

THE HUTT VALLEY ANGLER

Issue No 412 : June 2016



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Editorial

One of the responsibilities of all committee members is to cast their vote to decide the winner of the HVAC Literary Award for 2015/16, which will be announced at the June AGM. Looking back over the past year, we have been very impressed with the quality and variety of articles submitted by club members. So to all contributors over the past 12 months; many thanks. It's our newsletter and one that we can be very proud of.

This month is no exception. Ted Carton's fictional piece "Cumberland Gap" will be of interest to all members and particularly those with British connections. Fly fishing is not just a sport, it's a way of looking at the world, so it's great to see members putting their thoughts on paper to share with others. Our new monthly column "Trout Talk" is going from strength to strength and the "Meet the Member" section is a great icebreaker for those joining the club. Dan Waechter's report on Fish and Game issues is always a welcome reminder of the collective role we play as we negotiate our way through the maze of wider environmental issues.

Looking forward to another great year. If you have any ideas for articles, be they stories, technical advice, trip reports, product reviews or opinion pieces, please put pen to paper and go for it! All the best

Chris Kuchel

President's Piece

We are into May and duck shooting is upon us. Remember to share the water with other water users during this time as duck shooting has a very limited season.

Back to fishing, it was great to see so many members at the May club night, it shows the strength of our club and may well it last. That night we had Dan Waechter giving us an update of issues that Fish and Game are dealing with



currently. These will ultimately have an impact on us and the environment we fish in. So we should thank Dan who gives his time to represent us and looks out for us.

Following Dan's presentation, we had a Skype session with John Gummer who I met through being a controller at the Nationals and shopping at Hunting and Fishing in Palmerston North over the years whilst visiting family members. John raised some very interesting points to the questions I had submitted to him and his sincerity came across in his responses. John, when he is not working is out there fishing and for a young person he has a mature mind set. John speaks from experience gained on the water and I have found him very helpful when it comes to gear selection. I have been in contact with John thanking him for the evening and saying he was well received by club members particularly his mug, which I think stole the evening. John advocates for us to get young persons into fishing which is something that Dan is working on also. In November if commitments allow, John will run an on-river course for us, which would be of benefit to those members who want to become better fisherman.

To complete the evening we had Paul Baker who like John, is preparing to represent New Zealand overseas at the World Fly Fishing Championships. It was interesting to listen to both John and Paul outline the research they do and how they need to adapt their fishing styles to local conditions that they had not experienced before. We all have an understanding on the local river we fish but to fish elsewhere for most of us would be a daunting experience and I would suggest a struggle.

Its good to see a group of new and future members to the Sunday Casting Clinics run by Ian Lawson. This is a very important service we as a club provide and through it encourages new persons to join our club. Thanks to Ian for bringing along the club rods and reels plus organising the casting clinics.

The club is gearing up for the June AGM to be held on Monday the 13th June at 7.30pm. I have been approached by members who are keen to be on the Committee which shows that the club is in a healthy position.

So see you on Monday the 13th at the AGM and may it be a good one.

Ross Goodman

June Activities

13th HVAC Annual General Meeting - King Lion hall 7.30pm

19th Casting Clinic – Belmont Domain 10.00am

21st Committee meeting 7.30pm

29th Fly tying – Community House 7.30pm

Club News

HUTT VALLEY ANGLING CLUB INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016 - AGENDA

13 June 2016 at King Lion Hall, commencing 7.30 p.m.

1. Welcome to members
2. Apologies
3. Notification of items of general business
4. Minutes of the 2015 AGM
5. President's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Subscriptions for 2016/2017
8. Budget for 2016/2017
9. Presentation of trophies and awards
10. Guiding raffle draw
11. Election of officers
12. Appointment of reviewer of financial statements
13. Appointment of cheque signatories
14. Notices of motion / remits
15. General business

The annual guiding prize winner will be drawn at this month's AGM from these monthly winners.

June 2015	Peter Jacobson	Dec	Ken Simpson
July	Colin Thompson	Feb 2016	Paul Stapp
Aug	Bill Shkopiak	Mar	Jono Gough
Sept	Peter Parker	Apr	Ajit Jogi
Oct	Bruce Prescott	May	John Rochester
Nov	Steve Doughty		

Following the AGM, John Millar will present a demonstration of tips and tricks on how to attach a leader to a fly line. There are a variety of options available, which are well described on the Kingfisher website

<http://www.fly-fishing-guides-new-zealand.co.nz/connections.htm>

Casting Clinic - This month's casting clinic will be held on Sunday 19 June at Belmont Domain. Be there early, 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.

