

THE HUTT VALLEY ANGLER

Issue No 398 : March 2015

Newsletter of the Hutt Valley Angling Club Inc



March Activities

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| 9th | Club Monthly Meeting — King Lion Hall 7:30pm |
| 14 or 15 | Burgess shield — Lake Ferry |
| 15th | Casting Clinic and Buddy Programme |
| 17th | Committee meeting — Community House 7.30pm |
| 25th | Fly Tying — Community House 7.30pm |
| 27th | Copy deadline for April newsletter |

Editorial

I'd like to thank our members who have taken the trouble to write articles and make contributions to our newsletter. Some of these come in the form of trip reports and others offer advice or pass on suggestions based on that member's experience. If you have tips or ideas to share then an article in the club newsletter is a good way to do it. In this issue we have an interesting article by Tim Trengrove entitled "Fishing Naked".

John Millar

Newsletter Editor

President's Piece

Over the last month I seem to have been involved in a number of conversations and read a number of articles around catch and release and the ensuing debate from those on differing sides of the argument. There are some who say it causes harm to the fish and that in general we do not handle fish carefully enough and others who consider the fishery is more sustainable if we do not practice catch and release. There are of course many more views and great complexity surrounding it. Like most things in life we find that there are fundamentalists on just about any subject and often the best approach is a balanced one.



These conversations have done one thing for me. They have created the drive to understand more about the benefits or otherwise of not only the practice of catch and release but how it affects the fish, the environment and sustainability of the fishery. I have discovered that it is a science and there are many viewpoints. My quest is therefore not to decide which the right one is and to become a fundamentalist myself. Realising it is complex makes me more inclined to try and understand what is involved and as I do I know it will impact on my actions and decisions on the river.

The point I am making is to suggest that it is a subject well worth our time to look into and discuss among ourselves. Not to be

right or push one view but being prepared to understand that we as anglers do have an impact on the wildlife living in our rivers and taking responsibility for the way we handle that. Being informed is a great way to start and I suggest that an open approach to the whole debate rather than a closed one is likely to positively impact fish life while we are on that journey of discovery.

Talk to other anglers, Google it, read up on it and let's understand what we are doing with a greater level of responsibility. I am enjoying the journey and pleased that I have moved from just thinking it seems better to catch and release based on a logic I pulled from somewhere and discovering that there is some good research, opinion and anecdotal evidence out there that has made me think.

Steve Doughty

Club News

Club Night — Monday 9th March at 7.30pm.

King Lion hall, King Street, Upper Hutt.

Our guest speaker this month is Alex Broad a clothing designer for Riverworks and a keen angler and hunter.

Casting Clinics and Buddy Programme

The next clinic will be held on **Sunday 15 March.**

Our monthly casting session will be held at 9.00 am on **Sunday** immediately prior to our Buddy Programme Session. It will be possible for members to attend casting then follow up with a Buddy session on the same morning. Names please on the clipboard at our monthly meeting or register on the website. Ian Lawson can be contacted for further information. His details are at the back of the newsletter.

It will be necessary to register for both casting and Buddy session if

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you intend to do both. **We need to know how many tutors will be required for the sessions.**

For further information get in touch with Ross Goodman, his contact details are given on the inside back page of the newsletter.

Fly Tying Meeting — Wednesday 25 March 7.30 p.m.

Upper Hutt Community Meeting House,
off Logan Street beside Upper Hutt
Medical Centre.



This month — March Brown

A traditional pattern from the British Isles.

I recall fishing the River Tweed on April 1 (opening day) as a teenager. On this

day the large March Brown Mayflies were coming down the river like an armada and snowflakes were falling gently on the water's surface. When it snows like this there is an almost eerie silence. Occasionally a Spring Salmon would broach and on this cold day trout were rising to these large brown flies.

The March Brown is one of those universal patterns that works well across Europe and through the United States or in this part of the world.

This month we will focus on a nymph pattern and winged wet fly.

In April we will tie a spider pattern and a large bushy dry fly.

Our **monthly beginner fly tying group** will meet at 6.30 p.m. in the same room immediately prior to the senior meeting. Those attending this group are reminded to be there by 6.30.

Handicap Fishing Competitions

Burgess Shield Surfcasting Competition March 14 or 15 (day to be decided). Details and an entry sheet will be available at our March club meeting.

This will be held at Lake Ferry. You will remember that 'Snapperman' aka Mike Nansett won last year's competition with a very nice snapper caught from the beach.

Please register for the competitions through our easy website registration or by contacting John Millar by email or phone. If you haven't fished a competition before, then give it a try.

Goodman Shield Saltwater Fly Fishing event - This was held on Saturday 21 February.

Eight members took the plunge so to speak by entering this novel fly fishing competition.

