



2015 December Newsletter

President – Darren Foster

Vice President – Cherie Blackburn

Secretary – Tony Ward

Treasurer – Justin Smith

Newsletter Editor – Jeff Yates

Committee Members

Peter Sewell

Brent Blackwell

Jeff Yates

Lawrence Blackburn

Singleton Fly Fishing Club
meets on the first
Wednesday of each month
at:-

Beresfield Bowling Club
Anderson Drive
Bersefield
At 6.30pm



Editor's comments



Jeff Yates

What a bumper issue we have for the last month of 2015. A nostalgic article written by Lawrence kicks off the newsletter, noting that the SFFC was born in 1999, just one year after our favourite club niece, Jenna, was born. Lawrence, you have set a high mark with your article, are a natural and expect to be hounded regularly for new articles.

Chris has shown us the best way to babysit, by taking his son Ethan on a trout fishing safari to Barrington Tops. A great experience for him netting his first fish for Dad.

Reliable Brent organized the Gloucester trip which seemed to have been well patronized and enjoyed by all who attended. He has also written an article on the Allyn.

Wayne has written his maiden newsletter article with a review on his new boat, a Morning Star. Never heard of it? I hadn't either until Wayne took delivery of it, and after fishing from it for 2 weeks in both salt and fresh, I'm very impressed.

Rod has contributed with an article on the Dawson River. Looks like the crew had a blinder on the Sprat.

Last but not least is Justin. What more can I say about our striped leotard clad founding member. He is a competent fly fisher, a poet, a journalist and a bloody great club member. Besides these accolades, he also smokes a mean fish and is a constant source of humour at our outings.

Thanks for the input from all our contributors and I have only one thing to say, keep the articles rolling in as it helps me and we all love to read your scribbles. If you can't downsize pictures to say, 100kb, then send them through individually and I will compress them. Send all articles in a word format. Nothings too hard!

January is usually a family time with holidays and trips away, but hey, that may make for interesting reading, particularly if you pack your fly rod.

The next newsletter will be a February issue.

Hope Santa is good to you all, and brings plenty of fly fishing gifts, like Sage rods, Loop reels and Simms waders; dream on.....Have a great festive season and catch you in the new year.



President's Report



Well, another year has almost finished running its course. 2014 was a big year for the club with many excellent club outings. Just to name a few, Lithgow, Xmas in July, St Clair, Swansea, The 12th Annual Carp Classic and the combined outing with Hastings Fly Rodders (which is looking like being a regular outing) were enjoyed by all that attended.

A huge thanks to the out-going committee for 2015 for all the dedication and hard work put in over the last 12 months. Lawrence has been outstanding as President and Cherie has put in many hard yards to pull the Treasury in to line. Tony has handled the Secretary's role with both confidence and aplomb. Thanks also to the committee for their dedication towards the club.

Thank you too, to all the trip masters that put their hands up to organise/run the club outings. I am sure everyone agrees that you all put in 110% to make all the trips a success.


To the incoming committee for 2016, I hope the club continues to flourish and grow with support from the members. Remember, the club is not all about one person or a small minority but about everyone together building the club into what it has become today.

Thanks also to Glen (our previous Newsletter Editor) for providing a quality newsletter and whom has now handed over the reins to Jeff Yates (of fabled Power Point Presentations), we wait with baited breath.

To each and every one of you and to your families as well I wish you a very merry Christmas and a Safe, Happy and Prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you all next year and hopefully turn a scale or two, or three or four, or more.

Cheers
Darren (Dazza) Foster
President, SFFC 2016



					2016 Calendar
Month	Date	Region	Location	Trip Master	Contact Number
January	TBA	Fly Tying/Fishing	Lawrence & Cherie	Lawrence B.	0432 989 797
February	03 rd	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
February	13 th – 14 th	Hawks Nest	Saltwater	Tom Jones	
February					
March	02 nd	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
March	19 th – 20 th	Clarence Town	Williams River	Mik Ewin	0407 898 317
March					
April	06 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
April	16 th – 17 th	Barrington Tops	Little Manning	Justin Smith	0417 478 138
April					
May	04 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
May					
May					
June	01 st	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
June	11 th – 12 th	Lake St Clair	Lake St Clair		
June					
July	06 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
July	16 th	Xmas in July	Bero Bowlo		
July					
August	03 rd	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
August	6 th – 7 th	Lake Macquarie ?	Swansea		
August					
September	07 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
September		Hastings ?			
September					
October	5 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
October	14 th – 16 th	Lake Liddell	Carp Classic		
October					
November	11 th	Club AGM	Bero Bowlo	All	
November		Barrington	Local Rivers		
November					
December	7 th	Club Meeting	Bero Bowlo	All	
December					
December					



The First 16 Years of SFFC

By Lawrence Blackburn

During the course of writing this story I found newsletters from the first one I wrote in 2000 through to 2011, looking through the stories of the past from Rod Dillon, Justin, Jeff, myself and others we have travelled a long way to catch fish and as I read through the old newsletters many great memoirs came flooding back. Dotted throughout this story are pictures and relevant paragraphs from the past when we used film to take photos and had to scan them in and resize them so the document was not too big to email, dial-up speeds of 9600baud can take a while to download a large document.

