



NEWSLETTER

December, 2003

Happy New Year Everyone!

The year of 2003 was an eventful and rewarding year for our club. It was the year we proved we can all pull together and make things work; our successful Seminar and Expo was a great example...everyone pitched in and did what they could...and we made it work!

Our outings have been well organised and well attended, again with everyone doing a bit to make the days successful. We do something in our club which most others do not; we allocate passengers to boat owners and get each member fishing with someone he may not have fished with before. Most clubs know the "Fred" always fishes with "Jack" and "Joe" always fishes with "Ian", but we rotate allocations. We have a good number of boat owning members, but of course some own boats that are great out chasing Tuna but can't be used in some of the dams. Others have boats which are great chasing Bass, but a bit dodgy outside. Somehow we make it all work, and that is what a club is all about.

We can look forward to an even better year in 2004. We have gained some valuable members during the past year; unfortunately some of the old faces have dropped out, but the club is going ahead and that is the main thing. Here's hoping the year ahead will be exciting and most of all, Fun!

December Meeting

Our December meeting was ably chaired by our President of Vice, Gary Sheppard (did I get that right?) in the absence of Tom Boylan. Those who were unable to attend missed out on free drinks and snacks for the evening, put on by the club. The members who attended were modest in their consumption due to the Holiday Breathalyser hazard.

We welcomed new member, **Eric Berryman**, who is a troutie from way back. I'm sure we will lure him into the salt a bit. Welcome aboard Eric!

The main business of the meeting was to nut out our Fishing Calendar for 2004, which is included in this newsletter. We have done our best to have a mixture of local outings and weekend outings. We may make changes as we go along, depending on conditions at the time.

December Outing – One Fly Event

Twenty members turned up at "Spot X" (Lakewoods) with high hopes, since last time 24 fish were caught by 9 members. Alas the fish didn't play the game this time! Only two fish were caught; a 43cm Giant Herring by Angus Collins and a 40cm Flathead by Brian Kirkley. Brian had just commented to Angus that he was yet to catch a fish at one of our monthly outings. Angus said, "Cast your fly there." He did and was rewarded with a take! Congratulations, Brian. Several Giant Herring were hooked and gave great displays of acrobatics before throwing the hooks. In the evening, Brian cooked us up a great barbeque and we all enjoyed ourselves despite the shortage of fish.

January Outing –Clarrie Hall Dam

We have scheduled this Bass outing for Sunday January 25th. We have stated the starting time at 6AM, but it might be worthwhile getting there at first light. We will pair up those with boats with those who need rides at our January meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting but plan to fish, contact Tom Boylan and he will try to place you with someone.

****Remember**** - Petrol motors are not allowed and a current NSW fishing licence is required.

Angler of the Year Award

Once again our yearly results have been compiled from notes scratched on bits of paper, the backs of beer mats or paper plates or word of mouth. We have a clear winner and he will be awarded the trophy at our January meeting. This year Glenn Court has volunteered to take over the running and scoring of our competition. He is experienced at this sort of thing and will do a good job.

Vale Ron Aberdeen

Ron was past President and Vice President of the Gold Coast Sportfishing Club. Aged just 54, he suffered a fatal heart attack whilst on a fishing trip to Iluka. He leaves his parents and three sons to whom our sympathy is extended. Condolences are also extended to his fellow club members who will mourn the loss of his cheery nature and untiring efforts on behalf of the club. Ron was a top fisherman and a great bloke. He will be missed by the entire fishing community on the coast.

Jock Grey Fly

Our champion Angler Trophy is now adorned with a Jock Grey fly. Tom has had this collectible for many years and although it is now a little worse for age – as is himself, he decided that it should be better displayed and attached it to our trophy.

Jock Grey started tying salt water flies at the end of World War II and corresponded regularly, swapping flies and ideas with legends like Joe Brooks, Larry Dahlberg and Lefty Kreh. Although he had a huge collection of fishing books and was a font of knowledge, he never produced any writings of his own and maintained a fairly modest, low-key profile.