They assembled at the car parking area by the roadside at Ivey Bay, near the road bridge at

Paremata. It was a pleasant morning but rain did threaten with some dark clouds coming in from the West. Competition sponsor Ross Goodman who is a

local boy was ready with a sack of berley to bring in the fish. The competition was planned to run from 11.00 am to 2.30 pm which would cover the period of the high tide and allow more than an hour either side of it. Ivey Bay was an ideal spot because the members could safely wade on the largely shingle and sand bottom. Some of the guys decided to wet wade in the expectation that the day would be another scorcher but as it turned out those brave types began to chill off fairly soon with a fresh Norwester blowing in their faces. Within a minute or so of the starter's whistle blowing the anglers at the southern end of the bay could see several shoals of bait fish "skipping over the surface" as they were being pursued by predators. This was exciting and those anglers focussed their casting efforts to intercept any kahawai or other fish that were chasing the small baitfish. Within minutes Trevor Jeffries hooked and landed a small Kahawai and Ross Goodman was unlucky when his fish threw the hook. John Millar saw a big bow wave swerving after the panicking bait fish on the surface. He cast his fly amongst the action but only managed to hook Pipis or the bottom all day! He was fishing too deep with a very heavy line on a shooting head.

Within the first hour at least half of the members had retired due to feeling too cold or simply struggling against the highest tide of the year.

It was onwards and upwards for Trevor with another three kahawai coming to the net over the duration of the competition. Two of those were big enough to measure and would count. The remaining three anglers fished right to the final whistle but without any further fish being caught. Trevor was congratulated as winner of the Goodman Shield for the second year running. His winning tally was three kahawai scoring a total of 1920 points.



Raffle Winners in February

Green Trout Guiding Raffle Entry – (3) St John Wakefield
Fly Box with 12 flies — (8) John Rochester
\$20 Hunting and Fishing Voucher – (27) Ian Lawson

Fish of the Month

Details of trout caught can be entered in the club fishing diary and will be considered for our fish of the month award. Hunting and Fishing (Alicetown) sponsor a \$10 voucher each month for heaviest fish. Entries need to be received by the Saturday prior to our club meeting to qualify for fish of the month. You can enter fish in the club diary by email or phone to John Millar.

The winner in December was Thomas Fichter with a ripper Brown Trout jack of 9lb 11oz caught in a river near Lake Waikaremoana



Our January winner was Ian Lawson with a 6lb 8oz Brown Trout caught in a local river.



Please support our Sponsors

Club Trips

Our trip co-ordinator is Damian Bengree. If you have suggestions for a club trip please talk with Damian. Damian's contact details are at the back of the newsletter.

The next trip will be in April. Details will be posted as the arrangements are finalised.

If you are interested in taking part in a club trip then please get in touch with Damian, his contact details are at the back of the newsletter.

Rod & Reel Wellington Regional Fly Fishing Competition

On Sunday 15 February, 10 competition anglers along with 10 controllers met at the Gladstone Bridge in anticipation of a full day of fishing in changeable weather conditions. In stark contrast to last year's event, the Ruamahanga was running low and clear, providing a wide variety of fishing situations ranging from shallow water sight fishing to deep water Czech nymphing. I was looking forward to seeing how these competition anglers would approach the same water that I had fished during one of our club trips 2 weeks earlier. I was expecting the fishing to be tough.



The first session started at 8.30am. In a repeat of last year's event, I had the good fortune to be teamed up with Paul Dewar who quickly surveyed the beat and decided to start at the downstream end. Here, the water was shallow and clear with overhanging willows on the opposite bank providing perfect trout habitat. Sure enough, as Paul was rigging his dry and dropper rig, he spotted a number of fish lazily feeding near the willows. Within 5 minutes a nice 40cm rainbow fell victim to the nymph and was quickly brought to the net, measured and released. A great start. Moving upstream the river narrowed and became deeper, so the rod was quickly exchanged for another rod with a Czech nymph set-up. The faster water meant that stealth was not such an issue, so Paul was able to wade upstream methodically to quickly cover all of the likely looking water. Soon, another nice rainbow was brought to the net. Moving further upstream into the shallower riffly water, Paul reverted to his dry and dropper rod and picked up another rainbow.

It was clear to me that Paul's techniques were getting results. Why? What was he doing different from me when I go fishing? It's a bit hard to say exactly because he was making it look so effortless....a bit like watching a magic trick. But on reflection later

on, I've broken it down to 3 main elements.

1. Being adaptable. This is characteristic of all the anglers I observed. Moving along the river, the depth and speed of the water could change dramatically, requiring a completely different presentation technique. During the day I saw upstream dry and dropper, downstream dry and dropper, upstream Czech nymphing, downstream wet lining with a natural drift in deep water as well as swinging wee wets quickly across the fast glides at the tail of the pool. All methods were suited to the specific conditions and all produced results.

