

THE HUTT VALLEY ANGLER

Issue No 408 : February 2016



Photo taken by Damian Bengree

Up-coming February activities
It's not just about the fish we land!
The mighty Tongariro – not just a winter river
What's in a reel?

Editorial

Happy New Year and welcome to the first issue of the Hutt Valley Angler for 2016. I trust you all had a peaceful and relaxing time with your families over the Christmas break. It's a great time of the year when you can allow yourself to do absolutely nothing, totally guilt free. After all of the feasting, celebrations and over-indulgence, I found some excellent books to read. The first was "Open Season" by Dave Witherow (as reviewed by Tim Trengrove recently). Next came Derek Grzelewski's Trout Diaries followed by his Trout Bohemia. Both of these books are a true pleasure to read and give a very clear insight into his philosophy of fishing and life in general. Following that, came "The Artful Science of Trout Fishing" by John Hayes and Les Hill, which presents scientific data together with detailed knowledge based on years of practical experience and observations from above and below the water. I can't recommend this book highly enough. I borrowed it from the Hutt City library, but I'm going to buy a copy for myself for on-going future reference.

By the time this issue goes to print, it will be back to business as usual, with plenty of club activities planned for February, March and April. Make sure you make the most of these opportunities while the good weather continues and as always, please feel free to write an article for the newsletter and share your thoughts and experiences with other club members.

Chris Kuchel

President's Piece

Happy New Year to all members. Hopefully some of your Christmas gifts included a much needed new piece of fishing tackle. You can never have too many rods, reels and sundry equipment when you are a keen fisherman. Remember our sponsors; they are keen to see you and sell you a much needed new rod.

2015 finished for us as a club with our December meeting where we enjoyed a quiz night put together by Alan Markham. The



questions strained our knowledge banks and made for some great entertainment. Congratulations to the winners and a big thanks for AI for setting the questions and making the night most enjoyable.

Reading on the club's Facebook page, I have been most impressed by the success that DomScahill has been having on a local river. One day he caught 4 fish, with a couple over 5lbs and the other 2 over 6lbs. This new young member has certainly been reaping the rewards of learning the basics from the likes of Mike Nansett and getting out there and putting what he has learnt into practice.

For the rest of us the summer months have been enjoyable with a number of good fish being landed that have been in very good condition. What I have learnt in the last couple of weeks is that the wonder-fly of the last trip, may not work on the next trip. It pays to carry a number of patterns and sizes and constantly change the fly you are using until you hit on the one for today. As John Olds has said to me, "If that fly is not working, try something different. You will get the same result if you are not succeeding"

We have our first Committee meeting soon and I have been thinking that we need to set up a workshop to give some guidance to our newer members and perhaps refresh our more established members. I am thinking perhaps March/April time when the fishing is cooling down and not all of us will be away fishing.

There are a number of club trips coming up that are a very good opportunity to get out fishing with other club members and members of clubs from different parts of New Zealand. A lot of effort goes into organising these trips so please support them. Also we will get our casting clinics up and operating again to give assistance in the basics of casting. John Millar has organised the club fishing competitions which give everybody the opportunity to have success.

This time of year is a great time to be a fisherman, with lots of opportunities to be out in the wilderness areas of NZ which should not be missed. Hanging out my fishing gear yesterday on the clothes line, I came across a very dark Cicada; a sure sign that they are slowly emerging from underground. It is exciting watching trout react to Cicada's and the fishing can be mind blowing.

Well that is enough. Time to pack for a trip down to Southland for a week's fishing and battling with the insect life. The fish grow large which is not unusual given the amount of food that flies around and drinks our blood.

Ross Goodman

February Activities

- 8th Club Meeting King Lion hall 7.30pm
- 10th Casting Clinic Belmont Domain 6.30pm
- 13th Goodman Shield Saltwater fly competition
- 16th Committee meeting
- 24th Fly tying

Club News

Club night – Monday 8 February at 7.30pm in King Lion Hall. King Street, Upper Hutt.

Note that for the March meeting Strato Cotsilinis is confirmed as speaker. He is hoping to have the drift dive survey results for this year as well.

Casting Clinic – To take advantage of daylight saving and the warmer weather, the casting clinic time has been moved to Wednesday evening 10 February 6.30 pm at Belmont Domain.

The co-ordinator 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.

Goodman Shield - Saltwater Fly Handicap Competition

This year the Goodman Shield will again be fished at Ivy Bay in the Pautahanui Inlet. This will be a fly only competition.