Once upon a time some years ago I was contacted by a school friend from Campbelltown, he mentioned that a fella from school lived up near Singleton, he mentioned what he did for a job, so I started doing a little investigation, it didn't take long to obtain a phone number for Justin Smith, a lad I had been to primary and high school from the mid 1960's to the late 1970's.

It was time to make a call and say hello, it wasn't long before we had a face to face meeting and BBQ, meet and greet the kids and just talk about the last 30 or so years. Eventually the discussion moved toward fishing, and then strangely enough to fly fishing, Justin had fly fished in his youth in Scotland and related the story of one of his fishing expeditions where he managed to hook onto a 200kg cow on his back cast, I know, nothing special there we've all done that, haven't we?



Justin mentioned that the local tackle shop in Singleton run by Ross Mackaway was holding a fly casting session next weekend and we should attend. Seemed like a good idea, Fred from Loomis was there to give us the basics and Ross had a friend (Peter Wheeler) who had been fly fishing for so long he went fishing with a 2wt, in streams half a metre wide catching trout that were three inches long and he called that fun.

So as the sausage sizzle was cooking Ross suggested that Singleton should have a fly fishing club and the people there at the time also thought it was a good idea (it might also have been good for his business). So did I, even though I drove from Holmesville once a month to attend while others travelled all of five minutes to get there, that was the first Wednesday of the month organised.



It didn't take long before I found out about Newcastle Fly-Rodders, who met conveniently enough once a month on the first Tuesday, this could work. As Singleton club was brand new I took ideas from the Newcastle club to the bush and helped get people involved with raffles, outings, fly tying and the newsletter. People got involved and the club took off, gathering members from all around the area, learning how to tie flies and fish most often for trout as the flies were Peter Wheeler's favourite as it happened, until we got involved with the Newcastle club who invited us to the Carp Bash, as it was known then (now

known by all as the **Carp Classic**). We progressed and moved into Bass fishing at Lake St Clair, camping out as always in all types of weather, I remember one outing to Lake St Clair where we had rivers of rainwater running through the camp-site washing away eskies and members holding onto poles to keep the camp from blowing away.



October 2002, Katelyn, Jenna, Rebecca and Felicity help me release Bass fingerlings in the pouring rain.

In 1998 Jenna was born and in 1999 the club was formed, since Jenna was about seven I have dragged her to all sorts of outings, even to Thompsons Creek Dam and walked around the back at night, I'm not sure whether she enjoyed it but now she has a club full of uncles, which she very much enjoys, especially at the Carp Classic.

For the last nine/ten years the club has adopted Lake St Clair as its primary fishery and as such has been restocking the lake every year, not just for our benefit but for the benefit of the Singleton area and it has no doubt helped with tourism in the district. The lake has been good to us for many years and will continue to do so as long as we keep putting those fingerlings in, at \$4,000 a year it is money well spent.



July 2001, Walcha

I put my #12 Coachman trude back on and decided where to cast, only a few meters from the bank there was plenty of sipping, I cast two meters upstream from the last rise and let the fly drift down, sure enough there was a splash and I was connected to a well-conditioned rainbow, we argued for a while but he eventually saw my way of thinking and came to the bank.

As the club changed in its leadership there was a period where Ron and I were the President and Vice President respectively for seven consecutive years, at the time this seemed to work well. However nothing much changed, the same crew doing the organising and members coming and going, I believe it is important for the success of the club that there is a turnover of club committee members which is why we now have a maximum consecutive term of three years for any position.



During this period, the Newcastle club which had around thirty members had an AGM in which no one stood up to be on the committee and that was the end of the club. Some of their gear was transferred to Singleton as the nearest fly fishing club and the remaining funds were used that year for restocking Bass at St Clair. At some time, even for a one year period member's need to stand up and take on a committee role, I'm pretty sure I have done all of them in the last 16 years for this club and I'm still normal, still normal, still normal.....hasn't affected me at all.

As time progressed new members came on board and others left, then there was a spilt in the club, I can't remember exactly how it came to be, but as always when you have a diverse group of people from different walks of life there are going to be conflicts. Some are better fishers than others, some make more money than others, some have more time to fish, others have to work long hours on shift. No matter the reason if there is one thing I have learned from the different positions I have held is that you cannot please all the people all the time, some people have to accept that and move on, as Mr Fox would say, "harden up princess".

Whatever the reason the club halved in size overnight it took some time but the meetings continued and once again new members turned up, but it was time to make a move, with no people from Singleton turning up at the meetings, there was no point in everyone from Newcastle and Maitland and surrounds driving up to Singleton. Time to relocate. Mik was running the club at this stage and it was not easy, I have great admiration for how he managed the people and the club during this period, I know little about the events but I do know it was very stressful.

