



# THE HUTT VALLEY ANGLER

Newsletter of the Hutt valley Angling Club Inc

Issue No 421: March 2017



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## Editorial

At the February Club Night I spoke to John Millar who told me about a kiwi-based website called Active Angling New Zealand. One of the key contributors, Alan Bulmer has written a range of informative articles on a range of interesting and relevant fresh-water and salt-water topics. It is not possible to reproduce his articles in the newsletter, but I would encourage all club members to visit the website. Alan's articles are pitched at just the right level and are based on science, real-life experience and common sense. Definitely worth a read.

*Chris Kuchel*

## President's Piece



Welcome to what should be summer. The weather this year has affected our planned fishing trips throughout New Zealand in recent months. The sound of cicadas has been absent for many of us in the Wellington region recently.

February's club night which is essentially a catch up, was well attended by club members, visitors and persons interested in joining the club which is a good sign. Thanks to the persons who put together presentations for the night. It gave us an insight into what some of our members have been up to over the summer break and hopefully gave you an idea for future places to visit. Ask around if you are thinking of going somewhere different and we will try and give you the guidance necessary to make your trip a success.

Recently we were advised that the premises we as a club have used for a number of years in regard to holding Committee meetings and Fly Tying nights has structural issues and as such we are seeking an alternative venue. Through the good work of Ken Simpson we may be able to use rooms at the Stokes Valley RSA which is located at 21 Hawthorne Crescent. Hopefully by next month this will be confirmed and we will be able to advise you of the dates that we are booked in for.

As Chris alluded to in the February newsletter, Grahame Kitchen, after many years of tireless work has stood down from the role as Publisher for the Club Newsletter. I would like thank Grahame for his years of service in publishing such a high quality newsletter which we are always keen to receive. Krystal has stepped forward to assist Chris to put the monthly newsletter together which is task that needs two persons. Thanks Krystal for doing this.

Club business carries on in the form of casting clinics, club trips, fishing competitions and the buddy program. The buddy program gives you the opportunity to go out fishing generally on the Hutt River with an experienced fisherman who will show you a few tips that you can put into practice on any future fishing trips you undertake. Give it a go; we are keen to hear from you.

The auctioning of Keith Tourell's gear went well thanks to the efforts of John Olds. The money raised will be sent to the Neurological Society.

Our March club night will concentrate on water safety with Glenn Beach giving us guidance and direction. This will be followed up by on water tuition (location yet to be determined) on Sunday the 26th March. We have been working to get this course in place for about three years and are committed to pay for it. Please if time permits, come along as this could save you or a person you or others from drowning.

We are always on the outlook for new speakers or activities at our club nights that would be of interest to members. If you have some ideas that we haven't thought of, get in contact with a Committee member and we can think it through. Enjoy your fishing weather permitting.

*Ross Goodman*

## **March Activities**

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Club Night, King Lion Hall, 7.30pm
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Casting Clinic, Belmont Domain, 10.00am
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Water Safety Workshop, Hutt River
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Taumarunui Trip

Committee Meeting: date, time and venue to be advised

Fly Tying Night: date, time and venue to be advised

## **Club News**

### **Next Club Meeting – King Lion Hall – Monday 13 February 7.30pm**

This meeting is not to be missed. At our next monthly club meeting, water safety professional, Glenn Beach will be talking to us on all things related to staying safe in and around the water. There will be no cost to members.

Glenn's presentation at the meeting will lay the preliminary groundwork for an on-river workshop which will be held on Sunday 26 March on the Hutt River. HVAC is part- subsidising the cost, so there will be a reduced fee of \$20 for members and the workshop will be limited to 15 participants. Register on the club website.

### **Alternative Venue for Committee Meetings and Fly Tying Night**

HVAC has been advised that the Community House is no longer available for use due to earthquake damage. Alternative venues for our Fly Tying meetings and Committee meetings are being explored at present. Keep an eye on the website for developments.

## **Casting Clinic**

This month's casting clinic will be held on Sunday 19 March at Belmont Domain. Be there early and ready for a 10am start.

The coordinator is Ian Lawson. If you want to attend, please sign up on the clipboard at our monthly meeting or register on the website. Registration allows us to have instructors available for all attendees and who we contact if there is any change in meeting arrangements.

## **Library News**

The library is open from 7.00 on Club nights. Please make sure that all books and DVDs are checked out and returned through Ajit in the normal way.

## **March Fly Tying Night** (date, time and venue to be advised)

This month, rabbit flies. New Zealand lays claim to tying the first rabbit flies. They're brilliant and every trout angler should have a few. There is a big range of rabbit fur colour now. Black or white still look pretty good!