Date: Saturday 13 February

Times: Start 12.30 p.m.

Finish: 3.30 p.m.

Anglers will rotate their positions at 2.00 pm

High Tide: 2.10 p.m.

Ivy Bay is on the road between Whitby and State Highway 1 at Plimmerton. There is a car park on the left about 500m before reaching the SH1 roundabout. Leave your car in the car park then cross the road by the underpass to Ivy Bay.

Gear: Strong fly rod (preferably 7wt to 10wt) with floating (or sinking) fly line. Chest waders. Net.

Flies – lure type flies to imitate small fish.

Fish measures will be supplied. Fish must be at least 18 cm to count.

Points will be awarded for each fish caught and less experienced competitors will be given a generous allowance per fish.

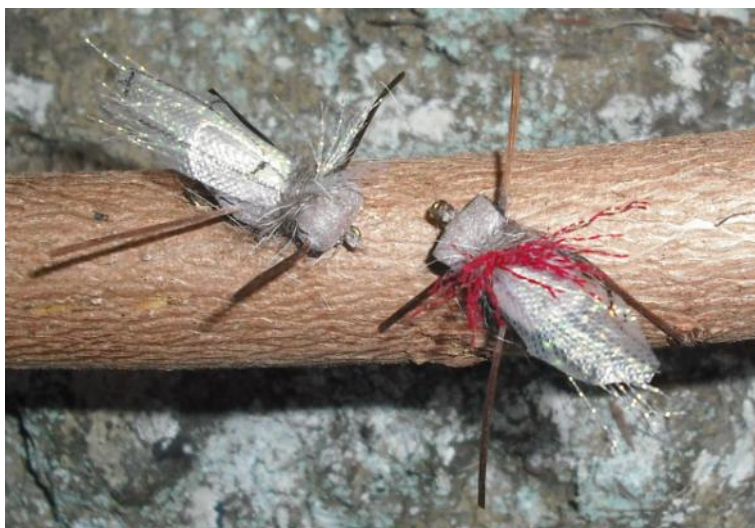
Names can be added to the clipboard at our February meeting or register on the website or by contacting John Millar. Email: john.millar@xtra.co.nz ,
Phone: 5636491.

Entry fee \$2 payable on the day.

See you there!

Fly Tying Meeting

Upper Hutt Community Meeting House off Logan Street beside Upper Hutt Medical Centre. This month we will be focusing on a foam cicada pattern.



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 Maureen in the normal way.

Burgess Shield Surfcasting Competition Sunday 27 March

This year the Burgess Shield will be fished at Te Horo Beach near Otaki.

The competition will start at 10.00 a.m. and finish at 2.00 p.m.

This competition qualifies for inclusion in the club championship.

It takes approximately one hour to travel to Te Horo from the Hutt Valley.

Fish will be measured and anglers will record their scores.

Competitors may not use more than one rod at any time.

This year points will be awarded for every competitor's place in each competition and the angler's best three results will count towards their score for the club championship.

There will be an entry form on a clipboard at the March club meeting or members can make an entry on the website or by contacting John Millar
Contact details - email john.millar@xtra.co.nz phone 5636491

Up-coming trips

Rivers around Pahiatua, 11- 13 March.

Tukituki River, 1 – 3 April, hosted by the Napier Freshwater Anglers Club.

This will be a popular trip and spaces are limited.

To confirm a place on a club trip, email Damian at

c.bengree@paradise.net.nz not less than 3 weeks before the trip date.

Damian will send accommodation details to participants as necessary.

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It's not just about the fish we land

By Trevor Jeffries

The first weekend in December saw a quartet of anglers slip away from their domestic task lists and head to Taihape for a couple of days of angling on the Rangitikei and other surrounding rivers. Among the group of John O, Ross G, Mike N and TJ, there was much anticipation of blue skies, clear water and boisterous fish to be landed.

Having travelled through on the Thursday evening, plans were made in relation to pairings and destinations for the following day with much promotion by JO of the “Rangitikei Red” as the “go to” nymph for this region. Despite the customary “yeah right” comments the following 2 days would reveal that each angler had in fact used the instructions in the Dec newsletter to add a few to their fly box – just in case!

