



## 2020 March Newsletter

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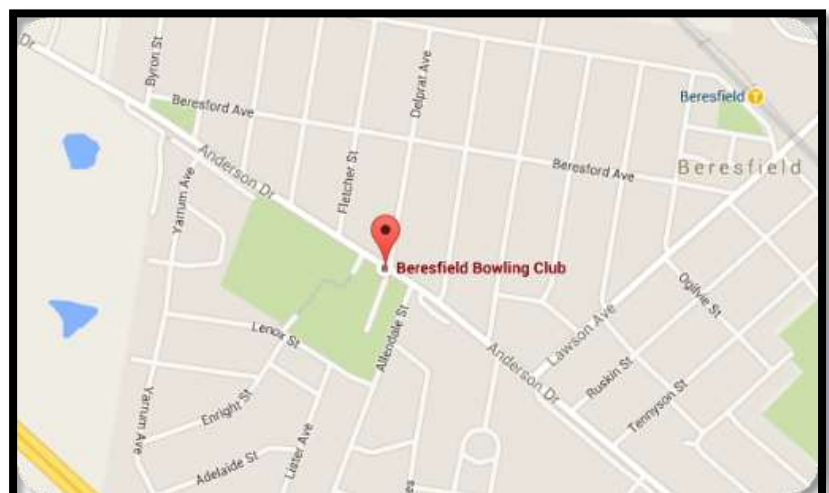
Peter Sewell

Kevin Croft

Robert Probert

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



We have been able to consistently get the monthly newsletter out over several years, but the pressure to fill the pages is no more evident than this month. I have added an article that Lawrence wrote back in 2011, as well as a couple of old photos, however, I was saved at the bell by a fantastic article from Brett, fishing for bream in the Wallis Lakes area, and the ever faithful and talented, Allan Ekert from our Coff's chapter.

Allan has written an article on Cabin Fever, and another article on casting. Casting is not a strong feature of our club, but good casting equates to a more enjoyable and relaxed attitude to our sport. I will follow up on Allan's articles next month with a basic tutorial on casting called *Fly Casting Skills Challenge Program, Bronze Level 1*.

**HOMESCHOOLING  
IS GOING WELL.  
TWO STUDENTS  
SUSPENDED FOR  
FIGHTING AND ONE  
TEACHER FIRED  
FOR DRINKING  
ON THE JOB.**



## *President's Report*

Welcome to the March 2020 Newsletter.

At present, we are finding ourselves in un-precedented times due to the COVID-19 virus and the rapid development of events unfolding before us on a daily basis (feels like almost an hourly basis though).

With the situations changing daily and authorities introducing new restrictions and regulations to help prevent the virus from spreading, we, as members of the Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club need to make sure we are all doing the right thing by following any reasonable directive from authorities and not place ourselves or others at risk at any time what-so-ever. By practicing good personal hygiene, maintaining social distancing and enforcing self-isolation where applicable and also encouraging others to do the same, hopefully we can all play a part in flattening the curve and stopping this virus in its tracks.

The health and well-being of all club members is of paramount importance and following the bowling club's directive of no more meetings until notified otherwise and in line with the governments instructions of social distancing, I had no choice but to cancel all club outings until such time arises when we can go back to enjoying what we all love to do – flicking all manner of fluff, fur and synthetics at anything fishy in anticipation of our line coming up tight against something other than a snag.

Now, just because we cannot meet face-to-face or gather in small groups, it does not mean we cannot keep in touch or still have a meeting. Thanks to our resident Rent-a-nerd (aka Grunt) Mark Schmidt, we will be still able to hold our meetings via Zoom which Mark has been diligently setting up for our use. As well as holding meetings via Zoom, we will still be putting out our regular monthly newsletter thanks to the continuing efforts of newsletter editor Jeff Yates. So if you have anything of interest relating to fly fishing to share with the members, please do not hesitate to send it through to Jeff.

During the current situation you may feel overwhelmed by all that is happening. If you are struggling, please, and I really stress please, talk to someone. If you have no one to talk to there are other options:

Life Line Phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days); Text: 0477 13 11 14 (6pm – midnight AEDT, 7 nights); Chat online: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat> (7pm - midnight, 7 nights)

Or: NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511: Mental health crisis telephone service in NSW.

