



## 2020 February Newsletter

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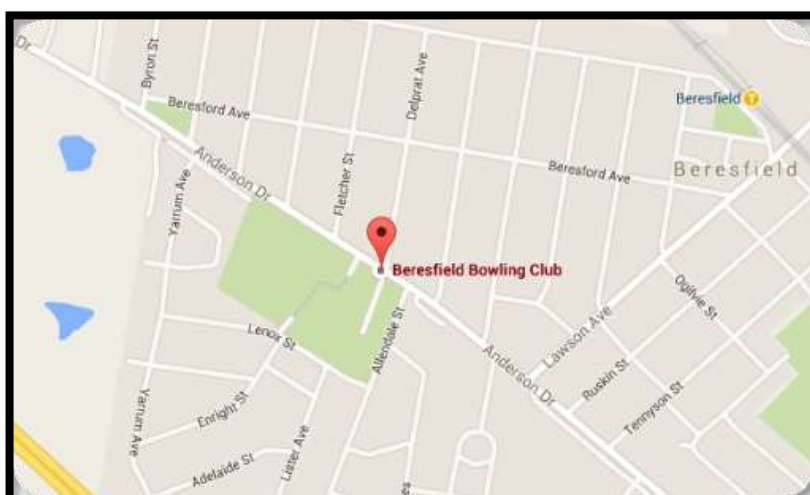
Peter Sewell

Kevin Croft

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

Beresfield Bowling Club  
Anderson Drive  
Bersefield  
At 7.00 pm



## *Editor's comments*

Jeff Yates



Welcome to a combined Feb/Mar newsletter. The stories were slow coming in, and prior to my annual pilgrimage to the Snowy, I had insufficient news to fill the spaces, but thankfully, I have had a rush since then.

Wayne has sent me a fantastic article on fishing in NZ, more specifically, Lake Otamangakau, located above Lake Taupo, in NZ's North Island. He travelled over there with fellow HVFFC member Rod E from Sydney, and sounds like they had a ball catching big bad trout. The article handles both flies and techniques, and is a great reference for would be fly fisherman intending to travel to the area.

Our Snowy trip was a real success, not from the size or numbers of fish caught, but more because of new country found and watching fellow enthusiasts tackle the area for a first time. Every year I go down, there is a new challenge; this year, it was hot summers and waters, bushfires, lack of rain, receding lake levels and lack of insect life. Any of these problems can be a cause on its own, yet alone all of them. Luckily, the areas we concentrated on were generally unaffected by bushfires, and we made the best of what we had. I think this may be the new norm. Our 2 new travelling companions, Dave and Glenn had a fantastic time, and were like kids in a lolly shop up on the Gungarlin River. I have tried to capture the trip in an accompanying article.

We had another summertime bass trip to St Clair, and as usual it did not disappoint. Catch up with Fred, Peter and myself as we tramp around the muddy shores of the receding lake, fishing over the thick weedbeds.

Another fantastic casting article from our good friend Allan Erkert, who has generously supplied this plus previous newsletter articles. Having fished with Dave Moppett in the Snowy and looked at his technique, I have become envious of their casting skills. Good casting technique opens up options and is a must for all fly fishermen in their quest to improve catches and for greater fishing enjoyment. Rumour has it that one of our members is being tutored in the skills of casting and will soon sit for certification.



The giant raffle was drawn at the Mar 4 meeting. Cherie has done a marvelous job coordinating the event, which has raised a substantial amount to go towards our stocking fund.

A special thanks to our generous sponsors.

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize** is three nights for up to 7 people at Arthurs Lake Retreat located at Arthurs Lake in the Central Highlands of Tasmania, generously donated by Rachel and Michael Sylvester valued at \$780.00 **won by Tom Jones**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize** is an SP 8# fly rod and reel combo complete with backing, fly line, leader and extras worth approx. \$350.00 **won by Mal Aubert**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize** is a \$150.00 BWC Flies voucher, plus additional flies for total value of \$250.00 **won by Mal Aubert**



## *President's Report*

G'day members,

Welcome all to February's 2020 Newsletter. By now everyone should hopefully be getting into the swing of things and catching plenty of fish on fur, feather and whatever else flies may be tied from now.

Rod and Narelle Fox have again excelled at the Trip Master's job in hosting another outing at St Clair. From all accounts it was a good weekend, can't wait to read the report.

Rod and Narelle are stepping up again with the Lake Lyell trip in March, see the calendar for the dates.