Day 1 dawned fine although with a mixed forecast with Ross and Mike heading off to an area east of Taihape with John and TJ heading toward the Springvale region. As it turned out Ross and Mike had the stretch to themselves with both enjoying several fish in the 2.5-3.5lb range with the best being around 4lb. While fish in this weight range may not be a trophy, in fast water and with various natural obstacles they represent a good challenge and a lot of fun with deft skill still needed for a successful catch. Meanwhile John and TJ experienced mixed fortunes, John faring the better and landing several fish between 2.5 and 4lb and losing a beauty at the pump bend. Despite TJ having a number of takes and battles, no quarry was landed. He was however left with a fly line friction burn care of a fish that had taken him to within a whisker of the backing and had also come within a rod length before deciding play time was over and making a successful break to freedom.

Day 2 saw grey skies greet the quartet yet with the promise of clearing skies and soaring temperatures, although with a rising wind also forecast. This day saw the same pairings with John and TJ deciding to also have a look at the area fished by Ross and Mike the day before, and the later deciding to venture to the Kawhatau river having been influenced by running into members of another angling club who were setting up camp near Springvale late the previous day.

Unfortunately for Ross and Mike, recent floods had caused significant changes to the river course resulting in numerous braids forming that, with much reduced water flow, provided limited habitat for holding fish. Having covered a reasonable stretch of the river the pairing had seen limited signs of fish and a decision was taken to explore a section of the tributary Pourangaki River. While surrounded by some stunning native bush and scenery, this also turned out to be quite a long walk between fishable water with only a few fish spotted. Mike did however manage to hook a feisty “staircase rainbow” that proceeded to run up and down a turbulent stretch of water several times before busting off.

The area John and TJ had ventured to, although remote was more of a known quantity. With the same risk of other anglers being in the area an early start saw them 1st to the water and a decision was made to head upstream of a road bridge and fish the downstream stretch on the way home. Early on TJ broke his drought and landed a couple of fish around 2lb using a sz14 cased caddis pattern tied with copper wire and black ostrich herl. Moving upstream, John had an excellent battle with a fish estimated around 4lb in relatively shallow water before being busted off and also proceeded to land 2-3 fish around 3.5lb fishing against the far papa bank. The Rangitikei Red was beginning to work its magic, but more was to come and a long stretch nicknamed the ‘hut run’ would soon provide several indelible memories for both anglers.

There is an article by a visiting angler Verlyn Klinkenberg, who had described the deception, making the sale and suckering the trout as being nearly the all in American angling, yet considered this as merely opening negotiation when fishing in New Zealand. A perfect illustration of this point was made and underlined in this stretch of water. Both anglers had spaced themselves around 50 meters apart and had ventured out slightly to position themselves behind reasonable sized boulders that offered some protection to prospect a lively riffle of around 3-5 feet in depth and also provided support given the extreme slipperiness of the riverbed. Both had tied a Rangitikei Red as one of double nymph rig being used and within a few casts both had solid hook ups with two fish of 3.5lbs and 4lbs landed. TJ had just released a second fish and was observing John’s approach as John’s indicator disappeared beneath the surface and John struck. A moment later came the eruption as a 3 foot polaris leapt from the water and made a sizzling run across the current to the far side of the flow. This was soon followed by a run back across the current toward John who was now busy trying to strip

line as quickly as he could. For the next few minutes this game of cat and mouse and several strong runs and stunning leaps continued by which time John was now 70 metres downstream. Having exited the water TJ rumbled along the riverbank to get further downstream and act as the net guy all the while watching John doing his best to keep the missile under control. TJ had now reached a reasonable spot for John to work the fish toward and John appeared to be retrieving some line and turn the argument in his favour when off it went on another run and with a final leap broke off discussion.

Although there may have been a few initial words of dismay from Mr Olds, the next few minutes were largely silent as both anglers tried to appreciate the amazing bit of angling action that had just occurred. While there was a sense of disappointment, at the same time there was an equal sense of exhilaration, it just seemed to encapsulate what fishing is all about. The pair continued to fish a little further up the stretch for a short while with some additional success before stumps were called in favour of a drive back to Taihape and a glass or two and debrief with the others.

With rain looking to set in that evening, and the quartet having fed their angling addition, it was decided an early start home was the order of the day.