If you are looking for answers or advice check out: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) or [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)

Stay safe people and I look forward to talking with you on Zoom or over the phone.

Darren Foster

President, HVFFC 2020

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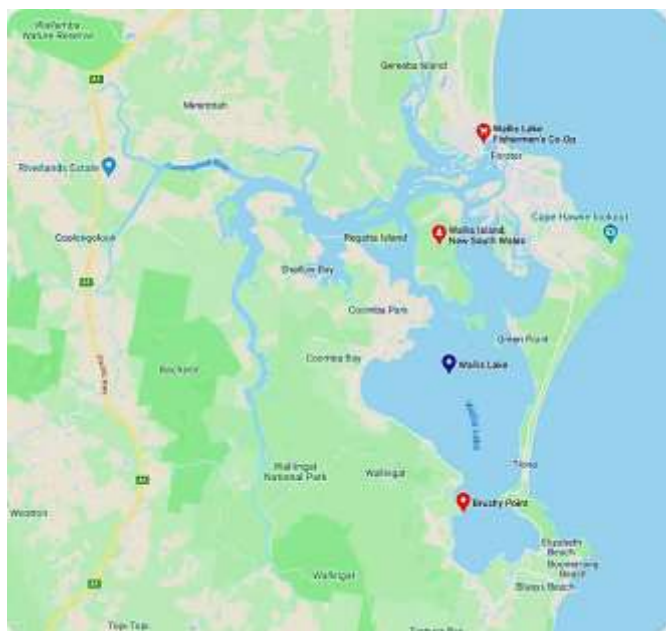
Month	Date	Venue/Event	Trip Master	Contact Number
January	18 <sup>th</sup>	Fly Tying @ Mai Wei with BWC Flies	Darren	0413392774
February	05 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
February	28 <sup>th</sup> , 29 <sup>th</sup> , 01 <sup>st</sup> M	Lake St Clair — Bass, Yellowbelly	Rod Fox	
March	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
April	03 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
April	11 <sup>th</sup> — TBC	Bunyah — Silver Perch	Patrick	0458781675
April				
May	01 <sup>st</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
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 Classie		
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	16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup>	Lithgow – Lake Lyall	Rod Fox	0407195508
November	06 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
November				
December	4 <sup>th</sup>	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
December				



*Breamin'*  
Brett Clarke

With a few days break from tying flies and Cherie securing a block of days off work, a venture north to the Mid North Coast of NSW was in order.

March can be a great time of year to head up to explore the Wallis Lakes system, with the seasonal changes starting to swing, the fish are active. Targeting Bream, specifically from around the oyster racks, both fixed and floating which present varying challenges in their own rights was chosen to dedicate our time to.



Tides play an import role for the saltwater fly angler. Early morning or late afternoon high tides were great as the water would be flowing well during those peak feeding times. The additional benefit of cloud cover and a bit of wind and a few drops of rain had the climatic influences starting to align for our trip.

The water I prefer to target Bream is coloured, so the back areas of the system were chosen. Heavy rain and strong winds blew through the system making the challenge of throwing flies even more so, along with controlling the boat position to effectively present the fly. To add another dimension to the challenge, 4 weight outfits were selected. I'm really enjoying the 4 weight for this style of angling, approaching the structures with the electric motor and as delicately as possible, presenting Shrimp flies in sizes 6 and 8 against the floating pipes or down the leading faces of the fixed racks.

The Shrimps fished are the exact ones tied and demonstrated with the Club in January this year, with an additional weight option that been tested with a few anglers. Bead Chain eyes work extremely well on the smaller hook sizes to enable a flutter fall off the edge of the floating racks. During the making tides, the bream actively feed from the oyster pipes and trays. At this point of the run, the bead chain eyes were chosen as the fish were high in the water column and who can resist a tiny shrimp morsel that flutters off the rack.... bump, bump .... Got ya!. As always, personal preference for my Bream flies is to feature brightly coloured eyes. To that note, Blue, Pink and the Kryptonite Green eyes were all used on a fresh batch of flies that filled yet another fly box. The fishing is quite visual to a degree. Certainly, the senses increase and intensify with being outside. Listening for the unmistakable 'bream kiss', a flash off of the side flanks, a fin on top of a rack tray, a water push from a moving fish, or even better, a tail in the air from a true feeder. A dedicated floating flyline, designed for short casting where accuracy is vital was selected and rigged on both of our 4 weight outfits. Leaders varied in length as they always will, along with the breaking strains.