Every club fly tier can make a great rabbit fly. The simplest with just rabbit fur on a hook will still catch trout. Dress it up a little and surprise yourself, just how good your rabbit flies look.

## Bound Shield Fly Tying Challenge for March



For this month's challenge we are asking members to tie a version of one of our favourite summer flies – the Cicada. This is **your** version and can be constructed from any suitable materials you choose.

The fly must be buoyant enough to float as a dry fly. These insects vary in size from around 15 mm up to 40 mm so you decide what hook size to use. Common materials may include closed cell foam, deer hair, cork, rubber legs.

The flies will be judged on what we will call "trout appeal" as well as overall appearance and construction.

Please bring your home tied cicadas to the Fly Tying Night.

## Raffle Winners in February

Congratulations to Ian Lawson for winning the Green Trout Guiding raffle. Monthly winners of the Green Trout Guiding raffle go into the annual draw for a fantastic guided trip with Jim Rainey. You've got to be in to win, so make sure you buy your ticket each month at club meetings. Fraser Gibbs took away the Hunting and Fishing voucher and Jason Young won the box of flies.

## Photo Competition

This month's winner is Krystal Smith who takes away the \$15 Fishscene voucher. Her winning photo "Temptress" is on the front cover of this month's newsletter. Jeff Wood from Fishscene is the sponsor of the monthly photo competition. Members are encouraged to support our sponsors.

## **November Fish of the Month**

No entries were received in January. Members are reminded to record their catches in the club fishing diary. Contact Rob Winwood to register your catch.

## **Up-coming Club Trips**

Friday 23 - Sunday 26 March. For the next club trip, HVAC will be teaming up with the Hastings Angling Club for a trip to Taumarunui, staying at the Taumarunui Holiday park. Cabins and tent sites are available. Spaces are limited to 6 HVAC members, so get in quick. A deposit is required. To confirm a place, email Colin at [lewiscrew@paradise.net.nz](mailto:lewiscrew@paradise.net.nz) or Krystal at [krystalarrow@gmail.com](mailto:krystalarrow@gmail.com). Accommodation details will be sent to participants as necessary.

One of the greatest challenges fishing the Wainuiomata is the wind. No wind, life is very difficult. Too much of it, life is very difficult. Sound familiar?

I'd arranged to meet Gian Booysen in Petone and motor on over the hill. The forecast was for wind, and it usually is over there. Just make the best of the situation is the plan.

Over the years I've developed some rules. 1) If it blows my hat off, stop fishing. 2) If the car door can't be opened, don't start fishing. When fishing with Gian, we usually add a few extras too like if it is a particularly tricky fish "Your turn isn't it?".

On this day the wind didn't disappoint. It was there all right, but so too was the sun. A strong wind and no sun makes for hard going. Strong wind and sunshine is actually okay. This was okay. What's more, as soon as we started I spotted a nice fish sitting close in, on a weed bed. The wind was blowing down the river and the trout was sort of facing that direction. It needed the angler to get upstream of it and place the fly very close in front of the fish. Gently too as the water was shallow and very slow flowing. This fish would see and feel everything. At about 5lb, this fish would have seen a lot of angler flies and got used to angler tactics.

"Your turn isn't it" I called out. Gian tried to return the favour but I wasn't having any of it. "What have you got on" I asked. "My magic Wainui fly" he said. Let's just say that the magic Wainui fly is a tiny unweighted pattern. "Perfect" I said, "I've got a #16 beadhead". And so it was, Gian made his way up river to get down the bank, behind the fish.

Wind to your back, from behind the fish, sail the fly out over it and land it gently in front. Piece of cake. You're kidding, right? This was anything but. With the fish high in the water, it wouldn't see Gian casting. Think of those tricky line diagrams that are meant to explain trout vision. The wind whipped up small waves but under the surface it was crystal clear. Shallow water and the fish can't see far in front or to the sides. It can feel everything though. That's the clincher. A small, unweighted fly was a



good choice. Now just get it down in the right place. And how did he know where the right place was as there was only glare from his casting point.

I stayed put and was able to give helpful instructions. "It's 2m out from where the weed juts in." Gian couldn't see the weed, let alone the fish. "Just get it out there" I said. Having more sense than that, Gian reversed up the bank and walked back to me until he could see the fish, then back again to launch the first cast. "Not bad" I called, "3m up and a 1m in". The little fly did a good job in following the instructions but was pulled back by the wind. The fish too had done a good job of putting up with us and now decided to slowly drift off to deeper water and disappear.

"Good try" I said, hoping the next fish we saw would be in a much kinder position.