Jeff has up-dated the badly neglected first aid kit in the trailer with a newer model containing in-date equipment. Who would have thought a band aid or sticking plaster could run out of date? As safety is everyone's responsibility and the safety of members and guest's is paramount on club outings, we need to make sure we comply with current legislation and look after each other. Thank you to those involved for bringing this to the committee's attention.

Current dam levels: St Clair 37%; Glenbawn 40%; Lostock 94%.

There are a few other good reads to keep you entertained so sit back with a cuppa and enjoy the read. Next issue, there should be a good story on New England Cod.

The next club meeting is on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March at Bero Bowlo: see you all there for a 7.00pm start or earlier for a meal.



Scruffy flies and  
big fish.  
Darren Foster  
President,  
HVFFC 2020



Month	Date	Venue/Event	Trip Master	Contact Number
January	18 <sup>th</sup>	<del>Fly Tying @ Mai Wei with BWC Flies</del>	<del>Darren</del>	0413392774
February				
February	05 <sup>th</sup>	<del>Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo</del>	All	
February	28 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup> , 01 <sup>st</sup> M	Lake St Clair – Bass, Yellowbelly	Rod Fox	
March	06 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	0407195508
March	27 <sup>th</sup> , 28 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup>	Lithgow – Lake Lyall	Rod Fox	0407195508
March				
March				
April	03 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
April	11 <sup>th</sup> - TBC	Bunyah – Silver Perch	Patrick	0458781675
April	TBC	Aust. Fly Fishing Festival		
May	01 <sup>st</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
May				
May				
June	05 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
June	12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup>	Lake St Clair – Bass, Yellowbelly		
June				
July	03 <sup>rd</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
July	18 <sup>th</sup> - TBC	Xmas in July & Club Awards Night	Cherie	0410555019
July				
August	07 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
August	TBC	RISE Film Festival – Bero Bowlo	Darren	0413392774
August	TBC	Swansea Salmon Classic	Cherie	0410555019
September	04 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
September				
September				
October	2 <sup>nd</sup>	AGM/General Club Meetings at Bero Bowlo	All	
October				
October				
November	06 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
November				
December	4 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
December				

## *Bass storm*

Jeff Yates

St Clair is not really on our agenda as a summertime fishing location, but when a trip was offered, how could I refuse. This is a location that excels during the colder months, but as the long, hot days arrive, the fish tend to go deep, with the exception of an evening window of activity. So, tactics must evolve to meet the challenge.

The countryside was looking lush, with a carpet of bright green grass covering formally parched fields, a far cry from a few weeks ago when bushfires raged across the state. We had to select 4wd (for those without Jeeps) to negotiate the muddy hillock leading to our destination. We pulled up as a bait fisherman was leaving the water, questioning our permission to fish on the private property. A quick engagement about the virtues of fly fishermen and making him aware that our club stocks the dam, had him inviting us to drive in and park closer to the water, but him not being the owner, we declined his offer.



The afternoon was muggy, with the threat of storms as the swirling dark clouds enveloped the surrounding ranges. On the way to the water we had to stop and put the rain coats on as the big drops began to fall. We soon steamed up under the coats with the temperature still around 30 degrees, but any discomfort was soon ignored as we approach the water after a long hike.

First observations were that the flats and shallower water were heavily weeded, and almost impossible to fish, so it was decided to fish deeper drop-offs where the weed margins were minimal. It wasn't long before the slipping and sliding on the muddy banks paid dividends, when I hooked a fine bass that I had to encourage from the weeds. Looking along the old creek bed to the next point, Fred was also hooked up and weeded, but convinced the bass to swim free under a bombardment of goolies aimed into the weeds.





Fred and myself worked our way along the steep slopes, targeting structure and weed edges and we were slowly increasing our tally with the occasion expletive, as another fish would bury itself deeply in the weed. After a while, with the aid of a heavier leader, the fish were quickly surfaced, and almost like water skiing, they were shuttled across the top of the weed to finish their fight at our feet: unconventional, but it worked!

It was nearly dark and the storms were raging around the surrounding mountains, lightning lit up the evening sky, and rain bucketed around the lake, but we were in the eye of the activity and remained comparatively dry, however, we best not take too many more chances, time to head back; but where's Peter?

Leaving Fred in the dark on the track back, I went forward into the now pitch dark to find our fishing buddy, obviously lost in the moment. A 20 minute hike around the island found Peter in his glory still landing fish. It took some encouragement to call it a night, and head back to join Fred.