It's important here to fish what you are comfortable with to achieve the result of the fish eating the fly. The length of leader built for our subsurface Shrimp flies was 7ft , simple

construction of 16lb fluorocarbon , stepped down to either 9lb or 6lb , depending on the intensity of the 'eat'. In clear waters, leaders do need to be longer and of a finer diameter to successfully convert fish.

Where the sessions got real, was when top water foam flies were being thrown across the tops of fixed racks on the high tide. The situation is aggressive with powerful eats, and as the angler, the response must be unforgiving. Give an inch and you're done, lost fly, leader shredded and wasted time rigging again. The hook set has to be solid, as does the reaction to getting the rod tip high in the air to clear the razor-sharp edges of the oysters and keep pulling the fish away and off the structure. A second angler on board assists, driving the electric motor away in the process - it's a complete team effort to successfully escort the Bream into the net.



After reading this, I'm sure that you get the leaders are not dainty. 16lb straight through fluorocarbon was the go, starting at 5ft and getting all the way down to 2 1/2 feet total length with re rigging, bust offs etc. Below this length, the bite stopped and couldn't convince the Bream to eat, until new sections of 5ft were rigged and we started again. The trip was thoroughly enjoyable, especially understanding the limitations of our gear. Sometimes its just good to get away and put thoughts in to play. Fortunately, it paid off on this occasion.

***Just quietly, those Kryponite Green eyes are the Breams' true weakness ....***





# From Dorrigo Browns to Barrington Rainbows 2011

Lawrence Blackburn  
Barrington Photography by Mik Ewin

## Part One “Dorrigo Browns”

**A**nd so it was that another year has come to an end, but before I move on there is a holiday planned for the family to Coffs Harbour, we had a small shoebox cabin at the Harbour Park on the highway (opposite one of the biggest tackle store in Aus., by chance!) and it was thought best to take two cars if only to take the pushbikes along in the ute.

Monday after Christmas seemed like a nice quiet day for a drive, so quite in fact there were about three occasions where I could stop in the middle of the road and talk to people in the car next to me, yes there was some serious holiday traffic slowing progress.

That didn't seem to worry me at all, I was on holidays with Jenna in the cab next to me and we had (I had) a Maccas cappuccino and JB a hot chocolate, we were crusin'. Hours passed and we rolled into the tackle shop opposite our destination and after a few discussions I had a saltwater trip planned to Sawtell, no boat required.

The second day in Coffs provided some heavy showers so we headed to the movies and shops, nice and easy meals at the camp kitchen and a bit of social banter with the Germans, French and Wagga tourists.

The saltwater trip changed to freshwater after I purchased a map covering the Dorrigo region and noticed how close it was to Ebor via Waterfall Way. Conveniently the 4wt was also packed into the large toolbox on the back of the ute so the trip was planned.

I left base camp about 8.00am and headed to Dorrigo via Bellingen just off the highway. Waterfall Way is a lovely winding road up the Dorrigo Escarpment and it is very windy, mostly third gear for me, and I got stuck behind a slower vehicle all the way.

Arriving at Dorrigo I headed to the most important spot in town, the art gallery café, no doubt the best coffee in town and where else would I get fishing advice from a local. Not here apparently, the coffee

was good but it was up to one of the customers (whose Scottish husband fly-fishes) to give me a hint or two.

First hint, *“my husband goes back home to fly fish.....”* second hint *“drive along Waterfall Way until you are nearly in Ebor and there is a river there somewhere, don't know what it's called, try that.”* Ok the tourist information is across the road, let's try there.

Well tourist information is not the same as fishing information, but the outcome was the same *“drive out along Waterfall Way for about 40mins and there is a river there.....”*, never mind I've got a map, I'll just go for a drive.