2. Being methodical. What does that really mean? Your next fish could be one cast away, so why not cover the water systematically and fish it to its full potential. It's also all about maximising your fishing time. That means keeping your fly in the water, not in a tangled birds nest or hooked up a tree. This is where the benefits of line control and casting practice pay huge dividends.

3. Having confidence and stickability. There's no doubt that unless your fly's in the water, you won't catch a fish, as evidenced by Paul Baker's last minute save in his last session. With literally one minute to go, he quickly tied on a new fly, got it back in the water and immediately hooked a nice 45cm rainbow. A total of 1 fish for that session, but enough for him to take out overall honours on the day. Well done Paul!

Competition fishing might not be everyone's cup of tea, but for those HVAC members who are considering becoming a controller, I would thoroughly recommend it as a valuable learning experience and a great day out.

Chris Kuchel

TWO MEN IN TWO BOATS (TAKE THREE)

John Olds

This was the third Anniversary weekend rafting trip that Fraser Gibbs and I have done and each year we have done something a little different. Last year we covered two 12km stretches of water over two days but this year we decided to raft the first stretch of 12km over Friday and Saturday so as to fish for longer in some of the pools that usually hold good numbers of fish. A more leisurely

trip for elderly gents in other words. Ross Goodman was again tramping in the South Island (a trip that suffered through some horrendous weather) but he and Janet kindly offered the use of their holiday home in Taihape for Thursday night.

I travelled up on Thursday morning as I had a couple of things to do on the way. I got to Taihape at about 2 and decided that a bit of practice was in order. It had started to rain just south of Taihape and was still showery when I got to the river. The first thing that struck me was how low the river was and the amount of green weed. The first two fish I hooked weren't particularly big but both spat the hook. Come on John, get your act together! The third yanked the indicator under and it was all on. Down the pool, up the pool, across the pool until finally there was a 3.75 lb rainbow in the net.



A lot of time was being spent cleaning the green weed off nymphs and I then noticed that the river was getting very milky (and it had started to rain again) and wondered whether waste from a nearby quarry was to blame. But that would be a breach of their resource consent and as I walked upstream to the car past the quarry it was still milky. The likely explanation was that a large chunk of papa had broken off a cliff upstream as it does quite often on this river which was borne out by the turbidity readings that night.

DAY 1

We planned a later than usual start to get some sun on the early pools. That gave us time to make sure all the gear was present then it was off to the get out point to park Fraser's car. The weather was looking good for the two days.

So, what rig and flies did I take?

The rig I used was a 6 weight rod with a handmade leader of about 3 metres. This is made up of 1.5m of 20lb mono, 60cm of 15lb (both fairly stiff mono which I bought for not much from the Warehouse) and 30cm of 10lb. A micro ring is then attached followed by a 60cm (or so) length of 6lb fluorocarbon. This piece is generally the sacrificial piece and can be a bit longer than 60cm.

You can also attach a 4lb piece if needed. The indicator is a small "rubber ring" type that can be moved anywhere on the 1.5m piece of mono. The indicator material is polypropylene yarn that I bought in Melbourne and is a mixture of light yellow and chartreuse – colours I have not seen in the stores here and very visible in all light conditions. The movable indicator obviously has advantages when fishing different depths. I have found that these rubber ring indicators tend to move on other mono but stay where they are put on the stiffer mono. In effect this is a Clayton's dry/dropper – the dry/dropper set up you have when you are not having a dry/dropper. While I like fishing dry/dropper I've found that they can get blown about in even a light wind resulting in tangles and the inability to put the cast where you want it. This rig tends to stay where it's cast but lighter gear such as the dry/dropper certainly has its place especially on smaller water where stealth is required.

Any flies (generally 14's with tungsten beads) with red in them worked, at times anything worked – rubber legs, flashback pheasant tails, orange beadhead hare and coppers – you get the picture. I had a lot of success with a darker hare and copper with a full length piece of red holographic tinsel along the back. Simple but effective. I was using two flies – generally a #12 for weight with about 15cm to the point fly. The top fly was blingy as an attractor and at times fish took this.

Start point. Majestic!

Ready to go just before 10 when we spotted a couple of anglers walking upstream. They had come down a farmer's track but were limited in the amount of water they could fish downstream. We were going to row a short way upstream to fish a



good looking riffle but took pity on them and let them fish it. Our first stop was at a drop-off they had already fished but we gave it a shot anyway – for nothing. The next pool has a fast run in the centre with a nice seam on the true left. This was the one I

wanted the sun on but wouldn't you know it clouds had appeared to block the sun. Fraser took point anyway and we fished through this fishy looking water (cleaning flies regularly as we went) for nary a touch. Maybe we need to fish it at 1 p.m. next year! ☺

Photo taken on 2014 trip when there was sun (but not on the water).