Fly Tying Meeting - This month will again focus on favourite flies. If you want to learn how to tie proven flies that work, this is for you.

Advance notice – Fly tying at July club night.

The annual inter-club fly tying competition will be held in November. To help generate interest, a demonstration of fly tying techniques will be presented at the July club meeting, which will be followed by a mini competition. Members interested in taking part in our Mini Fly Tying Competition at the July Club Meeting should notify John Millar.

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.

This month's feature book: **A Taupo Season** by John Parsons.

Library no 002. A fireside, bedside book for those who love to read of fishing for trout. Although set mostly in the Taupo area, the great majority of the material is applicable to any other part of New Zealand. Though intended as a book to be dipped into for relaxed reading, much of it gives food for serious thought.

Raffle Winners in May

Congratulations to John Rochester for winning the Green Trout Guiding entry. Trevor Jeffries took away the wading stick and Steve Doughty won the Hunting and Fishing voucher. Monthly winners of the Green Trout Guiding raffle go into the annual draw for a fantastic trip with Jim Rainey. You've got to be in to win, so make sure you buy your ticket each month at club meetings.

Photo competition

This month's winner is Ian Lawson, who takes away the \$15 Fishscene voucher. His winning photo is on the front cover of of this month's newsletter. Jeff Wood from Fishscene is the sponsor of the monthly photo competition.

Members are encouraged to support all our sponsors.

Fish of the month

Congratulations to Ian Lawson for his fine 6lb 5oz brown, taken on the Hutt River.

Next club trip

No club trips are planned for during the winter months.

All trips are weather dependant, with early bookings essential

Proposed HVAC Calendar – last chance to submit photos for consideration

At the March club meeting, it was proposed that the club produce a 2017 calendar. Initial response from members was positive, so this project will be going ahead. We intend it to be on sale by September at a cost to be advised. Grahame Kitchen and Chris Kuchel are organizing the calendar. Their first task is to source the 13 photographs that will be needed, and this is where members can help.

We are looking for a range of photos, taken in the past two years on modern digital cameras, that could be used to suit a “seasonal” theme calendar. Of course, each contributor would be given full acknowledgement as the author of the original photograph. Please email your photos to either Grahame or Chris.

Meet the member – Julian Taylor

Hello everyone. My name is Julian Taylor. Born and raised in Lower Hutt, I



have spent several years working overseas but have been back home for a while now. I currently work at the Ministry of Social Development but prior to this I have worked entirely in the finance industry. I enjoy most sports (watching rather than playing these

days), I like playing chess, am the world’s worst guitarist, and I am keen to learn a second language.

I’ve always liked the idea of getting out and fishing in the NZ back country but never have. To me it’s always been a quintessential NZ thing to do. Last year I bought some tramping gear to climb Mount Everest (I tramped to Base

Camp but “climbed Mount Everest” sounds better...) and to get the most out of it I will try and get out in the backcountry during the summer months.

At the end of the summer just been I bought my first rod, practiced a bit after work on the Hutt river and tramped the Travers Sabine circuit in the Nelson Lakes region. I wasn't expecting to catch anything... and didn't. So I have joined HVAC to learn as much as I can. I have had one casting clinic putting Mike and Ian's teaching skills and patience to the test. Looking forward to learning and maybe even catching a fish one day!

Picture is of me and a family living on the Everest Base Camp Trail after I gave them photos of themselves. Apparently it was like Christmas time for them.



TROUT TALK

By Big Jack

Last month I talked about making sure you wet your net and hands when practising catch and release. One thing I forget to say was make sure you have a knotless bag on your net which will also preserve the trout's body slime. This month, unhooking and handling fish.

UNHOOKING

A quick troll of the internet over the past week or so has shown a marked lack of use of tools by anglers when removing the hook from fish. If you fish barbless it's not really a problem to remove the hook with your fingers (sometimes the fish does it for you - usually from a distance!). But using some form of tool is quick and it is efficient and if you are releasing a fish, quick and efficient is what's required. Unhooking implements come in several forms:

Forceps:



Long nosed pliers:



Multi tools



“Name brand” forceps can be ridiculously expensive. I did notice on the internet that one store was selling Loon forceps for \$24.99 while another was selling the same product for \$39.99 – so shop around. A quick look on the internet and I found a pair of forceps for \$7.

Multi tools obviously have the advantage that their name suggests. I have a multi tool that I picked up at Supercheap Auto for \$7.