After a tiring return scramble to the car, our collective 200 years plus was telling, and I don't mind admitting, I was stuffed. We stripped off the wet and sweaty gear, and slipped on the shorts and had a quick cuppa before heading back home, though the storm we saw on the hills was now over the road. The 30 minute trip to Singleton was at 60kph as the bucketing rain reduced our visibility to around 100m.

Another interesting trip to our favourite bass haunt with around 25 fish landed and many more left behind in the weeds. There has been a small increase in the lake level, but if any more storms like the one we just passed through occur, the level is sure to quickly rise.

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## *Lake Otamangakau NZ North Island (Lake "O")*

Wayne Salmon

Rod Esdaile accompanied me to NZ for my annual February trip to the north island. Based in Turangu, Lake O is a 20 minute drive up into the Tongariro National Park where the lake is part of the hydro electric system. Being in the middle of summer and with low rainfall in the north island we were a bit concerned that the water levels could be low and water temperature would be high. Last year the power company had the intake tunnel out of service for 2 months for maintenance and caused



very high water temperatures enough for us to stop fishing as some fish were seen floating around the dam. First look at the dry outfall canal was worrying so we checked the inflows to the dam and were pleased to see some flow even though it was directed out of the dam for environmental flows in the Whanganui River.

The dam can be fished successfully from either a boat or from the shore. The shore based options are limited but exciting sight fishing to large browns in the 6lb to 8 lb range in half a metre of water 2 rod lengths away. The weed beds form passage ways and these fish can be seen doing their beat with up 4 at a time within casting range. A greased 8lb leader to a size 14 damsel or pheasant tail nymph pattern were the undoing of the fish. Rods experience and those trying to catch them landed about 1 in 4 as they really turn it on in shallow water.

My preference for fishing Lake O is out on the lake where a number of techniques are successfully employed. The lake is around the size of Lake Liddell with large weed beds that are the attractors for the trout. They hold a huge quantity of food and at this time of year the damsels are in full hatch and are the main food source for the trout. The damsels are coloured green and red which are the colour of both sexes and different flies are needed for both. I tie all my flies on Black Magic hooks and have not had one straighten yet where other lighter gauge hooks have. The fly pattern used for the red damsel is a marabou tailed nymph on size 14 unweighted and the green damsel pattern is an olive marabou tailed damsel on size 14 hook. There are weighted patterns also for different fishing methods which I will discuss later.



*#14 Red damsel  
and Green  
damsel  
unweighted  
nymphs*

The usual method of fishing for the mostly rainbows in the deep water is an indicator rig using a rod length of 12lb mono and a rod length of 8lb fluoro down to a size 12 bead headed nymph with a half metre from the hook to the unweighted red nymph. The indicator is located at the join and fished at a rod length depth. When fishing this method do not wait for the indicator to go down as even the slightest unnatural movement is probably a rejected bite. This method usually accounts for the largest fish as I can attest as on day one I lost my first fish at the net after a 20 minute fight which was quite possible in excess of 10lb.

It became clear from other fisherman that the main body of fish were concentrated in the colder water of the dam and this was moving daily with wind currents and those who used the currents caught more fish. A check by Rod showed the water temperature away from the inlet at 22 degrees which is not in their preferred range so we concentrated on the colder water with good results.

On a previous trip I noticed a guide was spending a lot of time near the dam inlet where the cold water was prevalent and found good shallow water fishing to tailing trout. Changing my technique to still using the 18ft leader but removing the indicator and using 2 unweighted nymphs I accounted for several large fish during the trip which is heart in mouth fishing in less than a metre of weed filled water. This was made more difficult when I went down to size 16 pheasant tails after they were refusing the size 14 damsels.

This method was also successful in the deep water after noticing fish cruising a beat around the weed beds and on the first occasion accounted for 7 rainbows in the range of 4lb to 7lb. Keeping 4 for the smoker I released all other fish and these were the only fish we kept for the trip. There is nothing better than watching large fish swim away after a great fight.



