on the WWW	5
Casting Day 2019	5
AdVice Tips and Tricks	7
Lees Paddocks Revisited	8
Fowler Trophy Fishing in Friendship	10

Vice Index	12
Club Contact Details	25

Winter 2019	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	2
Tiger Hut 2019	3
Tying the Mighty Duck	5
Great Lake Tie in	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Dying with Macca and Delly	8
AdVice Tips and Tricks	9
A Yarn about Wool	10
The Willow Warriors	11
RSL Fly Tying Day	12
Vice Index	
Club Contact Details	

Spring 2019	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Bothwell Dams Weekend	4
Great Lake Tie in	6
Fly Tying on the WWW	8
How I Got into Comp Fishing	9
AdVice Tips and Tricks	11
Willow Warriors	12
Vice Index	13
Club Contact Details	19

Summer 2020	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Back to Lake Sorrel - Finally	4
Fly Tying on the WWW – Wally Wings	6
The Sorrel Shack	6
AdVice Tips and Tricks – The Card Tool	8
Fishing Sorrel Reprinted	9
Vice Index	13
Club Contact Details	19

Autumn 2020	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Commonwealth Champs Taupo	4
Fly Tying on the WWW – Zoomers	8
Western Lakes Trip 2020	9
AdVice Tips and Tricks –	10
Tim's Season Diary 2019/2020	11
Vice Index	13
Club Contact Details	19

Winter 2020	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Sorell Shack Working Bee	4
Thursday Zoomers	6
Macca's YouTube	7
AdVice Tips and Tricks –	9

Wine Weekend - Liaweenie	10
Vice Index	12
Club Contact Details	19

Spring 2020	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	4
Casting Day 2020	5
Fly Tying on the WWW	7
Four Springs Trip	8
SwissCDC Multiclamp	9
Ad Vice Tips and Tricks – Tony Dell Dyeing	10
Lake Fergus Trip	13
Scott and Henry's Place 2020	16
Vice Index	18

Summer 2021	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	4
Penstock Weekend 2021	5
The Appeal of Bamboo Rods	7
Fly Tyers Bookshelf - The Great trout of Lake Pedder	10
- The Feather Thief	12
Ad Vice Tips and Tricks – Claret Dun	14
Miena Field Trip 2020	15
Vice Index	16

Autumn 2021	Page
President's Report	2
Editorial	3
Hard Yards at Halkyard	5
AdVice tips and Tricks	11
The Gift	12
Fly Tyers Bookshelf - The Feather Bender's Fly Tying Techniques	13
Salmon Ponds Casting Day	15
Vice Index	17

Winter 2021	Page
President's Report	3
Editorial	4
Les Roberts and the Shannon Rise	5
AdVice tips and Tricks – Tippet Rings	7
Tony Dell's Diary	8
Annual Lunch Pics	9
Tiger Hut 2021	10
Fly Tyers Bookshelf – The Shannon Rise	12
Tying the Shannon Moth	13
RSL Tying Day	15
Vice Index	18

Spring 2021	Page
President's Report	3
Editorial	4
Four Springs 2021	5
Advice Tips and Tricks – Welded loops	6
Fly Tyers Bookshelf	7
Vale Cliff Ludford	10

Lake Fergus	11
Vale Philip Fisher	13
Bothwell Dams 2021	14
Lake Leake Trip	15
Vice Index	18

Summer 2022	Page
President's Report	3
Editorial	4
February Fishing at Lake Pedder -	5
Advice Tips and Tricks –	9
Inventing Tassie Lagoon Flies	10
Boat Boxes	12
Fly Tying on the WWW	13
Vale Bill Beck	14
McPartlan Pass at Pedder	15
Vice Index	17