I reviewed the map and found a nice looking creek on the Dorrigo Plateau, so heading out of town on Whiskey Creek Road I drove in search of Whiskey Creek I turned right onto Shepherds Road and found the creek. Then after less than a minute I continued down Shepherds Road to turn right onto Smiths Lane in search of Dillons Creek which joins Bielsdown River near Arties Bridge.....oh forget it where's Waterfall Way.

Turning left onto Waterfall Way I headed towards Ebor in search of a river somewhere. Onwards and upwards I drove the trusty Triton into the clouds and a height of around 1200m. Must be good trout country up here I thought as I meandered along the way.

I drove over many small streams and one caught my eye, and I said to myself, I must fish that on the way back. Continuing on I came across Deer Park Creek, this looked like a very nice location to start the fishing.

I hopped in the back of the ute and began assembling the 4wt and then some sun block and then two lure fishermen came round the bend tossing spinners around everywhere. They left the creek and came up to the ute for some local advice on where to fish, what could I say *“Ain't seen a fish in these waters for twenty years”*. Ok maybe not but the idea.....

Believe it or not the photo below is Deer Park Creek, this particular photo makes it look more like a river, but away from this drop the water slows and the stream narrows.



I crossed the creek carefully just above this point, from there climbed the bank and to a high point and walked downstream about 600m, I returned to the river and commenced casting into the usual haunts.

I persisted with the flies for about 15mins then crossed the river and sat down to change flies. The next cast saw a small brown tackle the dry, I missed the strike but was happier with the combination.

It was only a few more casts until I hooked up onto my first Dorrig brown. He came to the bank hopping, skipping and jumping all about the place, obviously not happy with the pheasant tail nymph lodged in its mouth.



I continued up stream catching four more small browns in all the usual spots, at the head of pools, beneath overhanging tree branches, near exposed rocks, in a fast riffle, even in the middle of the still pools watching the dry disappear to the mouth of a humble brown.

By now I had wet waded back to the bridge where the car was parked. I had another river to fish and it was getting late in the day, time to hop in the Triton and start heading back. After about 10mins I found the road crossing Little Murray River, which to me looked more like a creek.

I selected a pool and began casting the fly combo further and further up stream and closer and closer to the branches until I snagged one, a branch that is, I recovered and dropped the fly in close and hooked up on a small brown about 12inches in length.

This fellow was looking like dinner and so extra care was taken during the tussle and gently guiding the fish into a cutting, and with all the skill and care required to pick the fish up, I lost him at the bank.

I guess there was a reason for that, so I duly cast again into the same spot and the reason struck the line hard peeling the slack line through my fingers and straight onto the reel. The fish soon went downstream into the pool in the photo below, it looks calm in the photo but had been very busy a few minutes earlier.



The fish took me to the left, to the right and down the middle of the pool, under branches where I had to unhook the line then around logs and finally getting in hard under a bank cutting, the excitement for me was exhausting, this was one time where I had to jump onto the bank and then wade in the water just to land this creature.

For about 5minutes I played this fish, all the time thinking about the six pound tippet, all the knots from the dropper to the bend of the dry to the surgeons on the line, thankfully they all held, and I managed to handle the fish a little better than the previous one and got the photo (and a few others) below, quite a big fish for such a small stream.





For me that was the last brown for the trip, I put out one or two more casts but that fish was enough, time for the drive home to Coffs Harbour.

## Part Two “Barrington Rainbows with Mr Accessories”

Has anyone ever taken Mik fishing? There are many things to learn from this experience, which I shall now try to express in a few hundred words or more.....

The plan was for Mik to arrive at my place around 6.15am then to do a day trip to the Barrington Tops and be back home around 6.00pm. First I had to answer Tania’s question “*what’s in it for me?*” well that was easy, a day without Mik and the possibility of a lovely fish for dinner, does it get any better. Apparently not, as permission was granted.