So in Mike Hosking style, here's a short score of the weekend:

- The weather, when compared to the ominous forecast – 6
- The aerobatics of several hooked fish and seeing “in person” a couple of fish take lines near enough to the backing, Exceptional – 8
- The Rangitikei Red. It certainly works in this central area. If you haven't tied a couple by now, it's worth the effort - 7
- TJ sprinting, well maybe getting up to a full half-canter, some 90m along the river bank to line up as net man for John O for the ‘fish of the season’, when he decides to long range release his quarry – 5 for sprint, 10 for the experience!
- The Levin kebab experience. A wee gem of an eatery near the BP station. Well priced, generous servings, delicious and already added to the favourites list - 8!
- Mike's staircase rainbow - 7
- The slickness of the riverbeds in this region - 4. On the upside seeing the Rangitikei Rumba performed by John O, arms and legs moving at different speeds in different directions, pure dancing with stars stuff – 7
- TJ's 1st attempt at using a minimalist hip pack to carry his gear for a

day on the river. Abject fail – 2. Real men do not know how to work handbags!

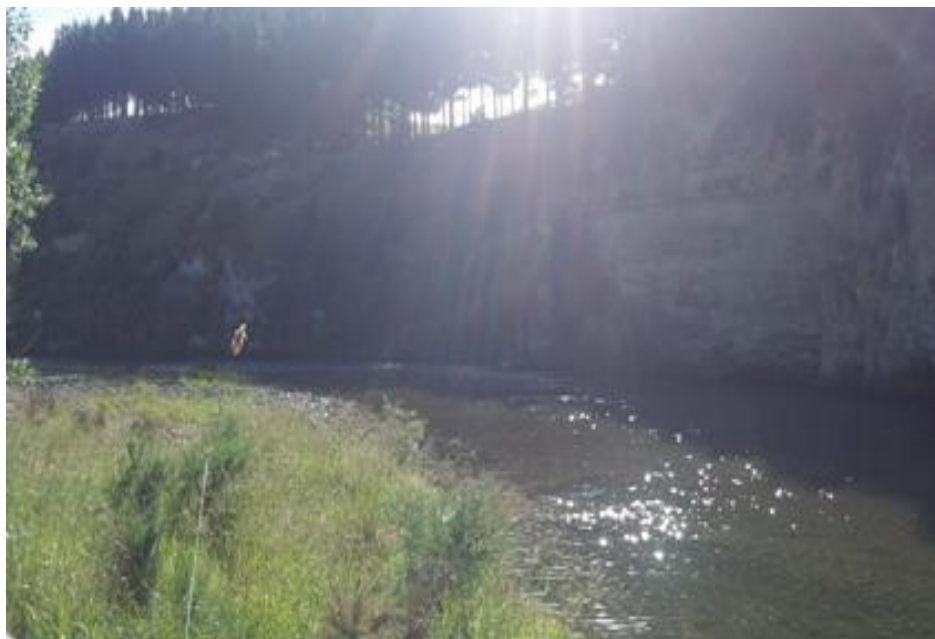
- Being back at a very reasonable hour totally satisfied with the fishing and feeling like we each still had a day to ourselves then realising the escape from the task list was just a dream. There is something chilling about those simple words, "oh good you're home I was thinking you might like to start ..." – 1
- The accommodation and hosting by Ross - 9.5. Only the absence of room service prevented a perfect score.

Over the 2 days we clocked a fair few km's amongst some stunning scenery and shared a wide range of enjoyable conversations and many laughs. As is common to many anglers, often we measure the success and enjoyment of trips in terms of the fish we land. Collectively, it is fair to say we got more enjoyment on this trip from the ones we didn't. Those fish that triumphed over each of us at different points have left vivid impressions in our memories. It is often those impressions that keep us continually looking to feed our fishing addiction.

Following is a selection of photos taken over the course of this great trip.









The mighty Tongariro – not just a winter river

by Chris Kuchel

At the end of November, I attended a weekend clinic put on by the NZ Silver Flies as a fundraiser for their up-coming trip to the world champs in Vale, Colorado. We stayed at the Park Travellers lodge in National Park and did all of our fishing in the Whanganui River in close proximity to Taumarunui. It was a brilliant weekend and a chance to learn from some of the best anglers in the country. As the weekend progressed, my hook-up rate increased and the number of fish I was losing decreased. By the end of the weekend, I was feeling a lot more confident in my ability to locate good fishing water then fish it effectively. One of the key things I learned was not to fish too light, so when I returned to Wellington, I bought some good quality 8lb fluorocarbon tippet, some heavier tungsten beads, good quality Hanak barbless jig hooks and a new 10ft 5 weight rod. My 10ft 3 weight rod is still great for smaller waters, but for the bigger fish on the Whanganui and Tongariro, the heavier 5 weight is the way to go.

