

# Winter

NEWSLETTER 2020

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“Our aim is to  
promote all  
facets of fly  
fishing and good  
fellowship”

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# From the Editor



John Hepburn – photo credit Stuart MacAulay

## WELCOME TO THE WINTER NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the winter edition of the DFFC newsletter. It has been an extremely interesting and challenging time for us all. Who would have thought since our last newsletter that we would all be confined to our homes and had to face a pandemic that would impact all our lives and our fishing season so dramatically. We can only hope that all our members and their loved ones come out the other side unscathed, and that the rest to our fishery rewards us all next season.

The club was also saddened to lose one of its stalwart members and past President, John Hepburn. John was President 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. When I joined the club, John was the first to contact me and offer encouragement and assistance. It is hoped the club can complete the etimogogy cabinet at the Lodge that was started by John, and would be a fitting tribute to him.

Thanks to those who have contributed articles to this edition.

“Please send photos,  
articles and reports to:

[newsletter.dffc@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.dffc@gmail.com)

or hand in at the  
meeting.”

Julie Butler - Editor

## From the President — Stan Laskey

Amended newsletter article

2020 has been a rather tumultuous year so far, extending from another successful Bronte camp and the magnificent effort by all of our volunteers and instructors to the advent of this horrible Covid-19 virus which shut down our state and most of the country.

It was decided by our executive to cancel all meetings until further notice because of the risks to members that are considered in the dangerous age bracket before the Government did the same thing which showed good thinking by our club at that time. We are tentatively thinking of meeting again on the last Thursday in July at the Devonport Library depending on government restrictions at that time. The Library have offered us a larger room so as we can meet social distancing regulations. All members will be notified if this meeting is to go ahead; if so it will consist of both our AGM then followed by a general meeting.

During the time our club has been in recess we have lost one of our past presidents in John Hepburn along with his wife a few weeks later. Our living legend George Surman was taken ill and had to go to Hobart for a successful operation, but wasn't home long before having to return to hospital, only to Launceston because of an illness from a bug he must have picked up somewhere, but is now home again and we all hope keeping well and not playing up too much.

Another of our members in Roy Wybrow was booked in to have his hip replacement operation at the NWRH at Burnie and was all excited about it when they cancelled it four days before it was due because of the pandemic. Roy has contacted me in the last few days to tell me that he has received notification that his surgery is back on and scheduled for early next month, which is wonderful news. We look forward to him once again being well enough to pass on his wealth of casting knowledge to any of our members who may ask him for assistance.

We are also in the early stages of hopefully acquiring another club dam to stock for our members to fish and perhaps a magnificent stretch of river which is not open to the general public. More information regarding this when it is all confirmed, except to say it's because of the tremendous reputation our club has of respecting other people's property and leaving all areas as we find them which opens up opportunities such as these for our club and all members should give themselves a pat on the back.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of our Patron and foundation member Ashley Artis who has donated to our club a huge quantity of fly tying materials, Six Ross rods in tubes of various weights along with reels to suit, the near complete set of Flylife magazine along with a large quantity of other fishing magazines. I received a call from him in the last couple of weeks to say he had found some more if our club would be interested and when I went to collect them he also presented me with his float tube and flippers for our club also. Ashley has in the past held the positions of Secretary,

President and always put his hand up and been available to help out at any time. A huge thank you to him for his donations.

Tentative plans have been put in place by the camp committee for a camp in 2021 pending a change in government restrictions at a meeting held via Zoom last Wednesday evening chaired admirably by Wayne. In view of the success of this streaming service the executive made a decision on behalf of our club to purchase a twelve month subscription to Zoom so we can explore other uses for it as well.

Even through the gloom of the lockdowns we have also had some positives happening in the background which we can look forward to in the future. I hope and trust that everyone is keeping well and staying safe until such time as we can all catch up in person

Stan Laskey



# 19<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships , New Zealand – Anna Bellette



home.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the passing of John Hepburn. Both Wayne and I were in New Zealand at the time of his passing, and was sadden to hear this news.

John always welcomed us into his home and life with open arms and a big smile on his face. We had many conversations around fishing and I believe he enjoyed hearing my progress into the competition fishing. My last outing with John was at the 2019 club Christmas dinner held at Devonport in 2019, both Christine (his daughter) and myself drove to the venue with John both reminding John not forget the fly rod for the raffle. John with his cheeky smile retrieved the rod and carried it safely to the car. John's laughter grew as I had won the rod and was now taking it back to his home in disbelief and now my turn not to forget to take it

I will miss John and our chats and his many ingenious ideas, his array of fly-tying gear and extras from the opp shop he would proudly display at each tying event. His enthusiasm for life and passion to learn anything new when it came to technology was incredible. John was a true gentleman and was a great asset to the Devonport Fly Fishing Club, I will definitely miss John and our chats. Knowing that I never got to give him an update on the Commonwealths championships I would like to dedicate this article to him.

The Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships were held in New Zealand's North Island on the 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March this year. Both Wayne and I left Hobart on the 7<sup>th</sup> to meet up with both the Australian men's and ladies team at Turangi on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. The Tongariro Hotel in Turangi was our base for the week and long training sessions before the Commonwealths were to begin on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Little did we know the Covid-19 situation would turn into a world wide pandemic and make it hard to travel back home to Australia. Each day we would listen to the news and each day the situation changed dramatically, we did not know if the championships would be cancelled or not.

Training days consisted of fishing the Tongariro river upper above the Blue Pool and lower sections 900 meters below the Turangi/Taupo bridge, these were the allocated training zones as this was one of the competition waters and the majority of it was closed to competitors and associates.

Both sections were extremely different, the upper containing more boulders and faster water and the lower containing longer runs.

We also trained on the Whaunganui River in Taumarunui and the Manganui-o-te Ao River. The Whakapapa River was included later due the long dry spell causing low water flows and higher water temperatures.