He was held in high regard by all leading Australian swoffers and his Melbourne funeral and subsequent book auction attracted a large attendance. Tom met Jock many years ago and although Tom didn't fly fish then, Jock gave him a number of flies; the one on our trophy has survived, has never been fished and still displays great balance and proportion. The legend of Jock lives on!

Dog Fishing Author's name withheld (The wimp fears persecution)

Dog Fishing has its start in Southeast Asia where people dangled baited lines from the roofs of tall tenement buildings. Their aim was to capture the wary mongrels who scavenged throughout the littered alleyways. Whilst they were originally sought for the pot, it soon became a fine sport amongst the participants, seeking the fastest and largest (hence the birth of longlining).

With declining fish numbers, sportfishermen around the world saw the opportunities and quickly took up the challenge. Dog Fishing now takes many forms and ingenious methods.

Sightcasting from the concealment of suburban bushes can return high excitement, particularly with leash led animals. For the more athletic, sprinting past the kennel of a Queensland Blue Heeler, dragging a jogging shoe on a short line will guarantee a savage take. Bicycle wheel lures work well on Kelpies, but a high quality swivel is recommended here as is the case when targeting circus

dogs. Flycasting wet or dry dog turds to Fox Terriers at busy traffic intersections is extremely challenging and only for the experienced.

The financially advantaged few have taken the sport upmarket, mounting a game chair in the back of a ute. Cruising through open parkland with a rat trolled on a skateboard will attract the High Leaping Doberman or Back Breaking Rottweiler. Jigging with an artificial limb over the fence of an auto wrecker's yard can produce a trophy-sized Great Grey Death. Staking out a bitch on heat will draw numbers of animals to your area however it is difficult to interest them in any kind of bait or lure.

You can purchase a high pitched whistle that the manufacturers claim only dogs can hear, but you can blow yourself to exhaustion without really knowing whether the damn thing works or not.

Bits of unwashed postman's pants are an effective attractant along with long dead birds or other vile carrion. Be warned however that placing them around your suburb may draw criticism.

Should you wish to get involved in this emerging sport, as a prelude to the sort of excitement and interest it can create, we recommend that you approach the RSPCA for a licence. (That should be fun.... ed.)

Tassie Travels. By Brian Kirkley ©

“The wind is a big problem” said John quietly as he finished tying his special Highland Dun, and added it to a little group of flies he had tied for me to copy. “It's blows right off the Antarctic most of the time and you really have to learn to punch your line out if you're going to do any good”.

Virgin Blue had started a new service Brisbane to Hobart, and offered some 'not to be missed' specials so I was flying down for less than the price of a Sydney flight hopefully to experience some of Tasmania's Highland fly fishing, for the first time.

John had fished the Central and Western Lakes many times and was a willing and gracious source of help and advice. “You're only going to have 5 days fishing, so it's possible you could spend it sitting in front of the open fire of the Great Lakes Hotel with a blizzard outside for the whole time. That's the sort of place it is. But if you can get a day with enough wind to rough up the water and some breaking cloud cover and not too cold, you might do some good.”

Well after two months of planning and preparation, here I was thigh deep in Double Lagoon in the Western Lake district wondering what to do first.

We had driven up from the Great Lakes Hotel before dawn over a passable gravel road right to the lake shore, and my two companions had spread out southwards while I had opted to wade out and move quietly northwards, fishing back into the little bays and inlets. The wind was from the northwest—and strong enough to whip foam up on the eastern shore as well as peaking an occasional white cap, so I thought that my best chance, knowing my casting skills, would be to utilise its help.

This was a far cry to the river and stream fly fishing I'd done. So much water and swampy ground and except for the wind no movement anywhere. MacBeth's witches would have loved this place for a 'blasted heath'!! Even so it was beautiful too—tiny spring flowers sparkling in dark prickly stunted grevilleas and hakeas, and domes of brilliantly green moss glowed surprisingly brightly in gaps in the darker foliage, and not a tree in sight. I noticed so much tiny detail as my eyes roamed constantly watching for the dreaded Tasmanian tiger snakes on 'dry land', now wading, I could relax much more.