*Weighted  
versions of the  
same damsel flies*

Another couple of Aussies who were fishing near us daily in the deeper water and were catching a lot of fish told us of another method they were using which was using 2 rod lengths of leader same as before but using only an indicator with the weighted size 14 damsel nymph below it. The fly they used was a Tasmanian Shrek variation with a small tungsten bead. Their weighted version of the red nymph is shown above. This was different to us as we have always used the unweighted nymph behind a weighted. The depth of fishing varied from 2 foot to 4 foot on different days and trial and error found the correct depth. The retrieve method varied



daily also from a dead drift to a slow retrieve but it was not till the last day that we got to look at the flies they used.

Lake O is a unique blue ribbon fishery with a daily limit increased from 3 to 6 in recent years. There is a lot of argument about this limit as fisheries believe the larger fish need to be removed to allow the naturally spawned fish to survive and there are others who believe that it should be C&R only. It is hard to argue with the results that Rod and I got with around 30 fish landed for the trip so the strategy appears to be working. All fish except one where in the range of 5lb to 8lb and are getting bigger each year.

The fish we smoked were vacuum sealed and were declared and brought through Australian customs without problem.



*Wayne with some magic fish from Lake Otamangakau NZ North Island*



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## *Breaking in new blood, Alpine country 2020*

Jeff Yates

*Glengarry property, Lake Jindabyne*



A week trip to Jindabyne is never complete without an adventure to the Thredbo and Gungarlin Rivers; but this trip also included Gaden Hatchery, Rainbow Lake, Guthega and Island Bend, as well as the almost daily coffee fix in town.

A trip always starts with the planning phase. Luckily, I have accommodation booked a year in advance at Glengarry, a ski lodge situated on the banks of Lake Jindabyne. It accommodates up to 8 people, but 4 or 5 is comfortable.

Next we lock in the team. Peter, Ian and myself have been regulars for the past 10 years, and we always like to invite a couple more to add to our diversity, and give others a chance to experience this unique adventure. New club members, Dave and Glenn, travelled from Coffs Harbour, slept overnight in a freezing carpark in Canberra and were on the water before we arrived on the Saturday.

Last, but not least, we look at the water levels, temperatures and this year, bush fires. Fires Near Me App <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me> indicated devastating burns up above the headwaters of the Gungarlin river, but fortunately, had not travelled down the Alpine plateau, to the lower reaches that we were planning to fish. Temperatures had been high over summer, with little rain and the lake level was down 12% on last year <https://www.snowyhydro.com.au/our-energy/water/storages/lake-levels-calculator/>, all telling factors as we would find out later.

Trip planned, a constant feed of team emails about conditions, food, accommodation, fish reports, travel arrangement, clothes, food lists and fishing gear poured out to ensure we were all on the same page. The 8 hour trip to Jindy was broken with lunch at the Cooma Kettle and Seed, best coffee in Australia. While at Cooma, a visit to the Alpine Angler is a must, however we probably had more fly tying gear than we needed, so it was only a quick visit.

Meanwhile, Dave and Glenn were up at the Diggings, on the Thredbo River, doing battle with the line shy, super spooky trout, in the crystal clear water. 20 degrees with low humidity, a far cry from the 34 degrees in Coffs and 90% humidity just the day before. Besides the trout, the boys were astounded by the number of wombat holes dotting the river flats, ready to swallow up the inattentive adventurer.

Rabbits, rabbits everywhere. Haven't seen that many since I was a kid. The hills move under the sheer mass of numbers. Warrens are easily seen, with fresh dirt mullock hills silhouetted against the emerald green carpet of fresh growth from recent storms. Shame the trout were not on the same diet as the rabbits! We found the lake fishing really difficult; clear, warm water, with the

grassy banks 10's of meters up the banks. There was no insect hatches and the mud-eye hatches, prevalent at this time, was absent. This was a baptism of fire for the new guys who have not done any night-time trout fishing. Dave warmed to it, eventually scoring a lovely 4lb brown on the last night, but Glenn, well, not that impressed.



*Glenn on the top of the world at 5250ft elevation on Rainbow Lake, formed with the damming of Diggings Creek for the long abandoned Kosciuszko Hotel.*

The lake that did impress Glenn was Rainbow Lake. Dave and Glenn tripped up the Kosciuszko road toward Perisher, and tramped the 1.5km into the lake. This beautiful water hole located at an elevation of 5250 feet, was formed when the Diggings Creek was dammed, for the long since abandoned Kosciuszko Hotel. It holds brown and rainbow trout, some of which are a fair size, being ex-brood stock from Gaden Hatchery. Ask Glenn about fishing light line to big fish! Photos that were taken from the day show a beautiful little lake surrounded by alpine shrubs and a plentiful quantity of water foliage. Truly magnificent.