I decided to try Copper Johns on barbless hooks. They worked well but the trouble was that these smaller rainbows are so feisty that the hooks tend to

come out and I lost 5 in a row. I like barbless hooks because they are less damaging to fish but it's difficult to get some of these rainbows in to shore when they start jumping around. Despite having to clean nymphs at regular intervals we started getting into fish. As usual a lot weren't big but anything 1.5lbs and up gives you a run for your money on this river. When first hooked they feel and act like a 4lb fish.

As we were fishing one pool there was a horrendous noise like a freight train followed by a huge crash as a large piece of papa came loose. We were grateful it had not fallen when we were near it and also hoped that it had not fallen in the river and discoloured it. It must have fallen into bush because we never found the spot.

The good thing about this 12km stretch of river (and, of course, other parts) is that the pools stay relatively stable year after year even after quite large floods. I think that this means that the fish population stays quite high in a number of pools. All the fish we caught this trip were in very good condition. It's nice to be able to go back and pretty much know where you will pick up fish. One of my favourites is a long curving pool with a fast run at the top smoothing out until the point that a stream enters it about halfway down. It then changes to a riffly run, then calms again so it's a pool of two halves, so to speak. I had high expectations for the bottom part of the pool as it had fished well before, but this time only two fish – maybe this was because the stream had little flow and the main river was down as well. In the top half we both managed a few good fish and found that the faster water was what

they preferred.

It was good to know we had all day to raft about 6km as one-day trips in the past have meant we have not given some water the attention it deserved. Ross Goodman and I rafted this stretch and put in a 10 hour day and you really know you've put in an effort then. Splitting the trip meant that we could give a lot of attention to what we have named the Long Pool. This is another stable pool that always holds a good number of fish. We first fished a small run above it and pulled out a few fish from 1.5 to 2lb. We then rafted down the Long Pool to check out a proposed campsite. As it turned out the area had got a bit overgrown so we settled on a good spot a bit further down with plenty of shelter from large trees. Fraser decided to fish the bottom section of the Long Pool while I rowed across and went up near the top. While the bottom yielded one small fish to Fraser I started to have a ball. In a short space of time I had hooked five and landed three of them and had hardly moved. And they were good fish of 2.5 to 3lb that put up a real scrap. Looking downstream it looked like Fraser was about to head off to the campsite but a bit of frantic waving and whistling brought him upstream. I put him in ahead of me and within a short while his indicator got a dunking. At one stage we thought the fish had gone as the line slackened when it came towards us but order was restored and a very nice 4lb jack came to the net. There was much high fiving! After that we managed several more including a 3.5lb hen which I thought at one stage may equal Fraser's but it was not to be. Things then got quiet so we left to set-up camp and still hadn't fished all the pool – next time!



Fraser's "best of the trip" 4lb Long Pool jack 3.5lb hen from the Long Pool

Our camping spot was beside a slow deep pool and, surprisingly there was no rise that evening. But by the time we had set up camp and had a meal it was getting dark and the casting arms

needed a period of recovery in any case. While we were eating we were amused by a black Labrador that belonged to a family camping across the river. Periodically it would wander down to the river and bark loudly in our direction. But even if we were across the other side it would likely have only tried to lick us to death!

DAY 2

Ready to attack it again.

Waking in the semi-light I checked my watch – 5.30. Let's get organised. The night had been still and warm and it promised to be another cracker day for fishing. Pack up and breakfast and we rowed across to the Lab's side. A few half-hearted barks – I



I suspect he/she was more interested in a sleep in than us. The first pool was a good one but again there was lots of weed at the top of the pool. We started at the bottom and hooked a couple. I'd said to Fraser that we would start hooking more fish opposite the first half fallen tree. Am I a guru or what? Sure enough we pulled a number of fish out of the top of the run but I have to admit it's been like that ever since I took my first raft trip with Jim Rainey. On our way back to the rafts the lab was peering over the long grass and had got its voice back. It was either tied up or not willing to get too close to us. As we moved off downstream we met a couple of keen spin fishermen. These guys had got up at 4 a.m. in Palmy and had walked 5-6kms by the time we met them.



Our next pool (The Green Bush pool) usually holds good numbers of fish. I clambered up the opposite bank to spot for Fraser in the tail of the pool where there is a drop off into deeper water.

Unusually nothing spotted there but there was a fish of at least 4lb hard against the bank on my side a little further upstream. As I watched, it quietly swam off into deeper water. It was hard to spot further out because of glare on the water so we decided to blind fish up the pool. Again some good fish to the net. I hooked one that took me round a rock and I couldn't get the line free. The fish was still there as every time I gave it a bit of line in an attempt to free it, it headed downstream. In the end there was nothing for it but to put pressure on (lots as it turned out) until the leader finally snapped in the middle. After re-rigging the action tailed off. Fraser had spotted a couple of fish at the head of the pool but there was no interest.