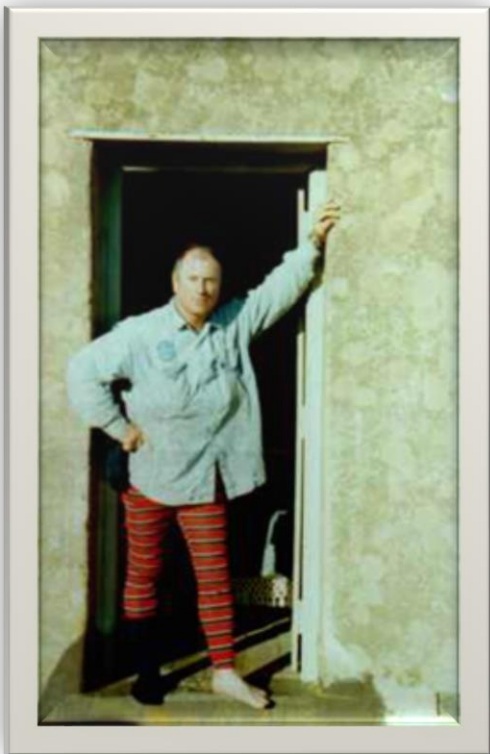


April 2004, Goulburn

The clubs fashion editor has been out and about chasing up the latest autumn designs and what's new around Crookwell.

This photo shoot was done on Saturday the 13th March as the late afternoon sun was burning down, after which our model took on the fish at Pejar Dam and like everyone else....lost!

Here's a lovely number from our favourite model Justine, the Columbia shirt with Singleton Fly Fishing Club emblem \$85.00, the watch from Dior \$245.00, hairstyle by Stephan of Queensland \$198.00, matching navy blue work socks \$25.00, the leggings.....priceless!



So we moved the meeting's to Maitland City Bowling Club located at Rutherford, we continued there for a about 18months until the bowling club underwent renovations and it became intolerable to try to hold a meeting without listening to the club raffle draw and then the bingo. We even

relocated one meeting to Pete's house, very much appreciated by the members but probably not popular with Ingrid. Time to move again, Beresfield Bowling Club is centrally located within the Newcastle and Hunter Valley region and reduces travel time for all concerned.

November 2004, New Zealand

It paid off, after trying seven different patterns and not getting a hit I attached what must have been the last pattern in the box, first cast I feel a hit, second cast nothing then third cast nothing, on the fourth cast I was hit and I struck at the same time, the following photo show the result of a lot of effort, the fly used is called a Silver Ghost, again you have to keep trying different patterns until you find what they like on the day. Later that evening I managed to land another fish of similar size, a great finish to the trip.



Something else which may now be worth considering is an idea Justin had about two years ago, changing the name of the club, Hunter Valley Fly Fishers/Rodders came to his mind and it is something worth considering. There are many things to consider



when changing a name and what do we do with the old name, something to think about in the new year.



***July 2005, Clubman of the Year,
Jeff Yates***

There are many things the club has learnt during the years and each year is getting better and better at functioning. My personal life has changed somewhat and over the years and the club has benefitted from my charming manner in being

able to convince my wife to help out with the club in the role as treasurer, Cherie is very much an organiser and loves lists, her passion for Christmas in July, the Carp Classic and new ideas has made the events very memorable.





The Carp Classic has become the signature event for the club and has also benefitted from Cherie's organisational skills and list generation, I'm quite sure we have next year's shopping list already sorted, just a few minor details to attend to. I should also make mention of Jenna's ability to create chocolate crackles with an assortment of additives, Mars bars, Kit Kats and Freddo frogs. Between the two of them the raffle tickets sell well. These two girls are ably assisted by Tania whose secret scone recipe keeps people coming back during peak fishing times for a *healthy* morning tea break. Not to mention all the morning and evening cooks.



July 2006, Jenna fly tying.....

Let's have a quick look at tying the Bass Vampire from an 8yr olds perspective:-

First get yourself an eight year old, here's one I prepared earlier, put a number 4 hook in the vice and run some black 6/0 waxed thread the length of the shank lightly coat the thread with cement, put a set of dumbbell eyes about 4mm back from the eye of the hook, Greg likes the fluoro green (chartreuse), he feels it is one of the most important attractants on the fly, I have used lead eyes painted with gold nail varnish.





With the eyes attached, run the thread to the rear of the hook and tie in some Krystal flash, Greg used some different material but the effect of some flashy material should be the same. The next step is to create a body of Super Salt Chenille, black in colour and large size if possible run the chenille to the back of the eyes and tie off.



Now we need to rotate the hook in the vice (or simply rotate the vice head if it has that functionality), Greg's favourite colours for Bass are purple and black slinky fibre, I used a similar wool substitute, when you select your fibre make it twice the length of the hook, one important factor that must be stressed is to dress the hook lightly, too much material is a waste and makes casting harder with the fly picking up too much air as it is cast. Purple goes on first, then black. Tied on in front of the eyes, tie off using whatever your preferred method is and then a drop of cement to cure the finished product.



The end result should look similar to the fly shown on the right, Jenna tied this fly from start to finish with basic instruction from myself the fly is now packed away for our next trip to St Clair or Glenbawn.