The first ever Australian Ladies team consisted of Karen Brooks TAS, Jane Forster NSW, Kerryn Milliagan ACT, Mirrian Miller VIC, Casey Pfeiffer SA and myself as reserve. Tom Jarman was our captian/coach and Jane Vincent as manager.

Training began on the Tongariro river, the men's team heading to their destination and the ladies headed to the Lower Tongariro. On arrival at the lower section



we noticed fish rising immediately and constantly sipping away.

We quickly discovered the Lacewing moth were the cause of the continual rises that we witnessed the entire time we were there. The locals saying it was unusual, and the low dry spell was the cause. The Lacewing moth were also referred to as the Passion vine hopper. They did cause much frustration for me, I tried a variety of methods to catch

them, fast flowing water causing my dries to drag until I final had success swinging with an intermediate line. I used a pink or orange tag on the point and a spider pattern on top dropper. Only two flies are allowed to be used at one time on the Tongariro waters but during the competition we could use three, swinging flies worked



well for me and timing my swing just prior to the rise worked a treat and when the fish took, they hit the fly hard.



Training on the Tongariro. Double hookup with Tom Jarman – Tom using 0.10 tippet

This method also worked casting to the far shore to a rising fish, the fish couldn't resist the point fly going past and this guaranteed a hook up every time. The Tongariro has both Rainbows and Browns.



using a clear intermediate 4wt line for this method.

Tom Jarman was our coach/Capitan/mentor and pushed us to challenge ourselves each and every day. We all improved over the week, especially our wading. Tom always made us wade beyond our capability, literally pushing us further and deeper and not to fear the water and to obviously wade safely. Each evening we would gather at tea time and talk about our day, flies, methods that worked etc. We bonded as a team during training and were ready to go, it was now time to head to Wairakei Resort at Taupo for the commencement of the fly fishing championships.



River Nymphs – note the length of the pink and orange tags can be trimmed. I didn't trim mine.

Glenn Eggleton organised a days training with Steve Brown on the “Art of Swinging Flies”, Steve was a former competition angler for New Zealand. The team spent the day on the Whanganui River where he taught us this technique. This is a very effective method to use during a comp and targeting the smaller fish, we all quickly picked up fish. It is a technique I used throughout training and in the comp, and used it with my Czech nymphing rig and the end of a drift, Steve advised

As the reserve my job was to help the team during the championships, checking out other beats, watching anglers' fish and tying flies for the team if and when needed. Flies were tied by Tom and Glenn. Glenn provided the majority of the lake flies for each session, carefully placing them in order so the girls would know which ones should be used for each lake session. Plonking flies, crunchers, nymphs, attractors etc. I got the chance to tie a few for the girls when we got closer to the championships when time became precious for everybody.

In preparation for the Commonwealths I made sure I had at least 3 spools of tippet in each diameter in case I lost it or ran out. I always use Hanak fluorocarbon champion, I had spools in 0.16 (5.0 lb) down to 0.10 (2.5 lb) for the rivers and 0.18 (6lb) up to 0.22 (11 lb) for the lakes. I mostly used 0.16 on the rivers with a 2.5mm tippet ring, when fishing with Tom he used the 0.10 and landed the bigger fish quite easily. For the boat I usually use Berkley Vanish 8 or 6lb mono.

I tied around 500 river flies before I headed to NZ, all on barbless hooks. I use Hanak hooks and 2.5 to 3.8mm Tungsten beads, being careful that the 4mm comply with the regulations. Brian McCullagh



**Lake flies tied by Brian McCullagh.**

kindly helped me tie the lake flies I needed and Brent Bowerman tying some dry flies for the river. I took four rods and did have the use of Waynes if needed. When I was fishing the river I had three rods set up, 10ft 4wt Czech nymphing rod, which also doubled for a dry rod or swinging if needed. Two x 5wt rods, one for dries and the other set up for dry dropper. I took Lake and river line, Di3, Di3 sweep, Di5, camo, courtlands ghost tip, inetemdiate which doubled as a swinging line on the river, two different floating lines one for the river and the

other heavier for the lake. I took two pairs of wading boots, one with the Rocktreads and the other without. I found the Rocktreads were fantastic but not so good on the larger papa stone on the Whanganui river. I don't think anything worked on this rock, you just slid like you were on an ice skating rink.

Session three, and it was my turn to fish on the Tongariro river. My heart was pounding but I was ready.

My beat was in the lower section, not a long beat but wide with an island dividing the section. It had long fast water, deep runs and shallow water. Opting to start at the bottom and head up towards the top of the beat was my plan. Some sections were too fast to wade but I gave it a shot. I managed to get two fish half way through my session on dries, and missed a couple on the swing in the rougher water. One of my fish measured quite long, so this put me in seventh place for this session.

I fished again in session five on the Whakkapapa, the last session and my immediate thoughts were fifth session the water would be hammered. It was a morning session and I was up well before 5am and ready to go to catch the 6am bus to meet my controller. He drove me to the river and showed me my beat which was much longer than the Tongariro section I fished the day before. The controller let me know the water hadn't been fished on the fourth session so I knew the water was rested.

I managed to get 14 fish in the lower section and only 4 measured. The legal limit was 20cm, when the controller told me each time that the fish was not long enough my heart sank each time. I did begin my session using a dry dropper, and managed to pick up fish right away on the size 18 pheasant tail nymph with a nickel tungsten bead.

Boosting my confidence, I continued to hook fish and continued to use the nickle bead on both my dry dropper and Czech nymphing rig. Some did take the dry but I missed a couple because I had to strike quickly with the nymph and much slower on the dry. It was hard to concentrate and to get this right. I managed to place Seventh on this last session.



The total fish caught throughout the competition was 1.919. Australian mens team catching 289 and placing 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Australian Ladies catching 158 and placing 8<sup>th</sup>.