We then fished on down to the take out point for a few more fish of up to 2lbs. We met up with the two spin fishermen again who were heading back. They'd caught about 6 fish between them and at this stage they were muttering about getting Waterstriders; they were obviously feeling the effects of a long walk on a hot day. In the last pool I hooked a fish in a small run about 60cm deep no more than a couple of metres from the bank. So the lesson always is – fish your feet first.

We were out of the water by about 1 p.m. Interesting that we did not catch a brown on this trip; they must be there somewhere. Once we had packed up and picked up my car from the start point it was off to the café in Mangaweka for a bottle of chilled coffee which was very welcome. The same trip is already pencilled in for next year.

Ngaruroro 2015 – Steve Doughty

It has been said that the anticipation of things is the best part. With that in mind my annual trip to the Ngaruroro River started in April 2014 when we booked the helicopter and paid the deposit. With the transport booked, entomology was next on my mind and my attempts at matching the local delicacies. Madame X who had proved herself to me on last year's trip was first in the fly box and in numbers. Overhanging trees, tight spaces between rocks and those flies that leave the line between the back cast and the forward cast can chew through a fly supply at a rate of knots. The standard green Cicada could not be left at home and this year I invited a new fishing partner, a Cicada pattern I found with a red

and black striped body who became one of my best friends in a very short time. Gear was checked (and checked again), rods inspected for nicks and bumps, spare reels, fly line, enough leader and tippet to save me in the wilderness from line hungry rivers and fish and I was set.

We drove in to Puketitiri on Monday afternoon to prepare for our flight early the next morning with Chris Crosse of East Kaweka Helicopters. However we arrived to the news of a change in plan. Due to poor weather conditions expected the following day we were told had better get ourselves organised as we had an hour before we were flying in. The weather was our friend in this case and we had caught trout that night before we were originally scheduled to leave and no jet lag to contend with.

Our arrival at the hut was also filled with anticipation. Would we be alone or would there be a tramping party in before us with



no manners, terrible body odour and a snoring problem that even the Stihl shop could not repair? The helicopter hovered over the tight landing area directly in front of the hut and it looked deserted, fears allayed and adrenalin pumping. In our excitement it was important not to forget to get out of the helicopter with your head down and well away from the tail rotor. Having negotiated those hazards we quickly threw gear on a bunk, reached for the rods and set off without delay to seek out another hazard; fast water, sharp hooks and slippery rocks.

You know how it goes; we arrived at the river a mere three minutes walk away, to the usual "nice looking water". The question was would it yield its residents to us or would we have to enter in to some serious negotiations? Rather than go in aggressively we decided to quietly offer a morsel to one or two of the residents we saw out for an evening cruise close to the river bank. It appears they were out foraging and although reluctant at first they soon moved forward to receive our offering. We had come in peace but it was apparent that upon taking our offering of a Cicada that they were not happy. They became aggressive, tried to get away from us and put on a wild display of thrashing and jumping to indicate to us that this meant war.

This changed things, and we decided that for the next three days we would show these fish who was boss. Sure there were a few that managed through speed and stealth to evade us but putting it bluntly we proceeded to cause mayhem on the river taking these residents one by one, teaching them a lesson and returning them to the river only after they had settled down.



Needless to say the fishing was excellent apart from one morning when the rain came; the Cicadas stopped singing so the fish stopped biting. Lunch time that day was a place of reflection and cogitating over why the morning was producing less fish. After a short conversation and a sandwich it appears the stand off between the Cicadas and the trout was resolved and the trout agreed to start biting again if the Cicadas would start singing. So with the merry bush song back in action it was a resumption of catching fish and the slow morning was quickly forgotten.

Having been relatively successful it was now time to consider if there were other flies in the box that might work better. The friendship that I have had for some time with Madame X sadly came to an end on the first day of the trip. I do miss her but given her refusal to take trout she was relegated to a difficult pocket in my vest because I



would not need her any time soon. The standard green Cicada had become our new friend but she was about to be ditched as well. As the red and black bodied Cicada I bought on a bit of a whim gently touched the water her allure drew a trout from some distance across the river. She performed this manoeuvre a number of times and the fact that we were running low on green Cicadas was no longer front of our minds.

There were a number of good fish, some of them left us with fond memories such as the one that decided I needed to check my backing. I am sure my green fly line was there when it struck but

a quick glance down found the reel was only showing backing. My fish had gone down river so fast that catching up was a test of my fitness and the ageing process. I caught up with it to find that in those few seconds I was not its only enemy. A very large Ngaruroro eel had sensed the trout was in distress and thought it would race me to see who could get to it first. A bit of a fight with the trout and a wading stick over the head for the eel and I won by and landing a nice rainbow hen. Interestingly we had about five similar eel experiences over the three days and some of them were huge.