It was too and further, there were about 3 cruising about together. The plan was for me to get well upstream of the fish and to drift a fly down to the nearest fish. Casting upstream into this northerly was well beyond me but with the wind behind, life was relatively pleasant. Not that I could cast with any accuracy – I couldn't. Just get it out there and wait for the fish to swim upstream towards the fly. After a number of tries, it worked. The top fish grabbed it and shot off downstream with the fly now firmly embedded. Just as well because with the wind, I never saw the take!

This was all rather impressive I thought and led to the usual banter. "How heavy?" Gian asked. "About 10lb" I replied. 2.5lb would have pulled it up.

About 60m up was the corner pool. We would look down into the deep water and spot fish while hatching a plan of attack. First up, one on the other side. Normally within easy casting distance for each of us but today, with this strong downstream wind, the fish was safe. Scanning on upstream there were possibly 2 others. Too many to contain Gian as he slid down the steep bank, taking up position across and slightly downstream of a fish that had about a 12m beat on the far side. The high banks on both sides created a wind tunnel as Gian quickly found.

He's a good caster and powered out a number of casts that would normally have gone 3 times the distance. Here though, they lagged downstream of the target and looked good examples of a downstream-bow-cast. Poor Gian, this was another very difficult fish. I could have stayed looking at this and would have if I were any sort of fishing mate but a dark shape upstream had caught my attention. Saw it as soon as we reached the pool but as it was not moving, thought it was a stick. Time to check it out. No stick here. A broad, black back and weighing in at least half a pound heavier than our first target. "Drift down to it" Gian suggested and he was right. Even if he'd wanted to from his position, the wind wouldn't allow an upstream cast.

Options. Get upstream, yes. I could get down the bank and crouch between gorse bushes. The fish was about 15m downstream and below me. Weighted nymph. No go, it'd sink into the weed bed and not drift. This fish too was sitting on the weed bed. Small, unweighted soft hackle. Perfect! But do you think I could resist trying a dry fly? No. The day before I'd tied these calf hair winged Adams dries and they were gorgeous. New barbless TMC hook too. What was to lose? On it went and after a few failed attempts to get line onto the water a reasonable fling got it out there.

The wind was now upping the ante as Gian pulled his hat down to the never-blow-off position. The fear was that the wind would capture the dry and skate it away from the fish. What happened was why I've got you reading this. The drift looked masterly, like I'd actually planned it that way. Down it drifted, half a meter out from the line of the trout. Seeing the fly approaching, the trout swung into line and moved upstream to take the fly. There was way too much slack line with the cast being mostly out of control so by stripping line I'd be ready to set the hook once the fish took. In that moment the wind delivered a frightful gust and lifted the whole fly line, leader and fly off the water into the closest gorse bush! The trout was robbed and so was I.

It was all too funny to get annoyed. Gian finally had something to laugh about. Having achieved lift off, we decided that was a good time to head back to the car.

My first club trip was the combined trip with Hastings Angling club in October. We stayed at their lodge, which is fortuitously nestled between the friendly vibes of the Patangata Tavern and the enticing drop-offs of the Tukituki River. After a long drive, it felt pretty outstanding to pull up between these two gems on a Friday afternoon and have that first beer!

We had dinner (and quite a few beers) at the tavern that night and chatted with the locals, who all seemed to be anglers or related to anglers. Back at the lodge later we were each paired up with one of the Hastings members, with the aim to have a more experienced angler in each duo. The Hastings members knew the area, and took us each to a different section of the Tukituki River for the morning. I was paired with Mark, and we went to a spot just a few kilometers up the road from Patangata. As we drove past the farmer's house I marveled at his outlook; a rolling grassy descent down to the deceptive depths and milky looking papa plateaus of the river.

After the pebbly shores of the Hutt River, or even the larger moss-covered boulders of the Manganui-o-te-au, which are my usual hangouts, I won't pretend it wasn't intimidating. The water depth was difficult to determine as it splayed over the shelves' varying shades of beige and brown, appearing deep when it was shallow over the darker stone, and shallow where it was deep above smooth cream papa.

We picked our way down and I awkwardly minced my way across the slippery papa to the seam Mark pointed out to me. He mentioned that the overcast weather wasn't ideal; when it's a bluebird day he said, you can see everything. I cast into it for a while, working my way up, and then across. Mark was certain I'd get a bite in there, but after a while with nothing I convinced him to go in himself and have a crack. He eventually did, entering a little upstream from me, where he caught a beaut rainbow; here's him reeling it in:



We explored the river and eventually crossed over, and Mark showed me where to aim amidst swift riffles which rolled over steps of papa. A few casts and I hooked one; I pulled up and I had it! I kept it tight and saw its pink side glisten as it jumped out of the water and writhed in the air. It was the biggest fish I'd ever had on my line (which isn't saying much), about 40cm from what I could see when it jumped. Satisfied that I had a tight line on it, I started to work my way downstream, reeling when it relaxed, letting it go when it ran.