Top 3 teams were Northern Island - mens who placed 1<sup>st</sup>, Australian - mens 2<sup>nd</sup> and New Zealand - Silver 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Top 10 Individual Australian men's/Ladies with Lubin Pfeiffer placing 1<sup>st</sup>, Chris Medwin 3<sup>rd</sup>, Casey Pfeiffer 7<sup>th</sup> and Craig Dawson 8<sup>th</sup>. This is the first time ever in a Commonwealth Championships a husband and wife have placed 1<sup>st</sup> in individuals.

Indicator fly for plonking – the hook is tied from the bend. In comp fishing we cannot use indicators but we can if tied to a hook - these are called Lighthouse

Teams included Australia, Canada, England, Isle of Man, Malta, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and South Africa.

The Australian ladies team came 8<sup>th</sup> overall. I would have to say this has been an incredible experience, it was great being part of an amazing team and I have learnt so much. My next trip to New Zealand's North Island will be one I am looking forward to and will be heading back to fish these rivers with a whole new set of skills.



Australian Mens and Ladies teams at the closing

Here is the link for the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships, it has final team results.

<https://commonwealthflyfish2020.co.nz/>

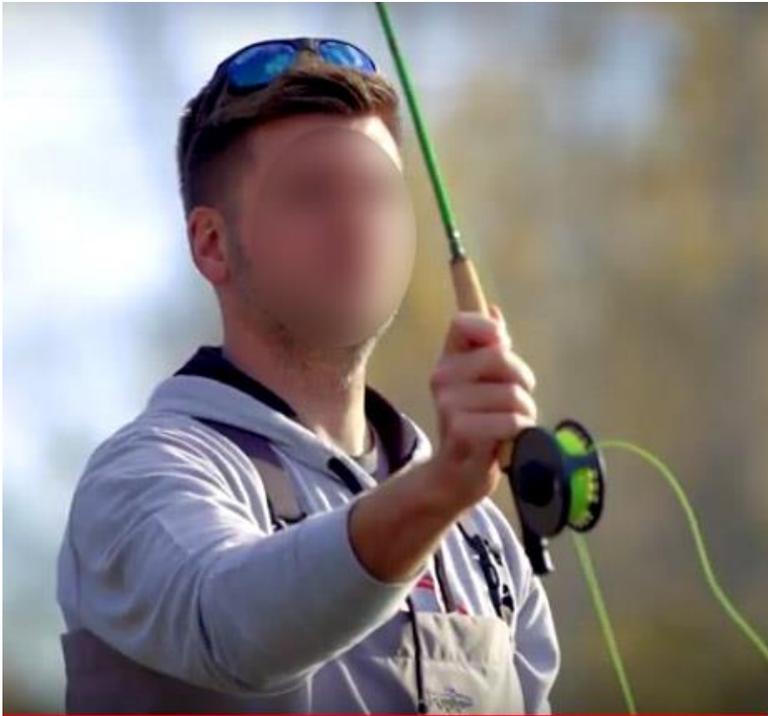
# Casting Around – Allan Ekert



## Using the Wrist in Fly Casting 201

I subscribe to the Orvis News (<https://news.orvis.com/>) and every Friday I get an email with a link to the latest selection of videos as part of the Fly-Fishing Film Festival. The folk at Orvis search the Web for the best fly-fishing videos available featuring an assortment of locations, fish species and content. If I have to stay at home and not go fishing at this time, watching videos of others is the next best thing. There's always something worth watching.

As much as I enjoy the exotic locations, the fish caught, and the knowledge shared, I find myself concentrating on the casting. Many of the videos are from amateurs who do an amazing job with the quality of their production. The professionals take it to another level. But with such a diversity of talent there is always going to be a range of casting abilities on show and I find myself focusing on the skills of those with a fly rod in hand.



While watching this week's selection of films I came across someone casting with a few obvious problems. Apart from the mask over his face he was having an issue with how he was using his wrist. Now it is not my intention to try and embarrass this gentleman (whose identify I have tried to disguise) but the video gave me the idea for this month's article. Fly casting is all about the wrist and the way it is used is central to effective casting.

I wrote about this back in May 2015. At that time I was specifically addressing issues that many beginners encounter in learning to cast. You can search the archives if you want to read the 101 version. But this month I want to deal with how experienced casters use their wrist. Many, like the gentleman in the video,

can cast and catch fish but are they doing it efficiently?

One of the hallmarks of an expert is the efficiency of their casting. They make it look smooth and effortless. Watch them casting and it will be difficult to pinpoint exactly what they are doing differently but the results speak for themselves. Look closely at their wrist and you will see a big difference to that of our fellow in the video clip. Expert casters know how to make the best use their wrists.

Tim Rajeff is rightly regarded as an expert. Brother of world champion, Steve, and holder of world championships himself, Tim knows the importance of using the wrist correctly. If you look at the picture right, you will notice how Tim is bending his elbow much more than his wrist. Expert casters know that using the big muscles in the arm is more efficient than using the smaller muscles in the wrist. Using the wrist at the beginning of the casting stroke wastes its potential energy.



Much better to use the large arm muscles to accelerate the rod and save the wrist muscles until just before the rod is stopped to give that final speed up. Expert fly casters know casting is 90% arm and 10% wrist.



So how exactly do we use our wrist? The first thing you need to understand is the basic positions of the wrist when casting. The wrist can be bent down, straight or bent back.

### **Bent Down**

When beginning the basic Pick Up and Lay Down Cast begin with the rod pointing at the water and the wrist in the down position.



### **Straight**

On the backcast, once the rod starts moving the wrist goes into a neutral or straight position for most of the stroke.



### **Bent Back**

At the end of the back cast your wrist snaps open to about 45 degrees. This speeds up the line and helps stop the rod. The wrist maintains the bent position on the forward cast until it snaps straight at the end of the cast.



At this stage I should warn you that there are other views and ways to describe the use of the wrist in casting. I encourage you to put a rod in your hand and look at how you use your wrist and how you would describe its positioning while casting. Take a look at some videos, read a few casting books and feel free to disagree with my observations.