Another one I will remember is casting to a sighted fish who was showing little interest in my fly when two nice fish passed by at a gentle pace but very intent on heading downstream. Quickly forgetting about the trout less interested in my fly I cast a Cicada in the path of these two missiles. Well that's not actually true, I tried to do

that and it landed behind them. The last time I looked trout don't have eyes in the back of their head but I had time for one more crack. A swift back cast and a minor length adjustment and I got the next cast right in their path. Without a second thought one of them came up and took my fly, very satisfying.

Each fish has a story and having just had one of the most successful and enjoyable fishing trips in my short fly fishing experience I don't have room to tell them all. There are some aspects of the trip that were not related to the fishing but were just as memorable such as my attempt at the Jacques' Cousteau award and needing to take my waders off on the other side to relieve them of the water content in the legs; the Sika deer whistling in the forest park day and night (where was my gun when I needed it) and the breathtaking beauty of this country we are so privileged to live in.

Those that don't fly fish always ask



me if I brought the trout home or did I eat one while we were there. I have no objection to taking a trout for food but all we caught went back. Not because it's the right thing to do but there is something in me (I know it might be a bit touchy feely) that believes the wilderness we were fishing in belongs to the wildlife and we were the visitors. Returning a trout to the river and seeing it swim back into its wild habitat gives me the same shivers up my spine that catching them does and it leaves the area that gave me such a wonderful experience for others to enjoy as well.

Meet the Member – Balaji Somasundaram

Tena koutou katoa !

I am Balaji Somasundaram, a kindergarten teacher. Basically I am from Chennai, a city in South India. I was a lawyer back in India with a Degree in Law but always wanted to become a teacher.



I permanently moved into New Zealand in 2009 and qualified as a primary teacher from Victoria University in 2011 and later an early childhood teacher in 2013. I am also a certified squash and badminton coach and passionate about any game, sport and outdoor activities.

I live in Upper Hutt with my wife who is also a kindergarten teacher. Our only son is presently studying Environmental Engineering at University of Utah, United States of America. Beginning at age six in Chennai my passion began for deep sea fishing with my grandfather on our boat. I still have the same feeling of excitement though I am totally new to fly fishing. As many years have passed since that first catch I have grown to love the sport even more.

This is the first article on popular old flies. In the following months we will visit some of the patterns you know well and other less known ones. The flies still catch fish and if you're starting out with fly tying, they're great patterns to begin with.

Partridge and yellow

Depending on what you read, the Partridge and yellow could be one of the oldest known trout flies. References are made linking Dame Juliana Bergen to the fly in 1498 but I think factual detail on that is

rather thin. What we do know today is that the Partridge and yellow is one of the best known North Country spiders.

For the last 200 years, the popular thread for tying the pattern has been Pearsall's yellow gossamer silk, heavily waxed. The hackle is taken from a partridge neck and is usually tied in tip first. The resulting flies have a large head and often the hackles slant back in commercially tied flies. The photos here are tied using the reverse hackle technique and using half of the hackle feather. That makes for a spartan fly with as few as 13 barbs.

Hook: Grip 12804BL #16

Thread: Pearsall's yellow gossamer silk

Hackle: Partridge neck, halved.

The fly has loads of significance for me. It was the first soft hackle I tied and only a few years back too. I'd owned a spool of Pearsall's yellow



thread for around 30 years but never used it! The stuff does last. While staying in Turangi, I read *Wet Flies* by Dave Hughes. It is in the library there and is well worth the read. There was something special about this fly and I was keen to tie up a few. Dave's instructions seemed overly complicated for such a simple looking fly. After getting home I got in touch with Hans Weilenmann and asked him to tie the Partridge and yellow on YouTube. He didn't but did tie the Partridge and orange, saying it was a more popular fly. What a revelation. The fly could be tied using a different hackling technique and be made to look very beautiful. It seemed the pattern had centuries of dust blown off, revealing a glorious old trout taker.

Now, to take it for a swim.

North Country spiders are traditionally fished upstream and for the life of me, I don't see why that is. Yes it is tradition but worked downstream the pattern comes alive. For fishing a fly straight upstream, a nymph is very hard to beat. The following week saw me tying on a Partridge and yellow, standing by a large run on the Ruamahanga. A few fish were rising in the flow that had dropped to 14cu over the dry Christmas period. As I stood working out where other fish might be, caddis were crawling up my legs and in such numbers they were getting up my back as well. It was the largest daytime caddis hatch I'd ever seen. Fish now began to rise freely. If there was a rainbow in the sky, an end would have been right here! On the

second cast a rainbow grabbed the fly and was off down the run. Gone. Time to wake up. The number of hits on this dear little fly made my jaw drop. Around 3 hits to one hook up then there were fish leaping in the air, throwing hooks, snapping tippet and others that did come in. Browns and rainbows, the best at 3lbs. Ten landed in all. The numbers didn't really mean anything, it was all about this very simple pattern and how effective it was.