But then suddenly it was gone. Just like that. The tension left my line and the adrenalin drained away to be replaced with a resigned acceptance. I reeled my slack line in as Mark made his way over. He had warned me about the papa shelves earlier, but in the moment, I hadn't put two and two together. The fish had suddenly run, darting around and in behind one of the protruding shelves for shelter. My line had been cut on the sharp edges of the stone. I felt embarrassed and disappointed, because Mark was trying so hard to help me and I couldn't do it.

We made our way upstream to a spot where a grassy bank overlooks a swift, clear and deep stretch which the rainbows like. It was one of those spots where you can see them lurking, but they can see you too. We spotted a really big one, holding level in the current, but I just knew I wouldn't be able to position myself to cast to it. I'm left handed and the bank was grassy and rising to my left. I persuaded right-handed Mark to take a crack, and though he wasn't happy about taking the chance from me, I convinced him it was the better option. The wind was picking up so I spotted for him and he tweaked his aim, until he was right over its nose. It didn't take, so he added some split shot to try for a bit more depth. Twice he added more split shot, and then with three pieces of shot on, it took and he had it.



For a while I cast my fly over a brown we saw holding in some thigh-deep still water, but he didn't like the look of the few flies I tried, or maybe I wasn't deep enough. Eventually we made our way back to the carpark, and on to lunch at the lodge and a change of partners.

Alan, my partner for the afternoon, took me to one of his favourite stretches of the Tuki, a good 5-10km downstream from where Mark and I had been. As soon as we pulled up on the stony riverbank I saw the spot I wanted to try. A long, narrow run widened out into a shallow bend that dropped off along a cliff side. Alan told me never failed to get a bite or two on that drop off, and that was all I needed to hear. He went upstream to fish the run, and I spent the entirety of my afternoon at that drop off.

It probably seems like insanity, fishing one stretch for hours like that. But as I slowly edged my way out, a couple of metres in from where the riverbed dropped away, I saw the first flash of pink. It wasn't down the drop like I had expected, but sweeping gently from side to side in the shallow gravel I was walking across. I immediately froze and waited for my eyes to adjust to the perspective shift. I saw a second rainbow, and a third, all hovering in the shallows and seemingly unaware of me. I was so excited, I was sure this was my chance. I barely needed to cast, they were so close. I flicked my fly a few metres up into the shallows, letting it bump over the stones and across their path, repeating each time it passed them without a bite. I tried several different nymphs and repeated, without a bite. I doubtfully tried a couple of dries, without a bite. I switched to a wet line and pulled a woolly bugger and wee wet or two past their noses, without a bite. There are so many things that go through your head when you can see them, they're feeding, your fly is almost hitting them on the nose, but they're just not taking. In my case, a lot of it was self-doubt.

I worked my way back and forth across that stretch for a couple of hours, before eventually looking up to see Alan gesturing that it was time to head back. Back at the lodge, not all of the pairs had returned, and not everyone was ready to call it a day. Dom and I were among them, so we walked down to a spot upstream from the bridge by the lodge and had a crack at another beautiful drop off.



After a lot of the same results I had with Alan, we gave up and headed back. Everyone was back, so we tucked into the snacks provided by the Hutt Valley Angling contingent, not to mention a few cold ones. There had been varying degrees of success and we all shared stories of our best and worst moments of the day. The Hastings guys put on a fantastic bbq, and we toasted their amazing efforts and hospitality. It really had been an incredible day for everyone, and with the best company.

The next morning I got up an hour earlier than everyone else and with a single-minded determination, I geared up and walked down to the river. I spent a fruitless hour trying everything I hadn't tried the previous afternoon, then wandered back for breakfast and to pack up. There were goodbyes all around and when I hugged Mark goodbye, I had to reassure him that I'd had an incredible time, despite failing to land a fish.

While Dom, Colin and I fished our way home (nothing for me, a little one for Colin, and a few big ones for Dom – some guys have all the luck), I reflected on the weekend and realized that I really, truly had enjoyed



myself. This weekend had been challenging certainly, but mostly enriching. I learned that I have a stubborn streak that I was sure, given time, would see me right. Information and advice comes at you from all angles when you're learning, and your mind feels like that wind knotted nylon you gave up on and shoved in your pocket. A problem that can be solved if you try hard enough, but just like that nylon, you need patience and care and the right frame of mind.

'Perseverance is character building' is the phrase I take away from my weekend in the Hawke's Bay. I've never had a more exciting and fulfilling weekend of fishing, without catching a single fish.







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