However, I believe there are certain fundamentals which make an effective and efficient cast. You have to begin with the wrist in the bent down position with the rod pointing at the ground and the line in front. As the backcast is made, the wrist moves to the straight position. At the end of the casting stroke the wrist snaps open and the line speeds up and stops. On the forward stroke the wrist remains bent until the end of the stroke when it snaps to the straight position accelerating the line before stopping.

Our masked friend and this photo show another position in which the wrist can be used while casting. I call this the “cocked” position based on the implication it has for the cast. If the wrist is bent so that the rod butt is 90 degrees to the arm it is almost impossible to maintain a straight line path of the rod tip when you bend your elbow. The result will be a big loop and an ineffective cast. You can make a strong power snap from this position but it does not take advantage of the muscles in your arm and can lead to wrist injuries.

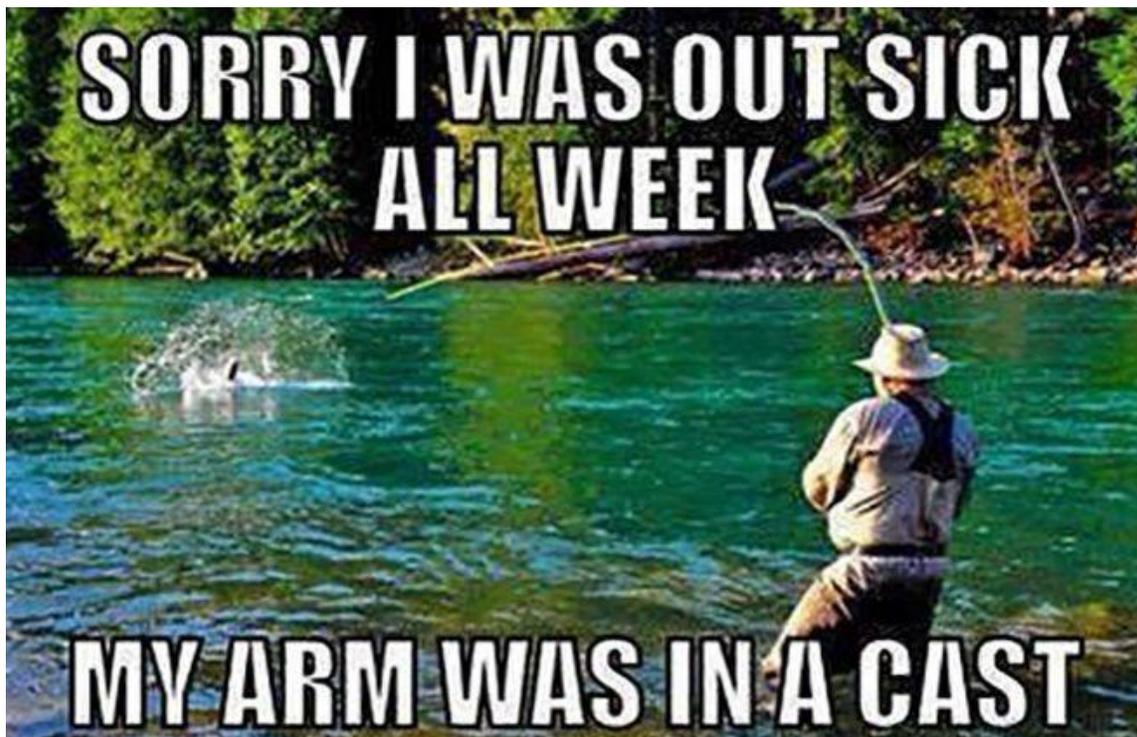
Contrast this with the bent wrist displayed by Tim Rajeff where the wrist is in the bent back position and less than 45 degrees. Tim uses his whole arm and shoulder to make a cast.

It would be possible to cast without using your wrist but it would be cumbersome and hard work. The wrist is essential to add the final burst of line speed and then stop the rod abruptly. We also use our wrist to change the direction of the cast and mend the line. I have often been tempted to put a beginner’s wrist in a plaster cast to stop them “cocking up.” Whilst this would help achieve a straight line path of the rod tip it would restrict the line speed they could generate and be very inefficient. Try strapping your wrist sometime and see what happens.

Proper use of the wrist is an important aspect of an efficient fly casting stroke. Expert casters have worked that out and make effortless casts with imperceptible use of their wrists. This video from Tim Rajeff (<https://youtu.be/S4CMyD66Ltw>) is compulsory viewing for anyone completing the course on *Using the Wrist in Fly Casting 201*. A study of this topic will pay dividends for your casting and fishing. To sum up, lots of wrist is not a good thing but by combining arm movement and wrist snap in the correct way you will make a better cast.

PS. Did you pick the other problems our masked fisherman was having? You should always wear your glasses when fly fishing and keep the line in hand!

“Proper use of the wrist is an important aspect of an efficient fly casting stroke



# PATAGONIA 2020

## A Report by – Norm Day

In late 2019 Athol suggested that we embark on another fishing trip in Patagonia as we had such great fishing 6 years ago and the guides were offering a discounted price. After much hesitation (we are both 6 years older) I agreed to suss it out. As it happened, Athol took off to Broome and left all the organising to me. After much google searching and many emails to Athol an itinerary was agreed and bookings made.

Patagonia is not a country, but an area comprising the southern parts of Argentina and Chile along the Andes mountain range. The southern part is getting down near Antarctica, but where we were going is in the northern section about the same latitude as Tasmania, on the Argentinian side of the Andes. I decided the best time was the same as six years ago because last time we were there for the minnow run. The minnows are like our whitebait but the run up the rivers to spawn from large reservoirs (not the sea).

We were booked to leave Devonport on the 6.30am flight on the 26<sup>th</sup> February. At that time we had no idea as to what effect the coronavirus was to have, we hardly gave it a thought. There was only one reported case in the whole of South America. Our plane left half an hour late (not a good omen) but we had stopover time on Melbourne and Sydney so no problem. Being old geezers we were not prepared to spend 12.5 hours in cattle class so at considerable expense we travelled business class from Sydney to Santiago. We were on a Qantas Boeing 747 on the top deck. What a way to travel, there were only 16 seats on the top deck with heaps of room and seats that folded flat for sleeping, plus good food and drinks available at any time.