I've returned to that pool a number of times since and tested many patterns there. Never has there been a mid-day caddis rise again. There is something special about the Partridge and yellow, not quite sure what it is but do know I'll always take a few fishing.

TT

Fishing Naked by Tim Trengrove

There's much to be said for fishing with clothes on and I wouldn't in fact advise fishing any other way. Getting hit on the back of the swede with a 3.5mm tungsten bead nymph hurts. Collecting one somewhere else would really set the bells ringing! There is more to getting the kit off as I'll explain.



Once upon a time, we started the day fishing a high country stream with one small fly box, some nylon and a pocket knife. A few squashed sandwiches were optional. That was it though, then someone got a fly fishing vest. Oh my lord, what a mistake that was. Every vest pocket now bulged with absolute necessities, the same absolute necessities we'd never needed in the previous years. We were nymphing now and needed 10X as many flies and in different weights, indicator material, scissors to trim that, floatant, things on whizzers, bizzers to match whizzers and so on. The shortie vest bulged to bursting then it was back into the full length type but this time with inside pockets as well. The last vest I owned promised to be the most comfortable vest made with padded and stretchable neck support. It might have been too until I loaded it up. Turning ourselves into beasts of burden was tiresome and so too was this new style of fishing. Two weighted nymphs, indicator or

two indicators, fast action rods that could hold a tent up all meant a complete loss of feel. I began to hate it and one day seven years ago, it began to change.

I'd lived up here for a few years before finding out that the Wainuiomata River actually flowed down Coast Road. That's right, this South Islander had not ventured down past the township. Being such a novice I pulled the car over where the river first swings by the road. A rotting pig carcass would have put off non-anglers but a dimple at the head of a very narrow and shallow pool caught my attention. Noooooo, it couldn't be. There's way too little water for trout but then another dimple. On the third, I was making my way down through the gorse. Trout alright. Spooked the first one and the second then took off everything. They were seeing the indicator in the air. Indicator gone. 4lb tippet? Gone. There was a spool of 2lb nylon in there somewhere. #16 nymphs? Gone. One #18 unweighted mayfly emerger was my new Top Gun. Now to cast. Cast? No saddle bag fly fishing vest, no fluffed up indicator, no two weighted nymph rig, no thick nylon and no wind resistance. In the words of Donkey, I could fly! The unshackled pleasure of fishing naked was intoxicating and completely numbed the pain of the last fish inhaling my emerger and promptly breaking off. As I looked up it seemed a large banner crossed the sky reading **Welcome to fly fishing!**

In the years following this I've sold my fast action rods, most comfortable vest in the world and hardly ever use indicators or weighted nymphs. For a whole year I went back to taking only what fitted in my shirt pockets. It was naked but the draw for a few clothes was pulling me back. First came a chest pack, small enough so I wouldn't relapse into muledom. That was utterly uncomfortable and my son called it a fag bag so it really had to go. I've got a small shoulder bag now, sort of semi-clothed and well able to get me through an afternoon.

For anyone starting out fly fishing, disregard everything you've just read. Fishing naked is ridiculous anyway under our summer sun. If you're up to new challenges in fly fishing though, shed a bit of kit and see how you go.

Woods Waffles

Tackle Testing

Testing new rods, reels, lines and other pieces of fishing equipment is a favourite part of fishing for me. Just seeing what

the gear will be like when used in the conditions I tend to put it into becomes interesting. My family nickname was Buster for many years and it isn't hard to work out why!

One of the aspects I believe is important when putting thoughts into print (apart from not being sued for libel or is it slander?) is to mention any association with products or suppliers and in fact have given up buying a particular fishing magazine because of the blatant positive reviews on gear that is supplied by their advertisers. I prefer the warts and all approach, as well as hating subliminal advertising – as in "the power of the drag on the (insert brand name) reel came into its' own.... or "casting the (insert brand name) rod in that breeze was easy....

So here is a bit of a review of some Airflo gear that I have used lately and here is my qualifications of the review:

*All gear has been purchased by me for the shop so technically I have bought it and not been given any free to try

*What I like may not suit you and you should try equipment before purchase, wherever you purchase it to see if it suits as there a lot of good brands out there

*Your opinion counts as much as mine so neither of us is right nor wrong, so just enjoy fishing for what it is.

So here goes....

Airflo Bandit 804-4 Combination.