A couple of weeks later, I headed up to Auckland to visit my grandchildren, but made a point of making an overnight stop at Turangi on the way up. I arrived at one of my favourite pools in the early afternoon, parked the car and walked to the edge of the cliff in anticipation. Sure enough, there as usual, were about a dozen good sized rainbows lined up in formation in the deep pool. I take my hat off to anyone who can catch these fish. They feel so safe there because it is just about impossible to get in a good cast to them due to the difficult terrain. Not to worry, fishing the actual pool was not my plan. My attention was focused on the riffly water at the tail of the pool and in particular the quieter water downstream where the seams of fast and slow current meet.



Armed with my new equipment I walked downstream to a piece of likely looking water and gently lobbed my nymphs upstream, Czech nymph style, then let them drift naturally down towards me in the slower-moving current.

Within a few minutes, I hooked my first rainbow. A nice solid 3 pounder that gave my new 5 weight rod a good christening. The 8lb fluorocarbon tippet gave also me a lot of confidence and allowed me to get the fish to the net fairly quickly and still in good condition. Over the next 2 hours I managed to land one more fish before being forced off the water by black clouds and thunderstorms. The prospect of standing out in the open waving a carbon fibre lightning conductor around didn't seem like such a good idea. I also have to say that during this whole time, I did not see one other angler. I had the river all to myself.

The next day, I set off early via Taumarunui, where I fished the Whanganui again for a couple of hours, before resuming my journey to Auckland with a nice Whanganui brown wrapped up in the boot as my contribution towards dinner that night.

A week later, I arrived back in Wellington and checked my emails and found one from Tim Trengrove. As it turned out, he had fished to exact piece of water on the Tongariro and had a bit more success than me. He fished it during the day and landed 12 then went back in the late afternoon for another 2. That night he landed a further 8 on the caddis rise.



We've all heard stories about how crowded the Tongariro can get and the potential aggravation that can develop as frustrated anglers jostle for position. In my limited experience, the Tongariro is a great river, with miles of fishable water (not just the pools) which provide excellent winter and summer fishing.

What's in a reel?

by Tim Trengrove

It's not often I feel like poking someone in the eye but one person does come to mind. The one who said reels are just for holding line.

What a creep. I really like reels and always have. Even if the reel is for a cheap rod, I still insist on a good quality reel. These days good quality rods and reels can be bought very cheaply. My first graphite rod and later, first good quality reel each cost two weeks wages. Rods and reels can be bought today for a fraction of that cost and they're much better quality than those available 30 years ago.

Two big developments in reels were large arbours and disc drags. By 2000, small arbour reels were losing popularity. Is there much difference? Heck yes! Once you've used a large arbour reel, you won't want to go back.

Hardy Brothers made a large arbour reel in the early 1900s but it took years for large arbours to gain popularity. There were even geared reels about in early days for a more rapid retrieve but these never had a big following. Before large arbours took over, the biggest innovation was the disc drag. These were in response to the jerky start-stop with click pawl reels. For a good discussion on various drag systems, look at this page, <http://www.sexyloops.com/articles/drag.shtml>. The old mechanisms were clever in their day and well-made but they weren't keeping up with modern advancements. Hardy Brothers has a fascinating history for those interested in reels and rod making. Make sure you see the DVD The Lost World of Mr. Hardy. It is all there, from the original patents which made the Hardy Perfect reel famous around the world to the demise of the company. Hardys eventually made disc drag reels but only after close to a century of click pawl reels. By then the company was in serious decline. The lack of improvement in their reels is similar to Land Rover production between WW2 and the 1980s. Land Rover stuck with the same basic WW2 design for far too long. When Toyota came up with the 4X4 Land Cruiser, Land Rover didn't know what hit them. Here was a vehicle that also went anywhere but it didn't break down and was comfortable. By the late 80s, Hardy Brothers were still turning out the Perfect and reels with click pawl drags and tiny tension screws that even with warm hands, were a beggar to turn.

The original Hardys Perfect reels were heavy, made to balance heavy split cane rods. When fibreglass rods arrived, followed by graphite, Hardys

produced lightweight alloy reels. Lightweight in performance too. Die cast aluminium reels were cheap to produce but didn't wear well like the old fully machined reels. The company's fortunes were at an all-time low when I came to buy a good reel in the 1980s. An old drag mechanism in a stamped out reel assembly was never going to revive the company fortunes. In New Zealand the 2 top end fly reels were the Hardy Princess and the Orvis Battenkill. I chose the Hardy, unfortunately.