After a short stopover in Santiago (spent in the business class lounge) we spent another three hours flying across South America to Buenos Aires. Our fishing destination was only just over the Andes from Santiago, but because they are different countries, there are no flight from Santiago. We arrived in B A at 5pm on the same day we left Devonport, but we had been travelling for over 30 hours! We had to overnight in B A and the next morning we flew back across South America to San Martin retracing much of the flight from the previous day. This time on landing at the San Martin airport the passengers did not burst out into applause as they did six years ago.

We were met by our guides at the airport and taken to our accommodation at an Estacio (a huge ranch) called Quemquemtreu (QQT). It is about 180,000 acres and runs 40,000 head of cattle. It took over three hours because the road, although a provincial road, was in such bad condition the Hilux could only average about 30 kilometres an hour. By this time it was late afternoon. After settling into our accommodation our guide agreed to take us fishing for an hour or so until dark, but wet wading rather than in the drift boat. This meant missing out on pre-dinner nibbles and drinks but we were keen to go fishing. It took about three quarters of an hour to reach the river over rough four wheel drive tracks. We fished a small section of the river where there was a strong current, with flies imitating minnows.

Athol fished from the bank into a drop off into the edge of a fast current and caught a nice brownie. I waded out into the river and fished a couple of good seams of fast flowing water and landed 5 good fish (and missed just as many) mainly rainbows. The fishing was not easy as the bottom was round rocks and in knee deep water with a strong current I was in danger of being swept away. This was a good start to our fishing as we fished for less than 1 hour. We drove back to camp in the dark for dinner, but that was not a problem because in that part of Argentina they normally do not have dinner until about 10pm.

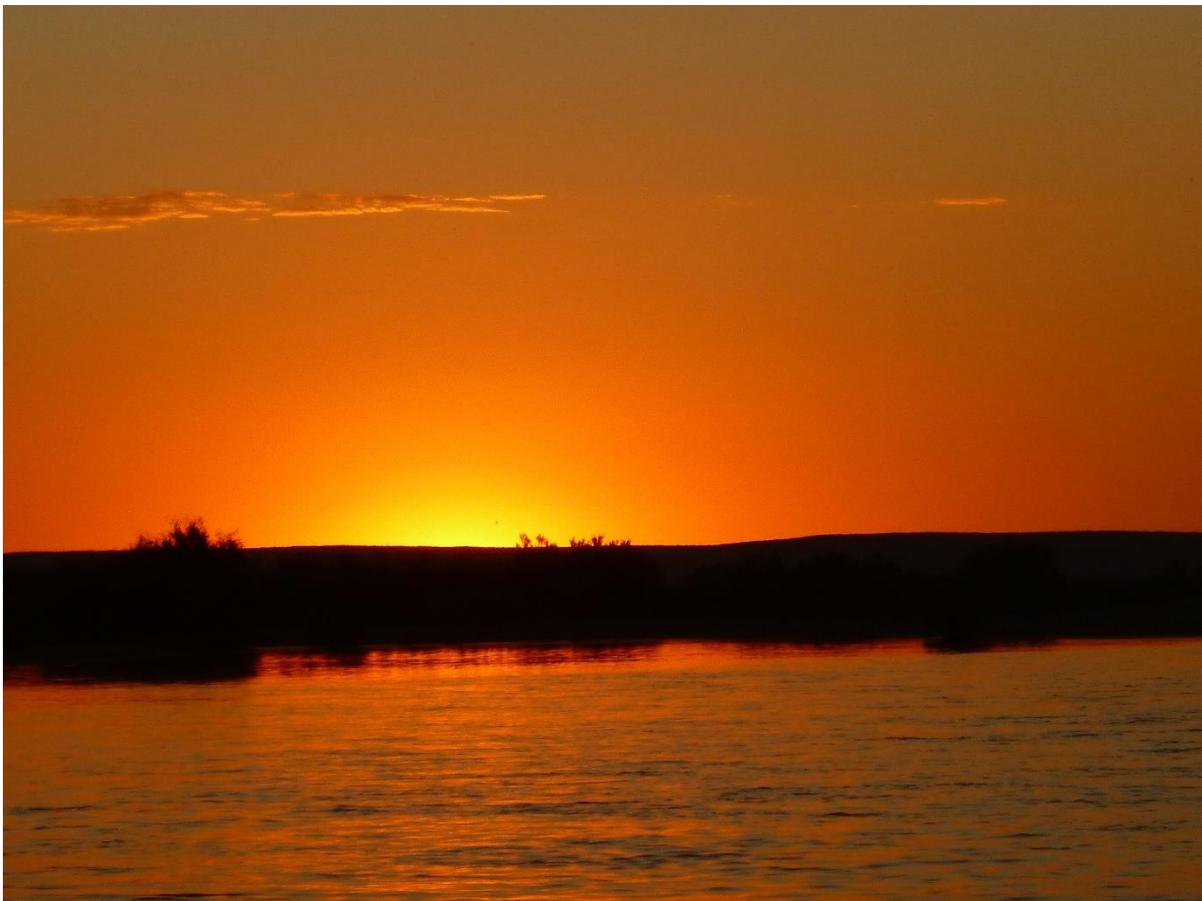


I should explain the area. It is to the east of the Andes and therefore in a rain shadow. The land is arid, almost desert, with just scraggy bush. The only trees are willows along river edges and trees, mainly poplars and a few pine plantations, planted, not native. The rivers all flow from the Andes mountains and even in summer are free flowing with torrents of crystal clear cold water, ideal for trout. These rivers join up to create really big rivers which flow right across the continent to the Atlantic ocean. The river we fished from QQT was the Collum Cura and is bigger than any river in Tasmania.