Long nosed pliers are pretty inexpensive as well depending on where you shop. Some of the small pliers don’t stay shut because they are spring loaded. Get hold of a small piece of heat shrink tubing and slip it over the end.

Also remember that these implements are good for mashing down hook barbs.

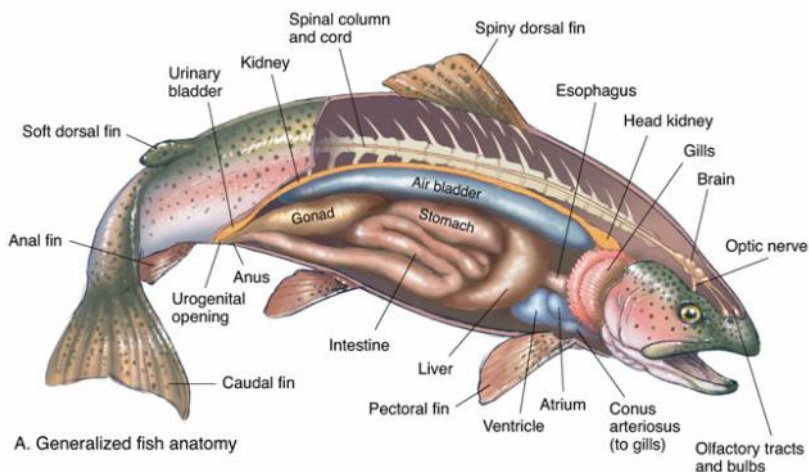
You can pay a lot for various types of hook removers but they are probably one of the first things that end up decorating river banks (apart from landing nets which George Skinner usually finds anyway) so I don’t see the point in spending \$35+ for name brand gear. However, it does pay to carry a decent knife/pocket knife which can be securely kept in your pack/vest.

When unhooking a fish, be gentle. Sometimes the hook can get caught in the bony part of the jaw and it can take some work to get it out. The best time to remove the hook is while the fish is still in the water. And if the fish has taken the fly well back in its throat from where removing it could cause fatal damage, and you still want to release it, cut the nylon at the hook eye and

leave the fly in the fish. It will do less damage than trying to remove it and it may work itself loose over time.

HANDLING

In our club newsletter of December 2015, there is an excellent article by Tim Trengrove called “Corner” about catch and release. What I have written below is an addition to the subject but I would recommend Tim’s article for another read.



This illustration shows just where the sensitive internal organs, intestine, liver and heart, are on a trout.

The preferred method which is the least stressful on the fish is to keep it in the net while you remove the hook and take a photo (quickly). In the photo below the fish’s head is still in the water and shows the fish very well without the need to lift it out of the water. I see photos on the internet that have obviously been taken using a camera timer by a solo angler. Poor fish!



If you must have a grip and grin photo remember that fish have no lungs! So as soon as a fish is lifted out of the water it effectively stops breathing. So it must be out of the water for no more than 5 seconds. I recently saw a video (and have seen others) in which all the fish were out of the water for much longer than this. And the anglers involved were both very experienced and should have known better. I'm sure the fish would have preferred to have been back in the water rather than hearing the anglers drone on about how handsome the fish was. When lifting the fish, first thoroughly wet your hands, hold it loosely just in front of the tail and cradle (repeat – cradle!) it under the gill latch which is the thin section under the chin leading to where the gills meet. Do not put your fingers under the gill plates – this is a sure way to kill the fish. And when releasing the fish cradle it gently in the current, not in slack water, with its head facing upstream until it recovers and swims away of its own accord.

HOW NOT TO DO IT!



The angler on the left looks happy but the fish probably won't be. The fish is being crushed in its heart area and, while it may swim away and look ok, it may die later. The problem with large fish like this is that their own weight contributes to the pressure on their organs. The angler on the right has this fish in a death grip. His fingers are right where the fish's sensitive organs are. Maybe he kept it — I hope so.



Good technique for a couple of reasons. The fish is being cradled so there are no pressure points and it is partially in the water which takes off pressure. Also, the grip and grin photo can be taken with the fish out of the water for the shortest time.

And doesn't this photo look good – the angler doesn't need to be in it!!!

NEXT MONTH:

Carrying your gear (or how not to feel like a beast of burden)

From the Lateral Line

– by Dan Waechter

A couple of points to follow up on from my comments at the May meeting. Please have a look at this site, download and use it as a first step in fishing smarter.

www.wainz.nz

A brief summary of the HVAC submission on the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region included requesting recognition in Schedule E5 Historic Heritage Freshwater Site for the historical value and cultural contribution of the Mangaroa, Akatarawa, Akatarawa West, Pakuatahi, and Whakatikei Rivers to our community. Also recognize the significant historic, scientific, and cultural value of Horokiwi Stream by including it in schedule E5.