I poured over the 1:50,000 hiking map with the lads, tracing out the route to the lower Gungarlin. They were so quick in departing camp, that they left their food behind, and lived for 2 days on snack bars. They made an excuse about a storm and wet swags to come back early, but we know they were hungry! But, what a time they enjoyed. Glenn was concerned about the XTrail handling the wet dirt track, but it proved unfounded, as it easily handled the conditions. Was the trip worth it? 2 days later they were up there again, this time with a couple of t-bones and matches.

The Gungarlin offers beautiful scenery, a spectacular river meandering down an alpine valley and heaps of wildlife. Platypus, deer, dingoes and brumbies were the highlights, but another critter, the proverbial Tiger snake did not impress Dave. What did impress him was a couple of larger fish dotted among the numerous smaller trout that they were landing. Although the biggest fish caught was only 350mm, the larger fish when sighted were too difficult to catch, a challenge for the next time, as I'm sure they are not finished with this river.





*Dave and Glenn fell in love with the beautiful Gungarlin*

Besides the fishing, we caught up with the guys in Jindabyne's High Country Fly Fishing shop for some expert advice. We were to visit them later in the week to test new fly rods. Also on the agenda was Gaden Trout Hatchery, where millions of fish are produced each year by Dept of Primary Industries for distribution around the country. The brood stock includes Rainbow trout, Brown trout, Brook trout and Atlantic salmon; these fish are huge, and can be attracted to the surface with handfuls of pellets purchased from the hatchery. We took the remainder of our pellets to the nearby Thredbo river, where more, obviously well trained trout to maybe 15lb, muscle their way around the dark pools at any sign of free food. These fish are not your average river fish, and many hard hours were put in further up the river for little result, on slimmer wild varieties.



*Feeding pellets to Thredbo leviathans*

Mid-week the wind got up and fishing was put on the back burner for a day. We decided to take a look at the 5200ft high Guthega Dam, which is an integral part of the Snowy Hydro Scheme, and was formed by the damming of the Snowy river below Kosciuszko base. It is also the highest of the Snowy impoundments. It looked really promising as a fishing location, but I would hate to be there in winter with signs advising not to walk on the ice that forms across the dam. The nearby hills were dotted with the skeletons of past bushfires, and ski runs came right down to the tiny community. We went for a walk across the wall and took a few photos. We know there's fish in the dam because we could see a lonely trout swimming at the foot of the spillway. We left Guthega to go down to Island Bend dam for a look, but access is a little more difficult, and probably not worth pursuing as a viable fishing option.



*Peter, Zulu,  
Glenn, Dave  
and Jeff on  
Guthega Dam  
wall*

Peter exited early from the trip, unfortunately having to attend a funeral of a friend in Sydney, who incidentally, saved Peter from drowning many years ago. As they say, the show must go on, so we gave the lake a final hammering on the Friday night before we departed, and I must say our confidence was a little dented by its poor performance during the week. At that stage we had caught half a dozen smallish fish, include a Brookie that Peter landed.



*Pete's  
Brookie and  
Dave on  
rocks in  
Creel Bay*

Our night-time rig consists of a 6wt wff line, with a 7ft level 12lb leader using a dual fly rig. Sounds a little agricultural to the average troutie, but at night throwing two #8 flies into wind, with the chance of hooking a large fish requires a degree brutality not adopted for the day time show. Last thing you want are tangles or snags busting off your precious flies or trophy fish. The only downside is any ill-timed strike or a rampaging brown that may cost you a fish or even a good rod, but where there is a tackle shop in town, a new Sage heals the wounds. Talking of new rods Zulu christened his on the last night with a fine brown, and Dave showed us up with a magic 4lb Brownie. Unfortunately, the bite window was extremely short, with 3 fish in 10 minutes, then nothing, but we certainly finished the week on a high.

The locals are doing it tough after the bushfires, and every business owner comments on the lack of normal summertime patronage. I think we supported them pretty well during our stay, and hope that this traumatic fire season is not repeated again next year. That's it for another year in Alpine country, a great place to visit, fish and enjoy with the company of new found friends. Thanks for you photo contributions Dave and Glenn, a picture tells a thousand words.