Our second day presented a cloudless sky with light wind. We mainly fished from the drift boat but occasionally disembarking to fish drop offs out in the river. Unlike our previous time on the same river, the water level was much lower which meant that we were restricted to fishing the main river as there were not the side channels and backwaters as previously. We caught plenty of fish ( too many to keep count of), mainly rainbows, most between 1 to 2 pounds. Unfortunately we did not hook the bigger fish which we did last time. However, the fish we caught were great sport as they were full of fight, especially when they got into the main river current. We fished minnow imitations and also nymphs under dries. The fish took both the nymphs and the dries. We were growled at by our guide because we missed numerous fish which took the nymph as we did not strike hard enough. We are used to just lifting the rod to set the hook. Here we had to almost pull the fishes head off on the strike. It was very hard to change a habit of a lifetime.

Back to QQT for nibbles and drinks before a 3 course dinner. This night we were joined by an American couple who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a 4 week fly fishing trip. Needless to say, plenty of red wine flowed. In Argentina the dominant red wine is Malbec, and it is very good.

The next two days were similar, fishing different stretches of the river. I must point out that it was hard work. We were informed by our guides that weather wise they had had a poor summer but true summer arrived with us. Every day saw cloudless skies and temperatures in the high 30's and up to 42 degrees C. Out on the river all day in a drift boat with no protection from the sun was taxing. Even the guides suffered, and from time to time they would jump in the river, fully clothed, to cool off. We had the easier job of casting and playing fish, while the guide, apart from growling at us and changing our flies etc, spent most of the day rowing the drift boat. The rowing was necessary to find the best sections and seams of water to fish, when in a seam, to row against the current to slow the boat to enable us to fish, and to take us over the flat water to the next good fishing section. The heat was so great that after the first couple of days, we would stop for lunch about 2pm in a shady spot and then have a siesta resuming fishing at about 5pm and then fishing until dark. This meant we missed out on nibbles and drinks prior to dinner, but it was a sacrifice we were prepared to make. One advantage was that we witnessed some magnificent sunsets. The hot weather meant that we wet waded all the time so we did not need the waders which we had brought from home. All the other fishing gear was provided by the guides.



The next 2 nights at the lodge we were joined by a party of 8 yanks. We always introduced ourselves as Tasmanian (rather the Australian) and the Americans immediately spoke about the Tasmanian devils. We had to explain what they were as their concept was of the Disney characters. One frustrating aspect of the lodge was we were told that the internet was available. Therefore Pene (my wife) expected frequent emails updating our trip. But, although we could receive emails and download other content,

we could not send emails. The last night at the lodge, we had an outdoor BBQ. That night I suffered from diarrhoea spending most of the night in the bathroom.

The next morning we set out for the next part of our fishing trip, a camping trip on the Rio Limay. This involved a 4 hour drive with first 2 hours over the same provincial road averaging 30 kilometres an hour. Luckily I had packed Gastro Stop tablets and survived the drive without having to stop.

The Rio Limay is an even bigger river and has big brown trout. When we reached the river we were met by 3 camping guides who had 2 large rafts packed with gear. One had a small outboard and towed the other raft. They set off before us to set up that night's camp. Some sections of this river were fished in the same manner as the Collum Cura with minnow patterns and nymphs under dries. However the main emphasis was on trying to catch the big browns who inhabited the bottom of the fast flowing main sections of the river. Everything was bigger than on the Collum Cura. The minnow patterns were larger which made casting much more difficult. Also the nymphs were mainly large red blood worms under larger dries (so we could see the dries in the fast current). These were also harder to cast. These were fished on 6 weight rods with floating lines (as on the Collum Cura). To fish for the large browns we used an 8 weight rod with a fast sinking line and flies 6 to 8 inches long and the leader was probably 20 pound breaking strain. Serious stuff. This gear was impossible to cast in the normal manner. To cast you retrieved the line until you left about 4 metres of line in the water. You then lifted the rod and with one back cast flung the fly out in front of you about 8 metres and as soon as the current took hold you back cast from off the surface and flung the fly as far out from you as you could. This way you could cast quite a distance. You then let the strong current take up any slack line and let the line swing with the current, hopefully sinking the fly down near the bottom. At the end of the swing you then retrieved as fast as you can. This form of fishing was very physical as you used both arms to fling (not cast) the line. When a fish took we were told not to lift the rod but to set the hook by even fast retrieving line. As I said previously, it is hard to break the habit of a lifetime. Consequently, the few takes we had we instinctively lifted the rod and missed the hook up. Eventually we learnt, but still missed the hook ups. As a result we did not land any big browns and as they were not really on the bite meant that we had few opportunities. The guide blamed the hot weather, it was 42 degrees C in the nearby city.

Because fishing for the big browns was so draining and the action few and far between we occasionally reverted to fishing the minnows and the nymphs along the edges of the river. We caught quite a few browns and rainbows up to about 3 pounds but not the quantity as in the Collum Cura. We again missed many takes by not setting the hook. With the nymph we again had to almost pull the head off the fish, and with the minnow, we were not meant to lift the rod at all but to retrieve faster to set the hook.

We again had a siesta each day after our gourmet lunch and then fished until dark. The 2 nights spent on the river we camped on islands in the river (it was big enough to have quite substantial islands). It was really glamping. We each had our own tent big enough to sleep 8 people with a comfortable camp bed. The camp included a toilet, shower with hot water, a large communal tent with a kitchen, an outside bar with a large array of drinks, and a table and chairs with white tablecloth. They even had a roaring log fire despite the temperature still being in the 30's. The 3 course meals were good, but I was unable to do them justice because I was still recovering. The next day they broke camp and loaded it on the barges and set it up down river ready for the next night.



On the second day I finally had success. A fish took the fly and was properly hooked for a change. As soon as it was hooked it took off down the river so fast that the line across my finger started to burn. In no time I was down to my backing. The guide jumped up and tightened the drag on the reel, and helped me to keep the rod pointing up. It was like catching a tuna, I was winding the reel while the fish kept taking line out. Eventually I made ground on the fish and after a tiring battle which seemed to last a long time, the fish was along side the boat to be netted. To our guides surprise the fish was a perch, the biggest he had seen. They measure fish by length, 25 inches. I estimate it weighed between 8 and 10 pounds. Definitely the highlight of the trip.