The submission also requested 3.6 Objective 25 to recognize the requirements of water quality in trout spawning and trout fisheries rivers.

And for 2.2 Definitions a request was made to diagram with one more representative of an active river bed.

As I mentioned at the meeting, the angling perspective on our natural resource, ie rivers, was minimal compared to other “users” and we as a club, individually, and Fish and Game need to work together effectively to press our point of view. Something the incoming committee might want to put on the agenda.

Tight lines, Dan

Waikanae trip report

By Chris Kuchel

On Saturday 30 April, HVAC members were hosted by The Kapiti Angling Club for a morning of fishing on the Waikanae River followed by a BBQ lunch. Yet another example of the benefits of collaboration with local anglers from other clubs.

This year, the fine dry weather had stretched on right to the end of the April, so water levels were very low and crystal clear, making fishing conditions difficult. However, being the last day of the official season, this was to be the last chance to fish the Waikanae until 1 October, so I was keen to have a good look at this river which I had not fished before. Driving north, I had often glanced down out of the car window at the Waikanae River from the road bridge and been curious about the fishing possibilities it offered. As I was to discover, there are good sized fish there, but they are very well educated.

We all met at the Otaihangā Domain for an early start, where John Rochester and I were buddied up with local angler Hugh Driver. Because of the low water conditions and relatively long distances between pools, Hugh decided not to fish himself, but instead, offer some helpful advice and tips to John and me, which was much appreciated. So off we went in John’s vehicle and parked up a couple of kilometres downstream from the road bridge. Our plan was to fish our way upstream to the bridge, then have another go at it on our way back down.

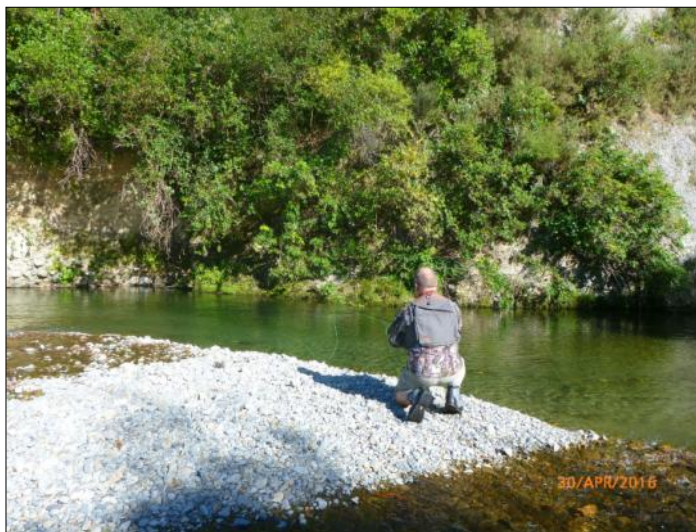


I have to say that the river reminded me a lot of the Pakuratahi...long shallow sections with a stony bottom followed by small pools. We stalked our way quietly along the banks, carefully keeping an eye out for fish on the edges and under the overhanging vegetation. No fish were sighted, so we took every opportunity to blind-fish the pools. As you can see from the photo above, there were some stretches of great looking water, with good structure which I'm sure would have held fish if it had been a foot or so deeper.



As we made our way up the river, John and I took turns as we came to likely looking water. In this photo, John had decided to flick his nymph into the riffle and let it drift down into the drop-off. A great tactic, but unfortunately no fish.

Further on up the river, I spotted my only fish of the day, a nice 2lb brown swimming downstream lazily towards me in a deeper pool. Instinctively I froze and waited for it to turn back upstream but in an instant it spotted me and bolted off into the willows.



In another group, local angler Craig found some deeper water and spotted fish. Here, he is getting down low to avoid spooking the fish. Note the clarity of the water.



No fish I'm afraid, so here Craig has swapped his rod for BBQ tongs.



After the morning session, we had a chance to refuel our tanks and talk about the fish spotted but missed. I for one am keen to get back to the Waikanae in October when it re-opens and the water is back up to normal levels. It's a very scenic river with lots of potential. Many thanks to Hugh for guiding us

and to Craig for hosting the BBQ at his house. After the BBQ, Ross thanked the Kapiti boys for their generosity and hospitality and suggested that HVAC could return the favour with another day of combined fishing, but this time on the Hutt River. These kind of combined outings are a great way to discover new rivers and help foster closer relationships with other keen anglers.