June 2008, Jenna with her 44cm Bass from Lake St Clair



May 2003, Eucumbene

The fight continued on and eventually he came close enough to the bank for me to have a go with the net. With my right index finger firmly clamping the line to the rod I confidently took a step forward and immediately sank deep into the mud, I scrambled nervously back up the bank to return to my position and check that the fish was still on the end of the line. It was about 8:30pm, a dark night and the nearest assistant was on the opposite bank. I worked the fish to a different part of the bank and carefully worked my way to the water's edge.



Where to from here, once again the AGM has come and gone and a new committee has been elected, without these people stepping up and volunteering their time the club would go the same way as Newcastle Fly Rodders, nobody wants that to happen. The club has a great bunch of members all willing to help out and above all learn about the graceful art of fly fishing, in our local waters and those far away. It's time for me to sit back and enjoy the fishing happy in

the knowledge that there are people out there willing to keep the club running it has been a great part of my life and hope to see it going long into the future.





Barrington Tops - Trout Splinter Group

By Chris Maloney

With a lack of weekends remaining before Christmas and the calendar filling with graduations, Christmas parties and other events that I can't avoid, I decided to combine a promised camping trip with my son Ethan and get to my first club outing (well for at least more than an cameo appearance).

So with the two trips combined I decided it was best we venture up to the tops for trout (Ethan is too restless for a canoe and has a passion for Rainbow Trout). So after getting some advice from Brent we raced up to the tops and started to explore. With Ethan on net duties and me with the fly rod we set out on our first stop. Unfortunately the bridge didn't work out, with no less than four bush walking groups we decided to go to plan B.



Plan B was back to the Manning River and cover some ground I fished in March, plus venture further upstream to see what it held. The first few pools didn't work out despite looking very promising, didn't help either that a camper decided to come and see what we were up to and stood at the head of pool gawking down stream at us. Then a couple of pools later we were on to our first rainbow, with some incredible jumping efforts and a rookie on the net we managed to land our first and only fish for the day. After some quick picks we released him back in the river for another day.



We continued to fish until lunch time with not much action. After lunch we continued to fish the remainder of the day with many more hook ups and sighted fish but were unable to get them to the net. We covered ground quickly and I was over ruled by junior on a few prime pools to fish, as he was getting a little impatient with fly changes and just wanted to get to the bridge where he was promised a lolly pop and dry clothes.

At the end of the day we spoke with some campers who said the first section we had fished had been fishing the previous day, which would explain why it was so quiet.

Thanks to Brent for organising a great trip and we had a great time meeting some more members. Also thanks to those who shared a few flies with Ethan, he has been keen to get back to the vice and tie some more ever since.





Dawson River Virgins

by Rod Dillon

The run leading to the river entry was some 75 metres long containing several areas where riffles indicated that rocks were just submerged or sitting out of the water. The Canadian being the first away confirmed my thoughts as the tell-tale clunk of rocks hitting hull could be heard. Subsequent Kayaks also generated the sound. At the entrance to the river it was easiest to step out and pull across an area almost devoid of water.

We had entered the Bretti reserve on the Dawson awestruck at the number of Vans present, probably upwards of 20. Two kayakers decided to go upstream and the remainder of us opted downstream. A quick search for a suitable launch and retrieve site found us through a gate and onto private property alongside.

Entering the river one could not help admiring the beauty of the area. A large pool stretched up and down from entry. Floating downstream the banks of both sides containing suitable snags and likely cover were peppered with bass flies, as they were the target.

Foxy and Mik in the Canadian, Kerry, Josh, Wayne, Rod E, Brad and myself in single yaks comprised the hunting party going downstream. Upstream were Noel and Tom. Brad remarked to me that upstream was probably the better option as that is where the fish would be due to the number of trees and stumps in the stream. Downstream were the bigger pools that suited the number in our group.

Out of the first pool and through a run that swung left and blindly to the right, hidden by bushes, was a large rock on the left side that if one was errant a solid connection would occur. All negotiated safely and again a small pool was peppered with no results. Another run swinging to the right was easily negotiated, although some opted for the run on the right which appealed to the younger. A magnificent rock wall on the left bank made me regret not having a decent camera with me though I would be hoping the gods were with me had I taken my Nikon D750.

Fishing the cover and weed areas of the large pool again drew a blank. Rod E and I decided to take the first of two runs to the next pool. We experienced a quick run to the left under some trees and caught Foxy and Mik, both fishing out of the canoe and at the end of the second run which was the better of the two.

There is a trout there they both stated. Joining them we threw cast after cast at the fish. Amazingly it didn't spook which suggested that it wasn't a trout. A second was sighted and all agreed they were Herring, or Spratt as I know them. After a fair bit of perseverance Mik hooked and landed one and Herring was confirmed.

Brad joined us via the second run.

Josh watch out for your rod yelled Mik as Josh came careering down the first run. Suddenly he was going backwards with the rod still erect in the air and all offering advice.



Thankfully he caught in the trees backwards but safe. Brad did the honours and waded to him and led his yak to safety.

Mik, Foxy and Rod E fished to the bottom of the pool and through the rapids into the next. Brad, Josh and I were joined by Kerry and Wayne and we moved to the bottom of the pool, electing not to go any further as Brad had also landed a Herring.