*Glenn crossing Gungarlin, Zulu with 2 nice browns, beautiful Rainbow lake, Hayshed Bay rocks, Dave on the Gungarlin, Glengarry entrance not welcoming to poachers.*



## *Lake St Clair February outing*

Rod Fox

After a shaky start to numbers for this event, we ended up with 18 members and 1 guest attending. 15 stayed for dinner, with 3 coming just for the day. The weather for Friday started well, however, it got windy in the afternoon and played havoc with fishing from the kayaks for Alex and Foxy. Notwithstanding the conditions, Foxy hooked up and landed a 40cm bass on a Craig's Nighttime. Fiona also caught a bass on Friday night.



Most people arrived on Friday, and started fishing on Saturday. Limited success was experienced throughout the day, with Ray and Shane catching one bass each, and Alex catching his first Silver Perch on a cicada pattern. Fred caught 5 bass late that night. Everyone enjoyed Saturday night's dinner and friendship with most having a fish afterwards, with some success. It was great to see Rod and Lorraine Dillon at the event, with Rod passing his knowledge of flying casting onto two new members of the club.

The mornings were fresh and the sunrises and sunsets were spectacular with Sunday morning's sunrise casting a multitude of colours on the western bank, mingling with the fog.

A special thanks to Brent for picking up the club trailer and bringing it to the event.

A great weekend was had by all.

### ***Ray and Fiona wrote:-***

We were lucky enough to spend this weekend at the club's Lake St Clair outing.

The trip leaders, Mr & Mrs Fox, put on beautiful weather for an excellent turnout.

We spent some very enjoyable hours in the shade of the tree of knowledge.

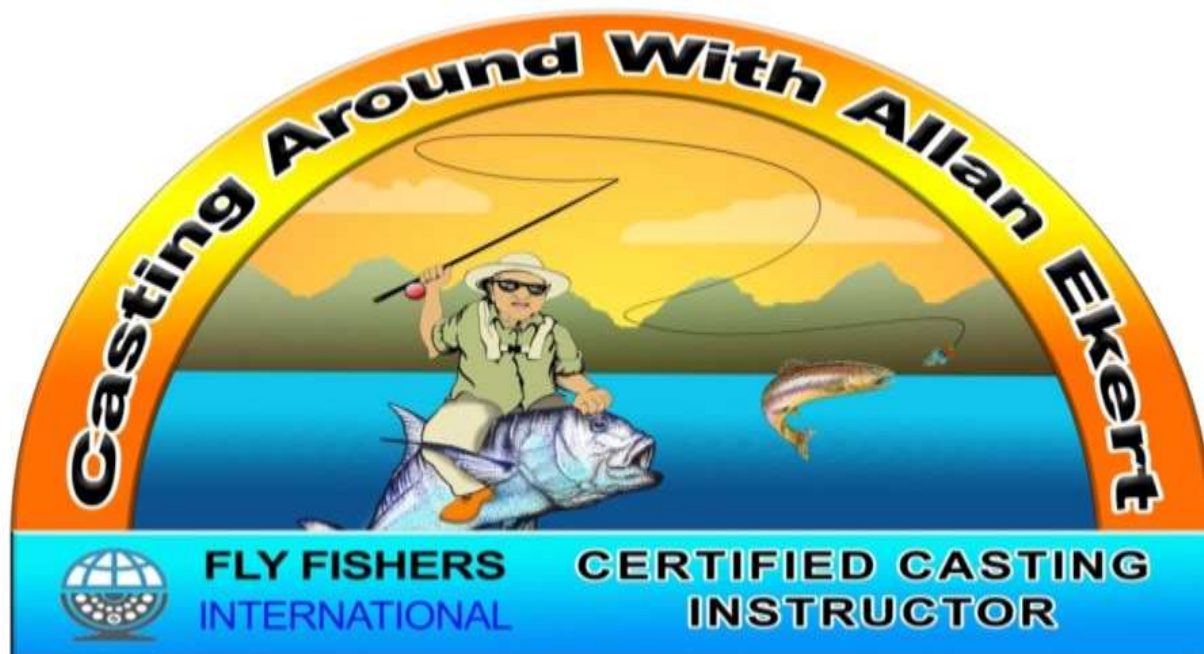
Then with the help of the club trailer we were presented with a delicious dinner.

We also had a fine time having a fish from the bank.

So thanks to all for a great weekend.







**March 2020**

## **Casting With Your Non Dominant Hand**

My recent problem with tennis elbow reminded me of how important it is to be able to cast with both hands. I'm not referring to casting double handed; but rather the ability to use your left or right hand on a single handed rod. The ability to use your non dominant hand is a great asset. It will help when injuries occur and more importantly open up more opportunities for presenting the fly to those tricky trout. I hope this month's column will convince you to give it a go.