Cumberland Gap

By Ted Carton

“Blue skies, nothing but blue skies”. Danny Styth was humming to himself as he looked out of his Hampshire cottage window. “Blue as a robin’s egg” he thought “not very often in the English climate”. Danny was on a high. Despite the recession, his London property development company was going well. He had just sold a row of town houses in Kent for a substantial profit. Time for a break since his last foray into the Scottish highlands trying for his McNab; a deer, salmon and grouse, which he had achieved more by luck in the time allowed one day. His latest decision was to purchase a gun-dog. During the long winter nights he studied gun-dog pedigrees, finally deciding on a liver and white springer spaniel, a working type, smaller and lighter than the show type. The classic rough shooter’s dog.

The dog’s name was Fell, an adult dog trained by a gamekeeper. Danny, needing a break thought “I know just the place”. It was ten years since he had visited the Lake District, his childhood home. The dog’s name Fell had given him the idea. Fells are the rugged hills and deep green valleys of the Lake District landscape. Never one to put things on hold, Danny made arrangements with a distant relation of his who owned a five acre small holding on the outskirts of Cleator Moor, a small village in the heart of the Fells. It had been years since he stayed there, but he kept in touch by phone now and again.

He decided to book Fell the springer into kennels for the time he was away. His relation bred border and lakeland terriers and fox hounds for hunting the foxes that abounded in the Lake District. Bringing a strange dog into this environment would cause no end of trouble.

Fell safely kennelled, and affairs in order, Danny headed north in his Range Rover. The big engine ate up the miles on the M1 motorway, bypassing all the major historical towns and cities of the midlands of England ; Chester, Birmingham, Manchester heading north to the Lake District. He made good time and late that evening booked into a hotel at Scotch Corner on the fringe of Cumberland, or Cumbria as it is known today.

The next morning after a full English breakfast, he set off for his relation's property. He was now entering into the heart of the Lake District. Hundreds of thousands of years ago, England was covered in an ice cap. The last place the ice finally retreated from was Scotland and Cumbria. The retreating ice melt carved out deep valleys and near-vertical hills in which later the invading Norsemen named fells after their own language, also naming the many rivers that abounded in this area; "becks". It is these swift running becks that Danny intended to fish. Most of them contained wild brown trout , large by English standards, two or three pounds. Most of the becks were discoloured due to the mineral content of the fells. The heavy rainfall leaked the residue into the becks, turning them into the colour of unmilked tea.

"It was good to be back" thought Dann. The sun was out, turning the fells bright green, interspersed with patches of blue Scottish heather. The Range Rover purred down the English country lanes lined by thick hedgerows and overhanging trees. He turned off before reaching Cleator Moor and down a long farm track that led to his relation's smallholding. He was met by the frenzied sound of barking dogs as he arrived. There was a note pinned to the front door "Gone to get you a fishing licence, won't be long, let Zulu out of the garage". Danny opened the garage and out bolted Zulu, a black Labrador , coat black and glossy, sleek as a wet seal.

"Hello boy, good dog" said Danny, "hope you're friendly". Zulu obliged by rolling over on his back to be tickled. "A great guard dog" thought Danny "up you get, let's have look around while we are waiting". Zulu raised himself and walked by Danny's side as he walked around the whitewashed cottage . "Nothing's changed" he thought. It was as if he was here yesterday. Looking out from the large vegetable garden, he could see the

distant fells wreathed in white cotton shrouds of mist rising up the green slopes to the sunlit tops.

The Cumbrian fells are one of the only places in the world where the mist rises from the bottom of the crags to the summits instead of the other way round from top to the bottom. You can be at the fell tops in brilliant sunshine and within minutes unable to see your hand in front of your face, as Danny well knew, as he had been caught out many times. In the lower slopes, the fells were criss-crossed by dry-stone walls, a few hundred years old or more, built with interlocking stones without mortar. They stand against the worst weather nature throws at them.

“It’s great to be back” thought Danny, “shouldn’t have waited so long”. A short while later, an ex-army champ, a jeep type of vehicle with a Rolls Royce engine appeared down the driveway and rolled to a stop. “Hello Danny, good to see you again after all this time”. Danny’s cousin Tolley, a larger than life like figure stepped out of the champ and shook hands. “I’ve got your fishing licence; come inside while we sort things out”.