Fish on Yelled Josh and then promptly lost it. This was repeated a further 4 times before Josh brought the fish to hand. **That's my first Herring on fly** he proudly proclaimed. We all congratulated him.



For the next hour or so fish were hooked and lost and landed. Wayne after some time hooked up and landed a herring. **That is my first fish on fly and won't be my last** he said. The joy of the catch was evident. **Now to get one out of the yak on fly** he was heard to utter.



Wayne with first fish on fly.....photo courtesy Brad

Kerry also joined the party with one. **That would be a relief** said Brad **after Josh going to the carp bash you could not let him outdo you today. Kerry concurred.**



Mik, Foxy and Rod E joined us. Mik had had success downstream. We now had a picket fence fishing what had been a productive stretch of water. Overall we caught and released in excess of 30 herring with Brad taking the honours for number caught. Everyone caught fish which was excellent.



The picket line... photo courtesy of Brad

Successful technique was an old one. Across and down and when line straightens strip quick and I mean quick.

Most successful fly: a caddis pattern shown below



So the Dawson River accounted for the herring virginity of, as far as I am aware, Josh, Kerry, Wayne and Wayne first fish on fly.



It is an area deserving of far more time on the water than we were able to give and some other rivers are now on my bucket list. Another trip Brent?





An Afternoon on the Allyn

By Brent Blackwell

I was at the Man's Shed. One of the members mentioned he would have to visit his farm to see how many carves spring had delivered. Conversation continued over several weeks. I asked how he obtained water. The reply was the Allyn River ran on the boundary of the farm.

I asked about fishing and he said there were perch in the river! Permission to come visit and fish was obtained.

Mik and I went to the property on the Allyn River. Mik is still not sure where we went. I am not letting on. We found the property with some vague directions. Having arrived, Ron, showed us around. Into the Suzuki and off over the hills. Checking the cattle and showing us how to get down to the river.

After Ron showed us his lovely timber table, we drove down to the river. It is a little steep, low range four wheel drive and first gear.

We put on the waders and rigged up, then wandered downstream. The river is gentle here, with a nice pebbly bottom. The trees edge the river giving shade between the high banks. As we went downstream there were a few shallow holes. Here we encountered catfish, working their nests. In under the bank an eel slowly glided upstream. Still not seeing any water to hold bass. The river bottom was alive

with nymphs and gudgeon; water boatman were skating about; the dragon flies were moving.

Further downstream there was a nice hole. The river covered and ran against a steep rock wall. I went to the top and Mik was going to the bottom to fish. Worked the water, casting and retrieving through an arc. Bring the fly back across the bubble line. The fly stopped, it thumped back up the line, I on!

A short vigorous tussle ensued, the six weight bent over, the hole was free of snags, so let the fish have it way. The fish tired and was brought to hand. Mik came over and pulled out his tape measure. A nice river bass 400mm in length. The bass was admired, then gently released back to the river.

Mik moved down to the other end of the pool. On the way, he dropped his fly in next to a pump pickup, surprise a bass came up followed the fly, turned away and dropped out of sight. Mik then fished the lower end of the hole with no luck.

Moving downstream another nice pool appeared. A platypus was feeding the top of the pool. Mik cast around with no luck. Time to move back upstream. As we approached the spot where Mik had been rejected, a small rise



was seen. Mik had a cast, the bass came up and hovered under the fly. Rejected again!

We called in to let Ron know how we went, Said goodnight and hit the road. It was a good explore of some little water high on the Allyn. We did not see any mullet or herring.

It was getting late, so we waded back upstream. Just below where the car was parked, a nice little rock wall looked fishy, so Mik had a few casts, no luck. Time to go.

So keep your ears open, there fishing opportunities out there. Access to private property is to be respected.

Boat Review

By Wayne Salmon

4.6m Morning Star





Two boats were used on a recent trip to Eucumbene, one being a 4.55m Quintrex Top Ender owned by Peter and a proven performer and 4.6m Morning Star Bay Fisher belonging to Wayne Salmon.

The Morning Star is the latest fishing boat on the market, and its fronting up to be a star in both name and nature. It handled as good as any boat its size and proved to be a remarkably dry and stable boat, even with side winds at speed.

An aluminium centre console model powered by a 60HP Honda 4 stroke is new to the Australian market.

Designed in Australia and built in a Thailand car factory using car body shaping technology, it is constructed by pressing the sides and gunnels in one piece and the hull bottom in one piece. With high sides and reverse chines which direct the spray down and back makes for a very dry ride.

Unlike other aluminium boats it has no external keel. The keel is internal and forms a box construction below the sealed aluminium chequer plate floor filled with high density foam creating a very strong quiet hull. The sides and bottom are constructed using 3mm 5083 high strength aluminium with a 7mm section at the front forefoot which is the impact point when landing.

Fitted with a 55lb Minn Kota I-Pilot electric linked to a 7 inch Humminbird sounder made fishing multiple spots each day a breeze using the spot lock making anchoring unnecessary.

Unfortunately, during a mishap, the electric suffered a damaged propeller, but when you are hours from the nearest service centre and time is limited you need to think outside the square. A

quick trip to a small local hardware allowed us to purchase some high strength

Araldite which was liberally applied, parts lined up and 24 hours later a like (almost) new propeller pushed us along on the water.