We all fall into one of four categories when using our hands. There are people who are right-handed, left-handed, mixed-handed (prefer using their left hand for some tasks and their right for others), and people who are truly ambidextrous (can use both the right and left hand equally well). Only about one percent of the population is truly ambidextrous. That leaves a lot of people with a non dominant hand and the opportunity to use it more.

I'm right handed and use my right hand for just about everything I do. I had to start using a computer mouse with my left hand when I developed RSI and I can cast a fly rod with my left when my right needs a rest. But without doubt I am right handed. Whenever I have needed to use my left hand I have had to spend some time teaching myself. It is possible to teach yourself to change hands as any left handed person will testify. Back in the bad old days left handed kids were made to change hands to write. Even today our world is right dominated and it is often easier to learn to use the other hand than find a left handed tin opener or pair of scissors.

As a fly fisher there are many reasons why you would want to be able to use both hands. I've already talked about how tennis elbow provided the motivation for me to learn to cast with my left hand. The late, great Lefty Kreh started his fly fishing career as a left hander but due to a bicep injury had to teach himself to cast right handed – and he did a pretty good job at that! Injuries aside there are other reasons to put the fly rod in your non dominant hand. When the wind blows from the wrong direction being able to swing the rod on the other side of your body can be a lifesaver. Two people fishing from a small boat can cause problems if they cast with the same hand so being able to switch hands can save a lot of frustration and pierced ears. When you are on the wrong side of the river for a right handed presentation being able to cast left handed beats having to cast across your shoulder all day.

What follows are some techniques and practices I have used to teach casting with the non dominant hand. If you are ambidextrous you probably don't need to read any further but you may want to know what those of us who are less endowed have had to go through to keep up.

Learning any new skill is easier the younger you start. Children find learning a new language or changing from left to right handed easier than adults. If you want to learn to cast with your non dominant hand, start now. The sooner you start the easier it will be and the less time you will need to undo bad habits. Whenever I teach a beginner to cast a fly rod I always try to get the rod in their non dominant hand as soon as possible. Not only does this start the process of being able to cast with either hand it helps reinforce what is being taught about the casting stroke.

The most difficult part of learning to cast with your non dominant hand is developing strength. If we are right handed we tend to do everything with that hand and that means it becomes stronger. The reason most people don't switch hands is not because they can't; it is because their dominant hand is stronger. I can cast with my left hand but nowhere near the distances I can achieve with my right. Even accuracy is better in my stronger hand as there is less chance of the rod deviating from my chosen path.

Maybe you will never achieve the same strength in both hands (unless you are truly ambidextrous) but there is a lot you can do to strengthen your non dominant hand. If you start by swapping hands for everyday tasks it doesn't take long for the muscles to develop. If you are really serious you can do exercises just like the gym junkies do. I make a point of trying to use my left hand as much as I can when I am fly fishing. But when it comes to the final delivery shot I usually revert to my stronger side. The more you can use your non dominant hand the more comfortable it will feel and the more effective it will be.

Once you have developed some strength in your non dominant hand you are ready to learn the timing and tempo needed to make a cast. It doesn't really matter which hand we are talking about the same principles apply. One of the most effective drills is a simple pantomime. Pretending to cast without a rod in hand instills proper muscle memory. It's how many of us learned how to cast to begin with, and it's a great way learn how to cast with your non-dominant hand too. Going through the motions without a rod in hand allows you to slow the tempo down and get the correct timing.

In my teaching I often use "clacker sticks" which provide an audible prompt for the forward/stop/pause - backward/stop/pause that make up the casting stroke. These can be used one at a time; in either hand or

simultaneously. If you have someone to help you they can set the pace with their clacker stick while you try to synchronize. The sound of the ball bearings “clacking” gives immediate feedback if the stroke is correct.



Being able to see exactly what you’re doing in real time is important if you want to be able to cast with your non dominant hand. You could make a video but pausing your cast in order to look at the video doesn’t allow you to make adjustments while you’re actually casting. Instead, try practicing in an open area on a sunny day, and position yourself so that you can watch your shadow as you cast. It might sound silly, but you’d be amazed at how much easier it is to adjust the timing when you can see it in real time. You could also use the glass facade of a building as a mirror to watch what you are doing.