Tolley was a great outdoorsman and the inside of his cottage was festooned with fox and badger masks, also large photos of hunting dogs and terriers. Tolley lived alone as did Danny and had the time and the money to indulge in many pursuits. There was a walnut gun cabinet standing in one corner, holding a selection of shotguns and rifles. Danny noted a seventy year old side-by-side Hollis shotgun; a collector’s item, also a Savage Hornet fox rifle. “I’m in heaven” thought Danny, “it’s an Aladin’s cave”. There was a row of fishing rods in a stand in the hallway. “Let’s have a beer” said Tolley, “I’ve got you a licence for a week, price on me. Pick yourself out a trout rod”

Over a glass of John Peel pale ale Danny inspected the rods. “What’s this Spencer rod?” he asked, “never heard of them”. “Thought you would ask about that one” said Tolley, “guy in Whitehaven buys blanks and makes them up; he is called Spencer”. The rod was blood-red graphite with black and gold fittings and anthrite rings. “Comes with an Abu reel” said Tolley from the background, “do you like it?” “Like it, I love it” said Danny, “can I use

it?”. “Yours for the asking” said Tolley, “you can use anything you want for the time you are here. Come out and meet the dogs before we have some tea. It will be good to catch up with old times”

Tolley walked to an old barn with outside runs and was met by frenzied barking dogs; two white and brown fell hounds, two border terriers and three lakeland terriers. “I contract to the local farmers to keep the fox population under control” explained Tolley. Danny in his early days had hunted the Cumberland fells on foot with the hounds and terriers. Unable to use horses, the fells had to be hunted on foot, the fells hounds running the fox to ground, where they hid in limestone holes. The terriers had to go into these deep holes or caves and kill the fox or drive them out to the waiting hounds. Danny knew that pound for pound, there was no tougher dog than a border or lakeland terrier. To hunt for foxes on the lakeland fells, you have to be ultra-fit. Only the locals born and bred in this area go out with the hounds. Sometimes they walk for twenty miles in a day, keeping up with the fells packs. Danny knew his limitations. He was here for his fishing and would leave the fox hunting for Tolley.

After tea, consisting of Cumberland sausage and ham and a few more beers, Tolley said “Do you want to try out the local beck with the rod? You can walk there: it’s just a mile down the road”. Danny knew where to go from previous visits. “Take Zulu with you for company: I’ve got to see to the dogs”. Danny set off to the beck with Zulu by his side. With the rod over his shoulder and the dog lead free, he felt like Tom Sawyer going to fish the Mississippi. As he approached the beck, a flock of mallard ducks flew quacking into the air. “That’s good” thought Danny, “no one else around”. Danny told Zulu to sit as he approached the bank. Zulu would sit for hours before moving; he was a trained gundog.

Danny tied on a peveril peak, a northern English fly and began casting. There were some deep pools swirling around some moss-covered rocks. The pools were coal-black stained by the tannic acid run-off from the hills. Danny was getting into his casting action now. The line hissed through the air as he lengthened his cast. Soon twenty feet of line was airborne, reaching

out to the dark pools. The floating line and dry fly covered every stretch of water between the rocks and riffles of water. After an hour he changed flies to a march brown but still no result. Moving upstream, he tried another stretch of water.

The rod felt so light in his hand, he felt like he was casting with his arm only. Danny tried every trick he knew: changing flies, short and long casts, but no takes. The evening light was fading now. "No luck today" he thought, "time to pack it in." Disappointed, he called Zulu and set off back to Tolley's cottage. "Well that's fishing for you" said Tolley; no sympathy here. "Tell you what, fancy trying for sea trout tomorrow night?" "But the beck leads into Lake Emmerdale" explained Danny, "it's a freshwater lake. There won't be any sea trout in there". "No, we are going to the mouth of the Esk River at Eskdale" said Tolley, "it's the right time of the year for them".

The following evening, Danny and Tolley set off in the ex-army champ to the mouth of the River Esk. Riding along in the vehicle brought back memories of Danny's army days in the para-unit of the Goldstream Guards. He had criss-crossed Germany many a time in the rugged go-anywhere vehicle. The Rolls Royce engine carried them down the back roads to Eskdale, one of the most isolated and rugged landscapes in the whole of England. They climbed out of a deep valley and drove up a steep wooded incline and saw the wild Irish Sea glinting in the moonlight. Danny could smell the sea a mile away due to the iodine in the seaweed: a salty tang that reminded him of his childhood visits.