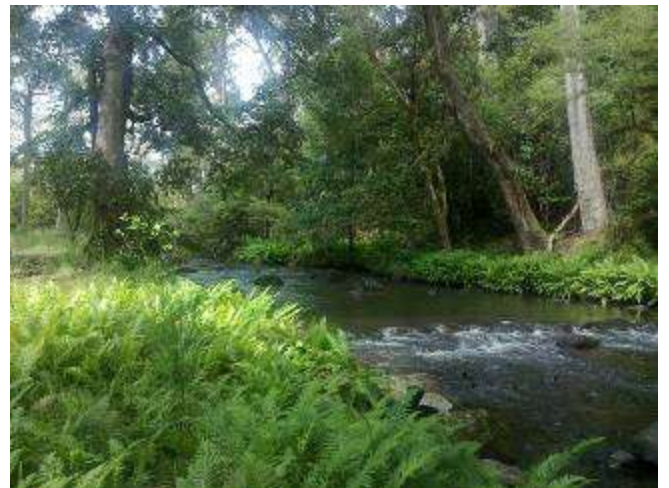
So right on cue Mik arrived 40 minutes late, we transferred enough gear from the back of Mik’s ute to last at least a week, this should have been some sort of clue for what was going to happen in the near future. But I didn’t see it at the time.

We hopped in the Triton and headed out, as we travelled out of Branxton a local hot air balloon was coming across the New England right in front of us, so Mik ever ready with his camera took half a dozen happy snaps. Another clue.

We continued on to Muswellbrook Maccas, picked up the mandatory coffee and continued on to the Tops. This was Mik’s first trip to the Tops, club outings seemed to clash with work and social functions, I think Mik just took the photo’s to take back to Tania so she could see how nice the area is and next club outing the whole family can come too!

I took the president to the Manning River camping ground and we looked at the river below, it looked very fishable but I was taking Mik to a spot where I

know we can catch fish, or at least I know Justin and I can.....



There had been a reasonable amount of rain leading up to our trip but the rivers were running clear. The rain had however made the 4wd track in a lot more interesting as the following photo shows, but the trusty Triton got us in to that magical spot.

Once at our destination we set about having a freshly brewed cuppa thanks to Mik’s brew-o-matic which is just one of the many accessories we transferred from Ute to Ute earlier in the day. For the next forty minutes we shuffled gear around the tray, put rods together and played with accessories. Not to forget the GPS, Scratch & Sniff Repellent patches, one handed knives and on it goes.



I had been fortunate the night before to be able to make four dry flies of no particular pattern basically a golden pheasant tippet for the tail a dark dubbed body an nice yellow foam beetle back and a quality size 14 hackle to finish off.

With these done I moved on to take particular care in tying two pheasant tail nymphs, I focused on the proportions and was pleasantly surprised with the results. I tied one each of these flies onto the six pound tippet and simply attached the nymph about ten inches below off the bend of the hook.

Once ready I waited for Mik, and waited, then waited some more, my main aim was to get Mik onto a fish as soon as possible, so I did not approach the water until he was ready, and then I waited some more. It was now 11.55am, just about time for lunch?

Mik had gone down to get some water for the brew which first had to go through the purifier, which we all carry, while at the water he saw a fish take a moth from the surface. This was to be the pool for Mik to fish. He set up a similar rig and I passed on a few tips that Justin and I had learned from this particular pool in the past, I watched for a while expecting to see a fish caught early but after 10mins I had to go for a fish.

I walked about 500m downstream to the crossing and spied a likely spot to catch my first fish for the trip. With two new flies on I laid out my first cast and let the line drift into the lair, right on cue a small rainbow came out and took the dry from the surface, that was a good result for the fly combo. I continued fishing towards Mik in the small shallow stream, by the time I caught up I had landed seven rainbows and missed one or two.

Mik's first Barrington trout was caught in the pool as expected although it was not quite the size I had

expected. The following photo shows the dry fly hanging in the air as the fish swims around, it is a little hard to see the fish but you can see the taut line in the shot.



I was disappointed that Mik had not caught more so I had a few casts into the pool up around the rock on the left just past the tree branch in the picture below, and sure enough no more fish from that pool.



We had to press on, it was going to be hard work heading upstream and I had a target where we had to get to and return from before it got too late. We criss-crossed the river on many occasions fishing from pool to riffle to pool and so on, each time we stopped only for six or so casts if we didn't get a fish after that it was time to move.