The large uncluttered cockpit with no catch points made for easy flyfishing especially from the front raised casting platform. Gone are the days when we used to cover protrusions with shade mesh or bird mesh to stop the fly lines catching.



A live bait tank and 80 litre live well completes the fitout. For further info on these boats go to www.morningstarboats.com.au





Magic Mallacoota

By Jeff Yates



Have you ever been to Mallacoota?

What a beautiful place. Just over the border into Victoria, and a 10 hour drive from Newcastle, this little gem is far enough away from major population centres to have a reduced amount of fishing pressure. There is no commercial fishing which adds up to a potentially great fishery.

Located on the mouth of a twin lake system within the Croajingolong National Park, with a population of around a 900 people, this holiday haven was ripe for discovery. A 3 hour detour southeast from a planned trip to the Snowy Mountains gave us plenty of fly fishing practice for the week.

Departing Newcastle at precisely 6am, upbeat and ready for a 700km journey via Cooma and Bega to Mallacoota, the tidings were positive. Unfortunately, the boat trailer so lovingly maintained by Wayne threw a bearing cap not far from home. No spare parts places open at that time, so time to improvise.

A plastic water bottle taped on soon become roadkill as it spun off and was flattened by a passing semi. The next effort was a tapered

plastic coffee cup which when cut to size, and gaffer taped on, lasted the trip.



The accommodation options at Mallacoota are many and varied. It has a massive camping ground located directly on the water, b&b's and holiday units. We elected to stay at Harbour Lights holiday flats. The quaint, 2 1/2 star fisherman's hut was to be our comfortable abode for the next week.

Day 2 we hit the water and quickly caught a feed of black bream and flathead for dinner. The ride in Wayne's new 4.6m Morning Star boat was the smoothest trip that I had for a long time; a well finished, practical, dry and great valued fishing boat (see the review). A southerly change meant that it was time to



leave the water early and plan for another day.

Day 3 started badly with Wayne taking a dip while launching the boat. A quick swim in the cool water and a scurry on board was a bad omen for things to come. The day was windy and generally unproductive. Caught several small flathead on white Clousers. Wind played havoc with the fly gear. The spot lock on the electric was contrary, going off lock often at the worst time. We put this down to the strong current and wind, because in calmer conditions, the spot lock worked perfectly.

The rest of the week was spent investigating the lake margins trying to work out the best spots for a return trip. I threw every conceivable fly at the fish, but had some difficulty hooking bream. Check out the stacked fly boxes, and still not imitating the bream menu.

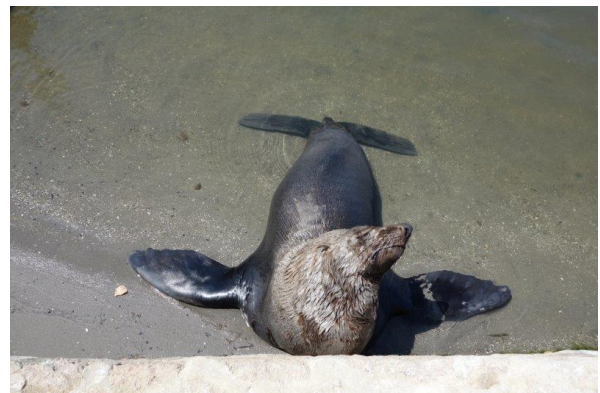


I'm always up for a challenge and spent many hours at the workbench tying flies. Tried Crazy Charlies, Bone fish flies, profile flies, poppers, Surf Candies, all met with the same negative response. This now sets the homework for the next 12 months, with further reading and investigation required.

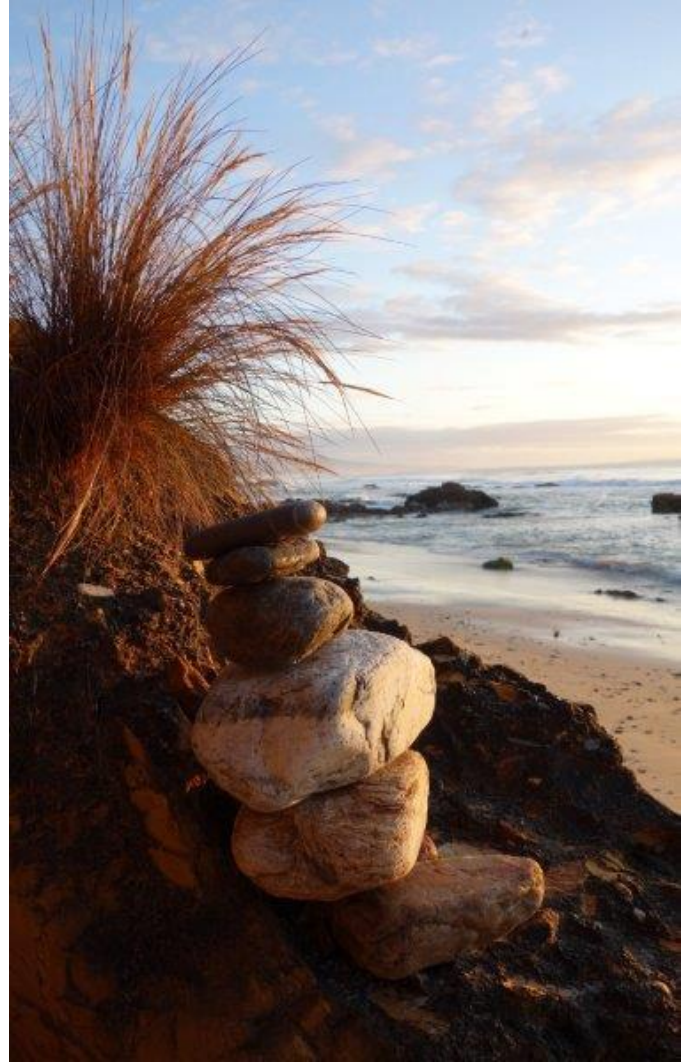
Back to the attractions of Mallacoota. As a flyfisher, we encompass the environment as much as the fishing, and this is what sets us apart from bait fishermen. At first light the calls of the birds roused us from deep slumber and the inquisitive Roos peered at us through the foliage.