They pulled up at the mouth of the Esk River and assembled the rods. Danny used the same rod he had the night before and tied on a lefty's deceiver: a saltwater and salmon fly. Tolley decided he would use a spinner to start with. The river mouth was grey and foreboding, with large waves washing in from the sea. Danny walked out in his borrowed waders to waist level, while Tolley stood on the bank in the shingle. They both began casting. After a half hour or so, Tolley cried out "I've got one; I'm hooked". Danny looked over his shoulder. Sure enough, Tolley's rod was bent in an arc with the line swerving sideways in the churning water. Tolley waded into the

water with his net and slowly brought the fish into the shallows and into the net. “It’s a bass” he yelled out, “not a trout but a good eating fish all the same. I’ll take it home”.

Danny thought he was having another blank coming. The tide was turning and the large waves from the Irish sea were overcoming the Esk river’s current. It began to drizzle with rain. Danny was getting colder by the minute. An extra large wave nearly knocked him off his feet. “I’ll have to get out” he thought. As he went to reel in the line, the rod was nearly jerked from his grasp. “I’ve got one” he yelled out to Tolley. As Tolley looked over to Danny’s position a large fish leapt into the air, shining silver in the moonlight. “Good one, good one, play it Danny, let it run”. Another large wave swept in and the line went slack.

“I’ve lost it” said Danny with disappointment in his voice, “it’s gone”. “No you haven’t” shouted Tolley, “it’s riding the wave surfing the top; keep the line taut”. Tolley was right; the line tightened and the battle was on. “I can see it” said Tolley, “it’s a sea trout; hang on Danny, hang on”. The waves were battering in now; surging against Danny’s chest, soaking him to the bone; saltwater filling his mouth and nose.

There was a roaring noise. Tolley looked out to sea in disbelief. A huge wave was surging in with creamy white spray boiling on the top of the curling crest. “Get out Danny, get out now, let the fish go, get out”. Danny looked in horror as the wave bore down on him. He scrambled for the bank. As the wave burst over him, knocking him off his feet, he rolled and staggered up the shingle bank, still holding the rod. The trout was still on the line. Danny thought “to hell with this” and grasped the flyline and jerked the trout into the shallows. Another wave came thundering in. Danny reached down and retrieved the trout before it could be washed away.

As Danny and Tolley drove home in the champ, Danny remarked “That’s the end of sea trout fishing for me”. They had the three pound trout and the bass for breakfast the next morning. Danny stayed for a few more days. He

watched the Cumberland wrestling championships and had a day of hound trailing across the Fells.

As Danny left at the end of his stay, driving down the long driveway, looking into the range rover's side mirror, he saw Tolley, Zulu and the whitewashed cottage disappearing from view. He thought of an Arnold Schwarzenegger film in which he said "I'll be back".

Swinging Wets for Winter Rainbows

By Chris Dore. Reproduced with his kind permission.



I follow a number of steel heading forums and converse with a number of avid steelhead anglers. Steelhead are simply sea - run rainbow trout which return to freshwater to spawn after 2 - 3 years living at sea. Although the same species, I find that whilst in NZ we do not have any true steelhead strains (NZ rainbows aren't generally known for visiting the salt), our rainbows exhibit similar behaviour when moving to their spawning grounds from lakes, and within larger river systems themselves. Steelheading tactics sure do work here, so let's look at probably the most basic, yet effective tactic for winter bows.

Gear.

A powerful 7wt rod with a floating line, whether a sink tip such as the Airflo Depthfinder or a longbelly WF, either will do the biz. A longbelly WF such as the EGO has the added advantage of allowing distance roll casting and single handed speys when backcast room is limited, and for when heavier tackle is required.

Loaded with a 10' Airflo polytip this system will allow you to mend if required to adjust your swing, and get you down into the zone. Remember when swinging, the currents work to pull your fly towards the surface on a tight line, and so you may need a heavier tip than expected.



Alternatively, an 8wt SWITCH or longer spey rod will make the lifting and casting of heavier tips and big flies easier – just like anything, using two hands makes light work. A skagit head to match and section of T-10 is my preferred set up here.

I use a lot of bunny and ‘egg sucking leech’ style flies when swinging, although killer style lures such as Mrs Simpson are popular too. Some subscribe to the ‘Light day, bright fly – dark day, dark fly’ school of thought; have a play and mix it up – see what works for you. I often tie my winter flies unweighted and rely on the weighted tip to attain depth. This I feel

keeps things easy to cast, and gives my flies more movement, even more so if I utilize a lefty's loop or similar to attach my fly.

A heavy, level section of fluoro is all I use on the business end – a couple of feet in heavy water or when colour is present, or up to 9' in clear conditions through the pools.

Likely Lies.