I took some pleasure in guiding Mik along and suggesting where to cast and helping retrieve his flies from overhanging branches on a few occasions. This particular photo below shows a tree on the left which Mik caught and lost a couple of flies on or was it in a tree behind, who knows, so I stepped in and had a cast just to make sure the fish were there, they were.





We had been fishing for quite a few hours and slowly making progress to an elbow shaped pool where Mik started at the end and caught three fish working his way around. As we were stationary for quite a period the local leeches managed to attach themselves to each of us and start their sucking. Mik was well covered and got his leeches off but one got through a gap in my shirt and by the time I had got back to camp had something of a red stain at the top of my trousers.

It was now about 4.00pm and the fog had started to roll in, it was time to leave, get back to camp and head home before the fog closed in. The walk back to the car took about 30mins as we climbed straight up from the river to the high ground and made good pace across the clearer country.

Back at the car we had a bite to eat and Mik asked “are we going to fish after?”; he was serious, I suggested that we should have a cuppa, pack up and head off. He looked longingly at the pool we started at, maybe a cast or two?

The following photo shows the fog rolling in on the track out, we crossed the river and headed back towards the main tops road, 45mins later we made it out, that was a relief in itself, we then had another hour travelling across the tops road at a maximum speed of 40km/h, the fog was very thick.

The picture below was the walk out from our last pool, it was like this all the way back to the car.



Upon arriving in Gloucester we called in at the pub for tea, we were told the wait was greater than 40mins so we left and went across the road and had a hamburger take-away. We got to my place around 9:30pm it had been a long day and many fish caught, I think Mik was pleased because he wants to go back and I know Tania was happy having a MFD. (Mik Free Day).

One of the many photos Mik took on the way out looks like a scene from a Harry Potter movie below.



Footnote: I inspected the condition of the toilets along the way and can confirm the condition is fair, happy now Mik?





## *Cabin Fever*

Allan Ekert



In Tasmania (and other places) during winter there is usually an outbreak of a very serious viral disease called “cabin fever.” The symptoms include irritability, boredom, restlessness, lethargy, lack of patience, and even sadness or depression. Fortunately, it is not contagious and is short lived ending as soon as the trout season opens.

During the coming months of lockdown and self-isolation I fear that there is going to be an outbreak of cabin fever here. With no end date in sight it would be prudent for all of us to take precautions against cabin fever. Here are some things you might like to try to keep cabin fever at bay.

1. **Go fishing.** With the latest message to “Stay at Home”, travelling to go fishing is not advisable. However, if you live on the water I guess you can fish from your backyard. For the rest of us you could try a fly fishing simulator. I’ve never been desperate enough to try one of these but the time might come soon. If you are into video games and can read a mobile device without magnifying glasses you might like to give one a go. (It would make a good article for someone to write for the next newsletter!) For now, I think I will have to stick to dreaming of going fishing.

2. **Tie some flies.** If you are an experienced fly tyer this is a good time to stock up on flies for when outings start again. If you are a beginner now is the time to learn. Go online and view the numerous YouTube clips for step-to-step tying. If you are into trout tragic, look up Davie McPhail, an Irishman who ties the best trout flies, some upsized would be suitable even for bass.

3. **Do some writing.** We always need articles, stories, reports etc for the monthly newsletter. Everyone can write and everyone has something they can write about. You don’t have to be an Ernest Hemingway. If you need help the Editor can give you a hand. People love to read real stories from real people. Take plenty of photos, as they link into your story and puts the reader on the same page as you. Photos aren’t always about fish, it could be the insects or bait fish that they are feeding on, or the beauty of the spot you are fishing.

4. **Practice your casting.** With spare time on your hands you don’t have any more excuses not to practice your casting. Getting out in the backyard or nearby park is great exercise and will give you a chance to get better at casting. Now would be a good time to have a go at the Fly Fishers

International Casting Challenge. You can do this with a friend as social distancing is not a problem when you are throwing fly lines around.