Australian Fur Seals take up residence in the harbor, and one old feller was a fixture at the local fish cleaning station.



At the end of the week we were both relaxed, with somewhat of a sore casting arm, but ready for the 3 hour trip back to Lake Eucumbene for a continuation of our road trip. Check out a selection of the scenery from the area in the photos below.





Poem, Josie's 2015

Mindfulness on the fly

By Justin Smith

What can I smell?

I smell the scent of rain, distant drops on green
grass as the storm approaches
I smell the sweetness of pollen and the
pungency of manure mixed
With rotting weed along the wet shoreline.
I smell my unwashed fishing shirt and sweet of
my effort
Layered with fish and dirt and hickory smoke
I smell

What can I hear?

I hear the approaching storm growling warning,
drumming dominance
I listen to insects' chattering, buzzing, plopping.
In all directions, water slops, slapping shores
and splashing, ebbing, living,
A voice carries on the wind, my companion
calls?
One flapping splash is different, subtle, direct, a
fish perhaps?
I hear

What can I feel?

I feel the heat and moisture inside my waders
against my skin,
The sun is still warm on my face
I feel the tiredness and stiffness of my back and
shoulder each back cast and lift

I sense anticipation, formless and real within,
restless above my stomach
The mud sucks my shoe to the bottom, the
water hugs my thighs, a pin hole leaks cold
water
I feel the sun setting, and the air cooling on my
wet fingers and exposed cheeks
I feel

What can I see?

I see so much, too many colours, too perfect to
reflect upon
A setting sun humbled by description, purple
azure, colours not invented
Turning clouds into sculptures, into canvas no
frame can hold
The landscape is solid and fluid, sharply defined
but softening with evening shadows
Water light dances, blue smudge soft focus on
distant hills, I see myself from afar
I see

What do I know?

I know the moment where all senses meet and
are friends
And in the instant that is now, a universe is held
and tasted
The perfect motion of a fly-cast, set free to land
and tempt
Silhouette of an angler stroking the sky, each
frame and motion captured, fleeting and
timeless
Painting clouds with a slender brush, snake and
whip and delicate
I know



The Josie's experience

By Justin Smith

ONCE A YEAR, EVERY YEAR

This is not the first time I've written about a fishing trip, but neither is it the first time I've written about a trip to Josie's. For me, this is trip number four and report number three, but for some of my angling colleagues, it may have been trip number twenty four or more? So why come back to the same place, to catch the same fish, potentially break the suspension on the AWD on the way in, to sleep in dusty bunk beds, cook, live and eat in a tiny shack that some would call rustic and charming, whilst others including my lovely wife, if she were ever tricked into coming, would describe as third world and grounds for divorce.

But come back we do, happily and with much anticipation. So what is it, what makes Josie's, a collection of improvised shacks and shelters located within a private property on the shores of Lake Eucumbene, a must do, must come back to, fishing destination? The answer is simple in a way, because it's the same answer that applies to assessing any fishing trip: Was it enjoyable, was the fishing rewarding, were my fishing companion's good company and was it good value for money? For Josie's, the answer is yes on all counts, and so at the end of each trip, we begin planning for the next.

This reflection is not intended to be a how to, fishing report. I simply want to describe some

elements that need to come together to produce the positive outcome I have alluded to. Because Josie's is relatively remote, difficult to get in and out of, has no corner shop, no ice machine, no petrol station, no actual power from 11pm to 7pm the next day, you need to be organised, self-sufficient and well, ready for anything. To accomplish this, one must plan, prepare and pack with every contingency covered, but one must also do this in the context of the needs of the travel group, to avoid doubling up on some items that can serve the group as a whole. Therefore, planning must be collective and cooperative.

Because we live and fish together, Jeff, Peter, Wayne and I, literally for a week, conversing, cooking for, drinking with, snoring at, farting and showering....in close proximity...together, well, one must be compatible with and considerate of the other members of the group. This is imperative should one want to avoid well...mutual murder, or at least uncomfortable silence, and to this end, all must look to the good of the whole even as much as the self. In other words, bring a sense of humour and a willingness to pitch in, and the result will be that you will get back tenfold what you put in.