Look for slower water, 2 – 6 feet deep where fish can rest on their journey upstream. Inside bends are always a winner. The first big pool above a series of faster braids is often a sure thing, especially those sporting structure in the way of logs, larger boulders, gravel bars or ledges. Winter Rainbows will often rest on the seam where fast water meets slow, and not just along the main edges either – every decent pocket in behind an obstruction offers two seams – work these carefully.

Working the water.

Cast at 45 degrees downstream and mend immediately according to both the currents before you, and whether you wish to speed up, or slow down your swing. Don't get into a habit of routinely mending the same with each cast – with each presentation you must read the water and the lies you wish to

cover, and decide how best to fish them. Try and maintain as straight a line as possible throughout your swing, leading slightly with the rod to absorb the more savage takes.

Let the line swing all the way into the bank below you, then give it a couple of quick strips to entice any fish hanging in the vicinity of your fly. Then take two or three paces downstream, pick up your line, and recast.

Steelhead will often follow your fly before cutting inside and taking your fly as they return out to their lie. I have found that our rainbows will exhibit the same behaviour, and maintaining a tight line and striking on the pluck will often result in missed fish. By carrying a loop of line behind the trigger finger of your rod hand, you can slip this by moving your rod tip towards shore. This allows enough slack for the fish to turn and pull the fly into the corner of its mouth, ensuring a true hook-up.

Missed Strikes.

A fish that misses your fly can often be enticed into striking again, so if you miss the hit, pick up and get your fly straight back out there.



Long casts are not generally required. A cast of 50' will cover a large arc on the swing. Get out there this winter and take a swing. You can't get simpler than that!

Safety

St John Wakefield (Reproduced from August 1997 Newsletter)

For some time now I have had in the back of my mind the thought that I ought to do something about the danger of high speed weighted flies. Any fly, particularly fishing with a group at night is a danger.

Two things have kept it in the back recesses, firstly there seems to be a general over protectiveness in many areas at present and secondly I have not come across any suitable eye ware. When there is a strong swing in one direction it can be difficult to strike a reasonable balance, and the current emphasis on safety both in the workplace and recreation is a good example. I can remember back in the '50s when I did a lot of deerstalking, I could be out in the bush for a couple of weeks and nobody knew where I was or when I was due back — now a days considered highly irresponsible — and rightly so. But in those days there were far fewer people in the bush and they were experienced or with someone who was. Also you were and had to be more self reliant because you knew you were on your own and no one would come and help you as you couldn't ring for a helicopter on a cell phone — you didn't see people in the bush in T shirts and jandals.

Two things brought the safety question regarding flies and eyes sharply into focus. First was a talk at a club meeting by Alex Gillett. As he was preparing to talk and changing his spectacles he commented that it wasn't until his mid fifties that he had to wear spectacles for the first time for reading. A couple of years later whilst fishing at Taupo in a cross wind, on a back cast his fly caught him in the eye, damaging it, necessitating his wearing spectacles both for distance and reading.

The second incident was more immediate and close to home. Rowan and I were on the Tongaririro — a beautiful clear day, a low and clear river and a distinct lack of fish. I was at the top of a pool and Rohan at the bottom, it was late afternoon and we re both ready to pack it in. Rohan is a rather vigorous caster, I turned around and he was walking back towards me, white as a sheet with one hand over his eye. The bomb had hit him ½ an inch

below his eye and it was already swelling impressively, the hook had caught the bridge of his nose which was bleeding freely. Luckily there was no damage done but if it had hit him ½ an inch higher spectacles would have been no use — he would have lost the eye.

We decided there and then that something must be done. Protective eye ware must — particularly for the younger generation — be aesthetically acceptable. Industrial and ski goggles are out which leaves only Polaroid glasses. I have always used 'Fisherman's eye ware', the lenses are glass and unlike the cheap plastic won't scratch and they are reasonably good value for money. But a bomb hitting a lens would shatter it causing almost as much damage as the bomb itself. Probably the best solution is a good quality pair of polaroids with chemically hardened plastic lenses making sure that the lenses are a good tight fit in the frames and won't pop out easily and possibly a few drops of super glue around the rim may help.

And whilst on the subject of safety, when fishing on the Tongariro we rarely saw people using a chest strap on their waders. Waders are bulky and contain a lot of air and will help you keep afloat until you reach a shallow part of the river where you can clamber out. But if they fill with water become a severe encumbrance, a strap around the chest just below the top of the waders stops the water getting in.

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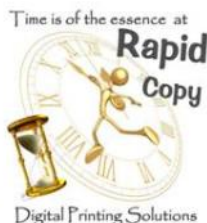
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