I chose a big beetle pattern and tied it on—and flicked it towards one little inlet after another—letting the wind carry it in. Slowly I moved along the shoreline—feeling carefully around the rocks on the bottom with the toes of my waders while I concentrated on the bobbing fly. Nothing!! Now I was moving into a series of small shallow pools with narrow waterways connecting them. What was that I could see way ahead? A flash of movement and as I stood still and watched a huge tail waved out of the water!! My breath caught in my throat. I'd read so much about Tasmanian trout 'tailing' but I hadn't realised it would be so obvious when I saw it happen. IT was HUGE!! Then as it disappeared a dark curving back and a huge dorsal fin porpoised through the waves. This was awesome, and for the first time I started to realise the challenge and appeal of what I had been trying to grasp. Distant memories of stalking a rabbit with a pea rifle in a huge paddock as a boy suddenly returned. That heightened heart rate and change in breathing rates. That cautious focused slow controlled moving closer, watching for any signs of alarm.

The tail waved tantalisingly again. I moved slowly closer until I thought I could reach the place where this giant lurked with my cast. I really concentrated on all the lessons I'd had, all the practice as I fed line out on each false cast - watching the flicker of the fly at the end of its travel to gauge the distance. Now a presentation as softly as I could right to the place I'd last seen the rise. The line straightened and lay across the waves. It pointed to the exact place the 'V' started that ran towards me like a torpedo, then curved past me and disappeared. I cursed myself in no uncertain terms! I must have been thinking of shooting rabbits!! My God! I must have almost hit the fish with my line, in my effort to get the fly right on target. Where was the rule of casting a few meters to one side and letting the wind drift the fly to the quarry? Well I certainly stuffed that up big time!!

A couple more hours and seeing a couple more tails at much greater distances, and the wind picking up so strongly it was almost impossible to hold a rod outstretched at right angles, encouraged me to work my way back to the car and meet the other two guys for a welcome flask of hot tea.

We looked for a sheltered spot on Lake Ada and a few of the smaller tarns over the next couple of hours, but the wind was by this stage strong enough to make the little four wheel drive rock on the road, so we headed back to the Great Lake Hotel for an early dinner. After a country pub grilled steak and boiled vegetables and a local ale, we started to thaw out in front of the massive fireplace. Clive had landed a nice pan sized rainbow on his light spinning rod in Lake Ada, but my stories of giant tailing trout fell on deaf ears and cynical disbelief, since neither of them had seen anything in Double Lagoon.

Clive headed back to Hobart after dinner and Mark and I had a round table to consider where to fish in the morning. We had already fished a day before Clive arrived to guide us to the Western Highlands, and already knew the basic layout of Arthurs and Penstock and Little Pine which were all within 15 minutes drive of the hotel, so we decided that providing there was little wind—we would try up on the western lakes again in the morning and save the closer lakes for later, if the weather didn't hold. We agreed that of all the lakes we had checked, Double Lagoon seemed to hold the most promise, and while Mark hadn't seen any indications of fish, he admitted he had been trying to cover a lot of ground and possibly moving too fast and noisily.

We weren't the only ones moving quietly around before dawn making thermos's of tea and packing sandwiches into our back packs. Other vehicles were droning out of the carpark long before we rolled out and turned right and headed up the mountain.

There was a feeling of déjà vu as I saw the tail again. Maybe not THE tail, but it was one just as big and just as appealing. Amazingly another fin cut the surface a few meters away. Two fish! The sky was lighting in the east, the glow of sun struggling through the clouds, the day much like yesterday, wind from the North West, maybe not as cold but still strong enough to chop up white caps. The tails appeared like Sirens waving in a little semi enclosed pool, the water remarkably smooth compared to the waves outside. This morning I had one of John Foy's Highland Duns in

pride of place and dangling underneath it on a 30cm tippet a tiny green shrimp on a #14 hook. The fish Clive took yesterday was full of tiny green shrimps and I thought it was worth a try to 'match the catch'.