Going back year after year, same month, same shack, same companions and most times, the



same neighbours, sounds a bit like a fisherman's ground hog day, but it really isn't. Firstly, the weather, the fishing and the strategies to chase our quarry are always different. Last year it snowed, this year we bent under hot westerlies. Two years ago, the midge hatches were so thick, swallows got fat picking them on the fly, and the secret weapon was any dry size 16 or smaller, preferably with a tailing emerger even smaller, but not this year. This year, from day to day, the combination that revealed what the fish were taking cruelly and constantly changed. One day, a fuzzy-wuzzy reigned king, but not the next. On another day, the presence of a particular insect in abundance, was not appreciated at all or indicative of what the trout were feeding on. Yabby banks that on previous exploits had yielded many a monster brown, produced nothing of consequence on this trip!

So in a way, the combination of tough fishing brought on perhaps by unseasonably hot windy weather really tested the collective character of our little group, and in a cliché kind of way, brought us closer together, as each day someone may be lording the fisherman's crown, whilst another, the fisherman's frown. In these circumstances, support and encouragement are as important as basking in the adulations of one's peers. Tough fishing is the great leveller for fishing egos, but is also the circumstance that produces the greatest sense of reward, when persistence and a little luck as well, pays dividends. Peter is a great example of this; he simply, never ever gives up, changing flies, moving watching and casting till his arm can't lift another fly, and then, well he keeps going until he cracks the conundrum, or as I

suspect, the fish just give in, and offer consolation for his labours.

I'm different, I am at this stage in my journey, still a confidence fisherman, and when I'm hot, I'm unstoppable, but then...after coming off a very successful session of five good sized fish, all from one of Jeff's orange fuzzy-wuzzy flies, my confidence u-turned as the next three successive days produced not more than one adolescent rainbow and the only other 'reward' was a sore shoulder and a deflated ego. I for one, was certain I had lost my angling mo-jo!

Whilst I purport to be a fly fisherman who revels in the mindfulness of our sport, the beauty, skill and art and not the numbers of fish, I still expect to catch my share, and truth be told, then some. But gee, three days and not a gosh darned decent fish....mannnn, give me break! At times like these you very much appreciate, encouraging friends who understand your demeanour, and know when to build you up as well as pull you down. At such times, one finds consolation in good wine and a little reflection on the concept that tomorrow is another day, that the moment is where you live, not the past or the future. If you are open to the lesson, our lows are equally as important as the highs induced on those bagged-out sessions, where one can't do any wrong.

But Josie's is not just about 'collecting fish', it's about making memories. It's about finding the moment and growing it exponentially. Each year all of us lay a few more rows of bricks on a building made of friendship, hardship and



success. None of us want the building to be complete, so we keep coming and keep adding and will continue to I suspect, until Jeff's new titanium knees wear out.

If each of us has a role to play, than it is simply to be ourselves and to be accepted for that very quality. If Wayne's back is playing up, I always offer to rub it, and funnily, that seems to fix it even before I get a chance to touch him? Peter's optimism, calm and tremendous practical approach to everything feels like an insurance policy that covers any conceivable contingency, should disaster occur. Don't worry, Pete will fix it? If you are bogged to the axles, he'll get you out, a puncture on a mountainside, the tyre will be changed, a fish that cannot be caught, he'll prove you wrong.

And Jeff, well I thought we all looked up to him because he was the oldest...or looked it anyway. Sadly, not everyone who ages is also wise, not everyone who is rich, is generous, not everyone who is successful, is patient. If I told you Jeff was all of these, and more, he would deny it and make you suffer for saying it,....just joking, but just in case, I won't say this is Jeff, but is someone very much like him.

Me, I can't help it, mostly, these three individuals just make me laugh. In an

involuntary way, poking fun, and bouncing jokes just happens when I am in their company. Most of the time, we all laugh, sometimes, I am the only one laughing, sometimes the faces of my companions are blank and confused, which for some reason, makes me laugh some more. I have no idea why this is so.

As I recall, this year, the closest we all came to a disagreement, was the breaking of one of our only rules, not to talk about work at a fishing trip. Well that's a lot easier to do when you are retired. Even though you can talk about building pergola's, or fixing engines, customising boats or painting houses, that apparently is not work, that's more like a hobby, I'm told. On this definition I was much mistaken for all of those mentioned activities seem to me to be very much like, well work, When I brought up discussion topics like union advocacy, employment relations and with some regret, asked a fellow angling neighbour to describe his views on...his work, well, I crossed the 'no work' discussion line and had to accept a much deserved frown of shame. But, this is to be expected as I am young (ish) and am still naive to the wonderful world of retirement.

I am not religious, but if I were, I would say, god willing, we'll be back next year and anyway, why wouldn't he be willing, after all, it's Josie's.





"When's the last time ~~Peterson~~ had a vacation?"

Sponsors 2015-16



<http://www.flynguide.com.au>

Email sales@flynguide.com.au 0427904518 (John) 0417402540 (Glenn)