**5. Watch some fly fishing videos.** There are millions of videos on DVD or Youtube/Vimeo you can watch. If you want to work on your casting or fly tying there are plenty of instructional videos to choose from. If you just want to chill out, you can sit back and watch fly fishing adventures from around the world. Here are a few reliable sites to find videos:

The Tug is a collection of videos curated by Orvis.

<https://flyfishingvideos.orvis.com/>

If you want quality casting videos look here:

<https://flyfishersinternational.org/Education/Learning-Center/Casting/Casting-Instruction>

RIO has an extensive instructional video library:

<https://www.rioproducts.com/learn/videos>

**6. Reach out through social media.** We have a Facebook page, group email and very soon, the entire club will be connected to Zoom, which allows us to run a 40 minute meeting for free. All you need is a camera, mic and download the app. Mark Schmidt has looked at the different options for running online meetings and has decided that Zoom is the go. When Mark gets back to us about the details I'll be as informed as the rest of you. He is intending to roll it out for our April meeting.

**7. Buy some new fly gear.** You can never have too much fly fishing gear and just think about how much time you are going to have to use it while we are all locked down! Researching the right gear to buy, reading the reviews and checking prices is a relaxing way to while away the hours. Just be careful of overseas purchases, check the exchange rate first. Our dollar was as low as 55c American this week, so USA purchases are not good value. Support our sponsors as they will be doing it tough.

**8. Read a book.** Just as with videos there are plenty of fly fishing books available for you to read. From fact to fiction there is a book for you. Then there are all the fly fishing magazines. If you are looking for something to read reach out to fellow club members and I am sure you will find they are willing to share. I'm told there are even books written about subjects other than fly fishing so if you are desperate read any book.

**9. Clean your fly fishing gear.** How long is it since you took the line off your reel, washed it, cleaned it and stretched it? Have you marked the end with the line weight? With all the spare time you are going to have, make sure your gear is in top condition for when you are able to go fishing again.

**10. Listen to a Podcast.** There are a lot of good fly fishing podcasts out there these days including one from Australia. Just search "fly fishing" using your favourite podcast app. The good thing about podcasts is you can listen while you tie flies or clean your fly gear reaping double the benefits.

11. **Plan a trip.** Obviously, we are not going to be able to go anywhere for the next few months but you should have a plan for when this is all over. Whether it be a club trip or something special just for you, having a trip to think about can take your mind off cabin fever. You can spend hours researching the destination, the species to be caught, the gear you will need and how to fish there. If it's an extended trip you need to look at transport, accommodation and maybe fishing guides. Having something to look forward to can give us the motivation and resilience to keep going during these difficult times.



If you are going to spend a lot more time on your computer researching, watching videos posting to Facebook etc you might want to think about updating your Internet Plan. Faster speeds and unlimited data will make for a more relaxed experience and help you find what you want when you want it. With more people working from home or avoiding cabin fever I think the superhighway is going to become more like driving through Sydney.



*Enough gear and time to tie a million flies*





## Five steps to Becoming a Better Caster

No matter how well you can cast now there is always room for improvement. You might not realize it or be prepared to admit it, but no one's casting is perfect all the time. Once you can cast well enough to start catching fish the emphasis shifts from learning to **cast** to learning how to **catch**. In the rush to study when to strike, how to play a fish, flies, fishing lies, weather patterns, river levels, and all the other essentials to catch a fish, improving your casting often gets neglected.

It's only when we start not catching fish that we recognize the importance of improving our casting. When we find ourselves in situations where we can't present the fly or our casts spook every fish, our attention returns to casting. It should never have left. Casting requires constant practice and refinement. Even the best fly fishers work on their casting. So here are some important steps to take to improve your casting. Follow them carefully and your casting and catching is sure to improve.

### Step 1. Get motivated.

I thought I could cast until I experienced the dreaded winds of the South Island of New Zealand. It's hard to catch fish when you can't get your fly on the water. On my return to Australia I was determined to improve my casting – and to go back to New Zealand. The motivation generated from this experience eventually lead me to becoming a Certified Casting Instructor. When you find yourself out of your comfort zone and confronted by new challenges you have to improve your casting skills to cope. Once motivated it is amazing what you can do. If you want to improve your casting you have got to **want** to improve your casting.