This setup was the Bandit rod, Lamson Remix 1.5 reel and the Airflo Super Dri Elite WF4F flyline. The rod comes in a hard cordura tube as well as having a spare tip section. The reel is one of the new Lamsons which features a machined main body with a machined cast spool that can also be used in the Lamson Liquid reel. The Super Dri Elite fly line is more of a presentation style with a longer front taper. In the hand the setup felt well balanced and nice to the feel.

Going out onto the Wainui armed with this setup was a real test of fate, as the weather gods could have served up a lesson but they played nice for once. The rod was lovely to cast and had a lot of power but for me the line needed to be swapped for either the Bandit or the Ballistic as I had trouble loading the rod for some short casts to sighted fish – probably more to do with my casting technique than the gear as I was using a long leader and dry fly for the first time. But putting out some longer casts to get a decent drift down some runs showed me that I could be delicate and it was

a joy to use. It also had power to burn when playing a fish. I caught a good jack at the head of a pool (7 1/2lbs - showing off now) and decided to see if I could keep it in the small pool rather than let it run down river. It wasn't a problem and I could turn the fish quite easily and got it in quickly as the rod could keep the fish turning. It didn't test the drag on the reel tho, but the pickup rate was good for the line I had out. A quick weigh and the fish was released green only cos I forgot my camera.

I really like this setup but would like to try a different line on it to see how it performs. Getting used to a smaller grip on the rod was a challenge as couple of times could feel my hand wander up the grip while casting but that should change in time. The spare tip was a great idea so that if the tip was damaged you could keep fishing. The only thing I didn't like, but could probably live with, was that the epoxy over the guides was a little bit thick for my liking. This does seem to be on all the Bandit rods so I guess that it has been deliberate.

Airflo Bandit 906-4 Combination

Bandit 9ft 6 weight rod with Lamson Liquid reel and Airflo Super Dri Bandit fly line. Apart from being the heavier version of the rod above, all the cosmetics were the same but with a slightly longer handle. The handle isn't the same length as on other rod brands and made the set up feel slightly off balance to my mind, especially as the rod is quite stiff. In fact I found this one a real power house when combined with the Bandit line. It was great for casting a long line with big flies quickly and efficiently and would be good with heavy nymphs. In fact this coming week it will be going into the back country with me for a trip to see how it goes with cicadas. I took it out to the Wainui again as the wind was blowing quite hard in Wellington, but who would have thought the weather gods would be nice to me twice in the same month. It wasn't as subtle as the Elite but that was fixed by lengthening the leader. It made casting a longer leader easy once I had worked out to slow down, load the rod and not power up the cast at any stage. Oh yeah also watch out for the trees- a few flies didn't make it home. Because the line has brown sections on it, it made it hard to see where the line was in the gloom and shade but will be good camouflage when the sun is on the water. All through the evening I did wish that I had bought the 5 weight instead and that I look forward to using the 6 weight on the Tauranga Taupo this winter.

Airflo Bandit 908-4 Combination

Keeping with the Bandit theme, I put the 8 weight to a bit of a test on Lake Tarawera. I teamed up the rod with a Lamson Remix reel to provide a bit of weight and then made up a Tactical Shooting Head 260gr with Ridge Line Floating running line. This was to see how it would stack up as a Heave and Leave style setup for the river mouths in the Central North Island over winter. I had heard quite a bit about the Di7 and how good they were for getting flies down deep and that was certainly the case. It was quite noticeable how quickly the line got the buoyant flies off the surface and down, and casting was made easier by the thin level running line once it got water on it to provide lubrication. The one thing I hated with a capital H was the loop to loop joins between the head and the backing. While having the ends pre-looped seems like a good idea, and it is for the front for tying the leader onto, I would cut off the line connecting loops on both lines and splice it up with a bit of braided running line as the loops didn't allow the line to come through the guides – even when pointing the rod straight down the line. This proved a pain when casting and retrieving the line. Also the slightly thinner rod grip was a bit small for my hand (I like a larger grip personally) and if using for a long period of time would put on a thin tennis over-grip to build it up. Other than that I could cast a fair way with this setup and can't wait to use more over the coming months. Well winter feels like it is already here!

TroutHunter Fluorocarbon Tippet Material

Want to really see how bad your knots are? No, I didn't think so and I don't want to be reminded again thank you but this FC just showed how bad my knots really are, and how I have got away with it over the years. I have watched on with amusement many times at people being ultra-careful when tying knots. Now I know why as I have had a few knots fail with this material, luckily not to fish, and I haven't been the only one. When I have slowed down and been careful, tied the knot properly, TroutHunter has been great to use. Abrasion resistant, not easily curled up on shonky casting, supple but with good strength it has made me go back to school and re-learn knot tying (www.animatedknots.com has been a god send) and practise. The down side is the price but it is comparable there to the top of the line quality lines. All rod and reel combinations are available for trial.

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