My decision to finally ditch this reel and other old style models occurred at the head of Lake Pukaki. When there is a high lake level, water floods into tussocks giving trout new grazing areas. The lake edge water is normally zero visibility for the angler. That day, spring fed water was flowing through tussocks, pushing clear water into the lake for around 10m. You need to be very careful stalking the lake edge here. Patches of quicksand can bury you up to your knees – if you're lucky. I was on my own and was lucky. A heck of a fright though -[best to fish in pairs](#) . I could see fish cruising the shallows. Nice fish, up to 5.5lb. The first one hooked scorched off into the lake leaving behind a reel slowly turning to a halt and broken tippet. Bother, time to slacken the tension. The second fish took off in the same direction and created an awful tangle. The third looked much smaller, about 3.5lb. Success, it weighed 5.5lb. I now realised that first fish hooked was much closer to 7lb. My reel just couldn't handle these fish and it was never made for them either. Palming the reel to slow the fish was impossible with the enclosed spool frame. That is where the Battenkill would have been better. It was time to sell the anachronistic Princess and get a disc drag reel.



Smooth start up, silky smooth drag and counter balanced spool. I liked the sound of that and got a disc drag reel from Cabelas. It was still die cast aluminium but did have this new drag. It rattled along (literally) for a while until a door slammed on my fishing vest which contained the reel. Up until then, the drag was quite superior. What I now wanted was a machined reel, with a disc drag. One that didn't rattle but did stop fish. There were a few duds along the way before I got two Abel reels. These were a tremendous step up. Fully machined reels, counter balanced spools and a cork disc drag. Steve Abel experimented with all sorts of drags and settled on a cork disc drag system. They did go beautifully, were expensive and the engineering was superb. Still, they were small arbour reels. I reluctantly parted with them and bought a Japanese large arbour reel locally with a sealed disc drag. It was incredibly smooth and had a lower inertia startup than the Abels. What it didn't have was longevity. After a season it was free spooling when it chose. Basically it was worn out. The shop replaced every component in the drag except the shaft. The drag now worked but the reel graunched, off balance. Having paid \$225 for the reel, I was unimpressed and ditched it too. My next move was to Trademe for a Chinese made reel with large arbour, machined, counter balanced spool and sealed disk drag. This has been the best suited to my trout needs so far. After two busy seasons, crashes to the ground and bashes on stones, it still spins perfectly and the drag is working well. Price? Well under \$225 and even less buying directly from AliExpress. When it came to getting a reel for my new 3wt. rod, I started with a second hand Lamson reel. It was partly machined, large arbour, sealed drag, counter balanced spool but came with some surprises. The fly line frequently made its way past the frame line guide, meaning the reel needed taking apart to fix it. The push-out spool was a cumbersome, crazy feature. I ditched the Lamson, then turned to AliExpress. You know the drill, machined, large arbour, sealed drag and counterbalanced spool. There were a number to choose from and the one I got was US\$35 delivered. So far, it has performed well and cost a lot less than sourcing a reel locally. The enjoyment of using these modern, large arbour, disk drag reels is incredible. They're so much better than the clunky old small arbour reels. There are a bunch of people who still prefer the old style small arbour reels for their cane rods. Just a line carrier? I don't think so! Where is that fella who said reels are just line holders? I am going to poke him in the eye.

Tips for the Riverside

This article was first published in the September 2004 newsletter.

1/ Arrive at the riverside, thread your leader and line through the rod rings, tie on a fly and make a cast. Usually the nylon lands in curls on the water — it just won't straighten out.

Now yuppie fly fishers have a neat little leather and rubber pad attached to their vests to straighten out their leaders. They pull them through the pads, which stretches the nylon and straightens out the twists and curls.

You could make one, or carry a small square of rubber cut from an inner tube to do the trick. But if you are really lazy you can do what I do: fold over the strap of your waders and pull the leader through that. It works really well.

2/ I carry a artery forceps in my fishing vest. It is perfect for twisting a hook out of a trout's jaw, so the fish can be released without being touched. With small fish this is especially important if they are to survive.

Clamp the jaws onto the bend of the fly and give a twist. You'll be surprised how easily the hook comes out with minimum of damage to the trout.

3/ I always have a container of split shot in my fishing vest. When fishing in waters in which it's use is legal, I tie on a couple of small, unweighted nymphs and put a shot or two on the main leader above the tippet knot.

In fast deep waters this allows the nymphs to move more naturally in the current. Trout will also be more easily taken in by smaller, unweighted flies than bulkier ones generously loaded with lead.

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