It took me nearly half an hour to position myself, and this time as I cast, I made sure to cast upwind of my target fish by at least 4 meters. The wind caught the leader and drifted it gently towards my quarry. Suddenly a bow wave surged towards the Dun. The fish rushed across the shallow bottom for a good 3 meters, a huge 'V' overshadowing the other waves, and then the Dun was sliding sideways across the surface as the tiny shrimp was scooped up. I didn't have to do more than lift my rod and then line burned my fingers and my rod jerked and I knew I had hooked a trout bigger than anything I could imagine. There was a surge and explosion of action and foam, and a head like a robber's dog broke out of the shallow water and shook with a sound that was a death knell to the 4 pound tippet that I'd used to dangle the tiny shrimp. I felt and saw my line fall slack, and in a second everything returned to reality. Wind and clouds and water and me and everything else very very still. Except my heart thumping, and a feeling like wanting to shout. I realised it was the shout I was about to make in triumph, and now that really stuck in my throat.

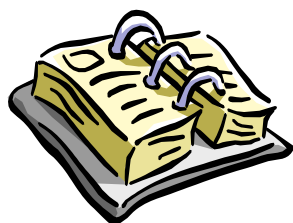
I took a deep breath and thought, well if there's one, there's more.

Well there wasn't more for me this trip. Certainly not more strikes. A few more sightings, a few more casts, a lot of wading and plenty of good company, but no fish, no giant brown to match the faded photos on the walls of the Great Lakes Hotel. I learned a great deal however. One thing I hadn't understood from the books I had read, the fishing I had done, the blokes I'd talked to, was that above all else, the explanations that this is STALKING fish became a reality. Just as stalking a rabbit as a kid with a pea rifle was something done with stealth and patience, fishing the Highlands was a game of patience and skill. The difference being that the quarry wasn't a rabbit; it was the equivalent of a bull rhino with all its cunning and alertness. I had read that one fish a day was good fishing in the Highlands, and now I knew the meaning of that phrase. I'd be back for my 5 fish another time.

Quote of the month: **Life is sexually transmitted!** **Anon**

Tight Lines and bent rods!
Your Scribe

Coming Events



CASTING ARVO

Sunday 1st Feb 1:30pm

Pizzey Park, Miami

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, January 20th - 7.30 p.m.

**Mermaid Beach Bowls Club,
9 Markeri Street, Mermaid Beach**

NEXT CLUB FISHING TRIP:

Sun. 25th January 6.00 am (or earlier)

Location – Clarrie Hall Dam

Target – Bass

BBQ at 11am

South East Queensland Flyfishing Club Inc. – Contacts:

President	-	Tom Boylan 55646660
Vice President	-	Gary Sheppard 55637470
Secretary	-	Angus Collins 55355499
Treasurer	-	Mark Miller (02)66724364
Publicity Officer	-	Bob Knott 55983254



FISHING CALENDAR 2004

Note: There may be changes do to weather, water conditions, or the whims of the membership.

January

Clarrie Hall Dam
Sun. Jan. 25th 6:30am (or before)
Target: Bass
BBQ about 11

March

Mooloolaba
26th-28th March
Target: Tuna

May

Uncle Billy's Retreat
Sat & Sun. 1st, 2nd May
Target: Trout
(Only 7 places left at this time)

July

Seaway
Sun. 18th July 6 am
Target: Tailor
BBQ about 11

September

Jumpinpin
Sat. 11th Sept Daybreak
Target: Flathead

November

Hinze Dam
Date to be decided
Target: Bass

February

Borumba Dam
Sat, Sun. 21st & 22nd Feb
Target: Saratoga

April

Nerang River
Sun. 18th April
Target: Bream

June

Jumpinpin
Sat. 19th June
Target: Whatever swims

August

Tweed River
Sun. 15th July, 6 am
Target: Bream
BBQ about 11

October

Ebor
Date to be decided
Target: Trout

December

Night Bream trip
Date to be decided