The last day on the river ended late in the evening when we reached the top of a reservoir which continued down river for about 100 kilometres. Our poor guide then had to row for about an hour across a section of the reservoir to a place where the vehicle could access the reservoir. The last night was spent in a modern hotel in a small city called Neuquen which had about 40,000 inhabitants. Surprise, all our emails went.

When researching the trip I discovered that the city of Mendoza, the wine capital of Argentina, has its annual wine festival on the very weekend our fishing trip ended. It was a no brainer to extend our trip to attend that festival. So, next morning our guides took us to the bus terminal to catch a bus to Mendoza which is about 900 kilometres north of Neuquen. Our booking said the bus was due to leave at 6.30am but on arriving in good time, the bus office was closed and no sign of the bus and no notice as to what was happening. We waited around for 45 minutes when finally the office opened and we were informed the bus would be there in about 15 minutes. Relief. Thankfully the guide had stayed with us because no one else in the terminal spoke English, and the only Spanish we knew came from Manuel in Fawltly Towers.

The bus trip took 13.5 hours but was quite comfortable. The buses are modern double deckers. Six years ago we took buses from San Martin to Santiago. On that trip we booked the more expensive seats, but found that they were on the bottom deck with limited viewing. This time we booked the cheaper seats on the top deck right in the front which granted us spectacular views. The only disadvantage was that it was still a heat wave and at times the sun streamed in the window. There were curtains which helped and the viewing more than made up for it. For most of the trip the country side was arid scrubby land, but as we got closer to Mendoza we entered agricultural land and villages because it is an irrigated area. Even though the road was a major highway in places it was so broken up the traffic slowed to a crawl. Not understanding Spanish was a bit of a problem as the bus stopped at various towns on

way but we were unable to find out if the stop was just for a few minutes or for longer. There seemed no pattern as to how long each stop was for, and I desperately wanted to buy a cold drink. In the end I got



off at what I hoped was a longer stop with Athol remaining aboard with instructions to stop the bus from leaving without me. Even then it was difficult to find a shop open as it was siesta time. I did find a shop open and bought cold drinks and icecream and Athol did not have to hold up the bus.

That evening we went for a wander around town. We stayed at the Sheridan hotel which was in the heart of the city. Just one block from the hotel we came across the procession of the queens. Each of the 23 provinces choose a queen and at the Vendimia the next night one is chosen to represent Mendoza. Talk about a colourful sight and loud sounds. Each queen was on the back of a highly decorated semi-trailer with many attendants and each towing a portable generator which powered festive lighting plus loud music. In addition to the queen's float, each province had a cavalcade of people on horses dressed in traditional costumes plus a troupe of dancers in fancy dress and sometimes with their own band. We watched for about 2 hours but when we left there were still more to pass.

The first day in Mendoza we went on a wine tour. We arrived at the first vineyard at about 10.30am and after a tour of the vineyard and winery sat down for a wine tasting. Unlike in Australia, they did not pour a small amount of wine in small tasting glasses, they used full size wine glasses and filled them half full. We tasted 4 wines and forced ourselves to drink all 4. Next we went to an olive grove, and here tasted the different olive oils on pieces of bread. This helped soak up some of the wine. Next stop was another winery where the tasting was the same format as the first place. Once again we were too polite to leave

any wine in the glasses. By now it was mid afternoon with very little food but much wine. At the final winery we had a 3 course lunch at 4.30pm with glasses of wine to match the food. Needless to say, on our return to our hotel we did not need an evening meal or any more wine. Once again we could receive emails but could not send them.

The next day we were free until the evening when we were to attend the big event, the Vendima. We went for a wander around the streets and lo and behold we again met up with the procession of the queens in broad daylight. The streets were crowded with spectators which made viewing difficult until we found a bar with unoccupied street side tables. We ordered a beer for Athol and a gin and tonic for me and settled down to watch the passing parade close up. I estimate the parade took about 4 hours it comprising all the elements as the previous night except for the lights.

That evening we were collected at our hotel at 7pm and taken to the Greek amphitheatre on the outskirts on the city to watch the culmination of the festival, the Vendima. The venue held 22,000 people and the enormous stage was big enough for over 1,000 performers. The place was packed. Seating was just a cement bench with no backrest. Our tour guide gave each of us a “cushion” which was about one quarter of an inch thick. We were there for over 5 hours and by then our backsides were numb. For the first hour the show consisted on a male and a female talking to the crowd with a couple of clowns clowning about. The crowd seemed to enjoy what was going on but we could not understand a word. Then a band with 7 singers entertained . we could not understand the songs but we appreciated the music. Then on dark the show began with over 1,000 performers on the stage at various times. The show obviously had a theme which we could not follow but the dancing and music and lighting were superb. The lighting was memorable and included fireworks. The show finished at 12.30am and were we relieved to be able to stand up. It was a magnificent event that we thoroughly enjoyed.

Reflecting back on the events in Mendoza, if it had been a week or two later the festival would have been cancelled because of the pandemic.



The next morning we caught a bus to take us across the Andes to Santiago in Chile. We had the same great seats as we had on the bus to Mendoza. This ride was truly spectacular. We followed the Mendoza

river right into the heart of the mountains with spectacular scenery the whole way, The rocks and formations and their colours were varied and we saw snow covered peaks of mountains and volcanoes in the distance. On the border into Chile we encountered the first official effects of the pandemic. We were not allowed off the bus to go through passport control until we had completed a health check form and had it and us scrutinised by an official. We made sure we did not cough. It took about an hour to clear the border post with our luggage being x-rayed. The descent down the mountain into Chile was spectacular with I estimate about 23 switchbacks with the front edge of the bus, over which I was sitting, often seeming to hang over the edge.