### Step 2. Get instruction.

I don't know how many people I've met who have told me that they taught themselves to cast and it has taken them years to get to where they are now. When you watch them cast you can see why! Casting is a complex skill. You can learn it yourself but if you want to learn quickly and as painlessly as possible you need the right instruction. This can come from a friend, club instructor, books and videos or a professional. If you are serious it should come from a qualified instructor. Not all great fly fishers are great teachers and if you are looking for someone to improve your casting you need a great teacher. Whether it is learning the basic casts or how to use a double handed rod you need proper instruction. It's hard enough to learn new skills without having to “unlearn” bad habits first.

### Step 3. Get out and practice.

All the instruction in the world won't improve your casting unless you get out there and practice. This is where the motivation comes in. You have to make the time to practice and be committed to put in the hours.

I've already written about practice in previous articles so I won't labour the point here. Needless to say, if you want to improve you **must** practice.

### **Step 3. Look behind you.**

If you are old enough you may remember the Punch and Judy puppet shows. Audience participation is encouraged and the characters are often warned of what is happening behind their backs by loud cries of "look behind you!" When I am watching people cast I often have to bite my tongue to stop myself from calling out to "look behind you!" The backcast is where a good cast is made and faults and errors are generated. Everyone should look at their backcast. When you are fishing you don't want to be watching your backcast all the time but it pays to take a look every now and then. When you are practicing you should watch your backcast all the time.

Now looking at your backcast can be difficult and not good for neck muscles so you need to take care how you do it. Having an open stance and rotating the whole body will help. When you are choosing an area to practice your casting make sure you can turn and watch your backcast without looking into the sun. Another great technique is to form your loops on the ground. However you do it, looking at your backcast will lead to better casting.

### **Step 4: Do less.**

I've watched a lot of people casting over the year – some good, some bad and some indifferent. One thing that sets apart the good from the bad is how smooth and effortless the experts make casting look. If there is one thing you can do to improve your casting it would be to learn to make less false casts and use less power. Casting is about pulling a bend in the rod not trying to push the rod as hard as you can. It's not about brute force or how many false casts you make. That's why women and children learn faster (they listen too!) Back off the power and reduce false casts. You will spook less fish, save energy and learn to take advantage of the fly rod that you have spent so much money on. If you want your casting to be smooth and effortless learn to do less.

### **Step 5: Compete**

I am a bit ambivalent when it comes to competition and fly fishing. I could never become a competition fly fisher partly because my skills are not good enough but mainly because I go fishing to enjoy myself. Fish put me under enough pressure without worrying about competing with others. On the other hand you can learn a lot from competing. Challenging yourself to complete one of the Casting Programs or getting involved in casting games will improve your casting and catching skills. Watching others cast and trying to match their skills can teach you a lot. You don't need to get involved in serious competition to reap the benefits. A little friendly competition can do wonders to improve your casting.

If you want your casting to improve, motivate yourself to practice, get some good coaching, analyze what you do, think less is more and have a go at friendly competition. We never reach perfection but follow these steps and you will get closer and closer every year.



*Zulu getting  
some expert tips  
from Dave  
during a recent  
Jindy trip*

# *Fishy Pics*



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*A Thompsons Creek winter Rainbow. Put it on your winter fishing calendar, if you like sight fishing large browns and rainbows. Best months are May, June, July and August. Hopefully, we will be able to travel by then. Re-read Allan's article on Cabin Fever and start planning. I can give you a few tips if you are serious about giving it a go.*

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# *Scape Pics*



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*Sunset Beach at Soldiers  
Point in Port Stephens,  
with only one fisher*

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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



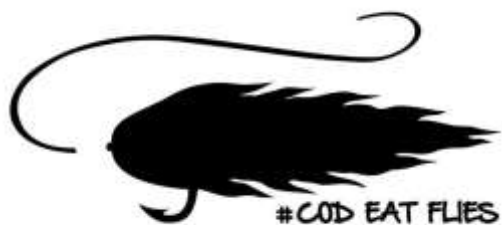
<https://bwcflies.com.au/>



### **Flies by Fedeles**



<http://flytyerman.blogspot.com>



**JASON STRATFORD**

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