Another technique I use is to try casting two rods at the same time – one in each hand. Use two rods of similar line weights carrying the same amount of line. Pinch the line and practice false casting at a fixed distance with both rods in unison. It might sound difficult but it is surprising how quickly even beginners can make this work. Sometimes casting with the non-dominant hand alone can feel awkward. Add the other hand and suddenly they mimic each other and it all comes together easily. Watching both lines also helps as it provides immediate visual feedback. Once you can produce consistent tight loops with both hands you are well on your way to being an ambidextrous fly caster.





Learning to cast with your non dominant hand is not as difficult as you might think. Like everything in life you just need to be motivated and find the time to practice. Using the techniques and tactics I have described anyone can learn to cast with either hand. If you are still a one handed caster you should do something about it now. Don't wait until injury occurs or that difficult fishing situation makes you wish you could use the other hand. Put that fly rod in your non dominant hand and get out there and give it a go. There is one proviso, however. If your dominant hand casting is rubbish then don't expect your non dominant hand to be any better.

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*Brett with his monthly fish shots*

# *Fishy Pics*



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*Dave with his first big  
colourful Jindy brown*

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# *Scape Pics*



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*Bullocks Flat Hut on the  
Thredbo River just below  
the junction with the Little  
Thredbo*

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**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – 2019/2020**

Fees due by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club Incorporated (the “**Association**”)  
(incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*)

I, .....  
[insert full name]

of .....  
[insert address]

.....  
[insert email]

.....  
[insert contact number]

☐ Full member  
(\$40.00 p.a.)

☐ Junior member  
(\$20.00 p.a.)

☐ Family membership\*\* (✓ applicable)  
(\$50.00 p.a.)

I hereby apply to renew my membership of the Association for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 until 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020  
By renewing my membership, I agree to comply with and be bound by the constitution of the Association  
for the time being in force.

.....  
Signature of applicant

Date: .....

\*\* Members renewing a Family Membership must complete the information on page 2 below.

**LODGEMENT AND PAYMENT**

Once completed, please sign, scan and email back to [darrenfoster65@bigpond.com](mailto:darrenfoster65@bigpond.com)

Or alternatively mail to:

Darren Foster  
20 O'Donnell Crescent  
Metford NSW 2323

Membership fees can be paid by cheque or via bank transfer.

If paying by bank transfer, please use your name as a reference for payment so your payment can be easily identified.

Bank transfer should be paid to the following account:

Name: Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club  
BSB: 637 000  
Account No: 780 089 059

Please make cheques payable to **Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club**

**Important Note: Your renewal fees must be received by the Association no later than 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to avoid your membership lapsing, after this date your membership will no longer be valid.**

### **Application for Family Membership**

To be eligible for Family Membership, and have the Association's insurance cover extend to include all applicable family members, the following conditions will apply:

- Family Membership is available for a member and their immediate family members only (i.e. wife/husband/partner and children under 18 years of age at the start of the new membership term) and does not include Grandparents or member's siblings or other relations, etc.
- Member's children 18 years or older will be required to join as a full member
- Each family membership is only entitled to 1 vote at club meetings.
- the requested information in the following table must be supplied in respect of all people proposed to be covered by a Family Membership:

<b>Full name</b>	<b>Date of birth</b>	<b>Relationship to member</b>

Office use only:

Date payment received: .....

Membership fee received: \$......

Payment method: .....



*HVFFC members wish to “thank you”*

### *Arthur's Lake Retreat*



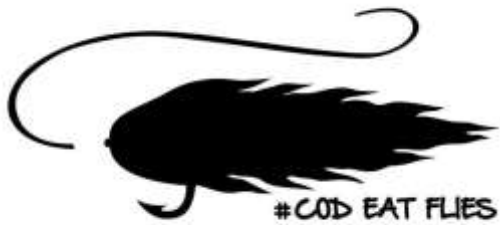
Arthur's Lake Retreat is located in the Central Highlands of Tasmania at Arthur's Lake. The home is located just 3 minutes' walk from the lake, in a private setting. This makes for a perfect weekend getaway. Please contact Rachel on 0428451720 or Michael on 0400721544



### **Flies by Fedeles**



<http://flytyerman.blogspot.com>



**JASON STRATFORD**

LOGICUS Images

E: [jason@LOGICUSImages.com](mailto:jason@LOGICUSImages.com)

M: 0468 46 54 54

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/logicusimages>