We just had the one night in Santiago. That evening we went into one of the restaurant districts for our evening meal. On the way back to our hotel at a major intersection we saw a heap of people running across it despite the traffic. Next thing an armoured vehicle appears from the road where people were running from, spraying those people (and the cars on the road) with a water cannon. The armoured vehicle kept coming towards us and we began retreating with some of the crowd. Just as we were about to be sprayed, a man came up to us and told us to follow him and not to run. I do not think Athol could run in any event. This man waved to the armoured vehicle and pointed to us. As a result the water cannon stopped just as it was about to spray us. On reflection we think the man was a plain clothes officer. All this time youths were throwing things and pointing lasers at the armoured vehicle. There is civil unrest in Chile and apparently the police had broken up a protest rally. Our guide next day told us the young had been protesting for months caused by the government increasing bus fares. The average person in Chile was continually getting hit with extra taxes etc and hike in the bus fares was the last straw. The guide also explained that the elite Chileans were getting richer all the time at the expense of the ordinary citizens. He explained that Chilean parliamentarians are the highest paid in the whole world.

The next day we went on a day tour to Vaparaíso, the port for Santiago (it is 90 kilometres from Santiago). This deep water port is built on a series of steep hills with houses precariously perched with narrow winding roads. The city is renowned for its street murals. It also has graffiti everywhere (as does Santiago) but the graffiti artists do not paint over the murals. We returned to Santiago and we were dropped at the airport as our flight home left at 12.40am on the 10<sup>th</sup> March. As we were travelling business class we were able to check in our luggage and spend 6 hours in the business class lounge waiting for our flight.

We flew on LATAM airways from Santiago to Auckland on a 787 Dreamliner. A nice modern aircraft, with lay flat seats for sleeping, but not as good as the upper deck of the old 747. It took 12 hours to get to Auckland as we were against the prevailing wind. After a couple of hours stopover in Auckland we travelled on a Qantas 737 for the 3 hour trip to Melbourne. We were in business class but it was hardly worth the effort as the seats were not much better than cattle class. After a short stop over in Melbourne we arrived in Devonport at 1.25pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> March. Luckily we arrived back in Australia just a few days before all the extra restrictions were imposed. Good luck rather than good management. I arrived back much poorer, not from the cost of the trip, but because of the stockmarket crash. When we departed for South America, the stockmarket was at a record high.

# SPLY FISHING

## What the hell is SPLY? – Roger Hickson

It is a word I made up and came about from an idea I had when I was considering making my own soft plastics in colours I wanted, which I don't seem to be able to find in the shops. It means a combination of spin and fly fishing which has been done before of course, fly droppers, weighted flies etc but not quite the way I thought of in the last week or so.

I did something extremely different for me and decided to do things the easy way (trust me that is not the usual way I do things) and use what I had instead of buying or making moulds, and playing around with more chemicals, so I tied streamer patterns on the jigs....well 1 to start with just to see how it went. It went well.

I just did a quick search about tying fly patterns behind a jig head and didn't get too many results. The closest one was called Fusion and used very light jig heads so that they could be cast on a fly rod, food for thought as I have a nine-weight outfit that would cast lighter versions of what I have constructed. I cast mine off my salt water spin/bait outfit which consists of a 3 piece Ugly Stik, Penn reel loaded with 10lb braid with a 9lb leader, anti-kink and lure or hook.

I am not fully self isolating in these troubled times as I still go to work. I walk more than usual at work due to the changed nature of my work and stay home after work on work days, so on some non-work days, I am going to get my exercise down at my favourite fishing spot here at Port Sorell, following all the current rules about space and hygiene. This meant I allowed myself to go fishing on dusk last night with the added bonus of clearing some space in the freezer in anticipation of the huge results I was going to get from this new method. When I fish here, I wade out to my spot after walking through the bush and I am literally a kilometre or so from anyone and have never seen anyone else fishing there, and so it was last night.

I was home on the Thursday due to good Friday being on my RDO, so I was a good boy and mowed the lawns and took care of the other chores during the day while my wife was at work. I fish the last hour or two of the outgoing tide at this spot and as low tide was at 7pm I started getting ready at about 4.

After a bit of a rest I set up the gear, I got the smelly stuff ready, no not me the berley, set the rod up, put on the waders and off I went. Once in position I threw the berley in, including some mouldy dry cat food...don't ask...and soon started seeing Mullet and Garfish in the trail hitting the floating pieces. This is when I learnt about the lesser casting distance but could still reach the weed beds, so no harm done. I wasn't getting my usual number of hits as there didn't seem to be many flatties about and no salmon. This area produces pretty well usually, and I was beginning to wonder whether it was all going to flop. I still had some bait with me (chicken) and was contemplating changing to it when I felt a tap but no hook-up. Encouraged I continued then a few casts later a savage take followed by line going off the reel and head shakes, meant all was not lost. What seemed like ages later but in reality of course was only a couple of minutes I towed 1 very large 54cm Flathead up onto the beach.



I don't usually keep fish this big, but with Good Friday being the next day, made an exception with this one. This was the only fish caught with the only other thing of interest being a squid that kept hitting the fly but letting go just as I was reaching for it. This happened a few times for about a ten-minute period and naturally I didn't have a jig with me for the first time in ages, they were back in the car. Squid are almost impossible to catch on the fly... unless you tie a fly with jig spikes in it he says thinking. ....



The used Sply Jig



The materials I used

The Silver duster is the belly material of the fly above. The green duster is the first one I used many years ago and salmon seem to love the colour as well as blue, slash of red and white belly. I also use Chrystal Flash and similar materials of course and just about anything else that isn't nailed down or being worn by my wife.

The wig is from the cheap shop and I just liked the colour ....for fly tying of course.



The wig  
wig fibres, small pinch of pink  
CF and yellow maribou.



The red one.  
Silver duster, Red Christmas  
tinsel and pink CF.



The Mink  
Grey Mink zonker, Mother of  
Pearl CF.

The last 3 jigs haven't been used.....yet.

# Club Calendar

## July

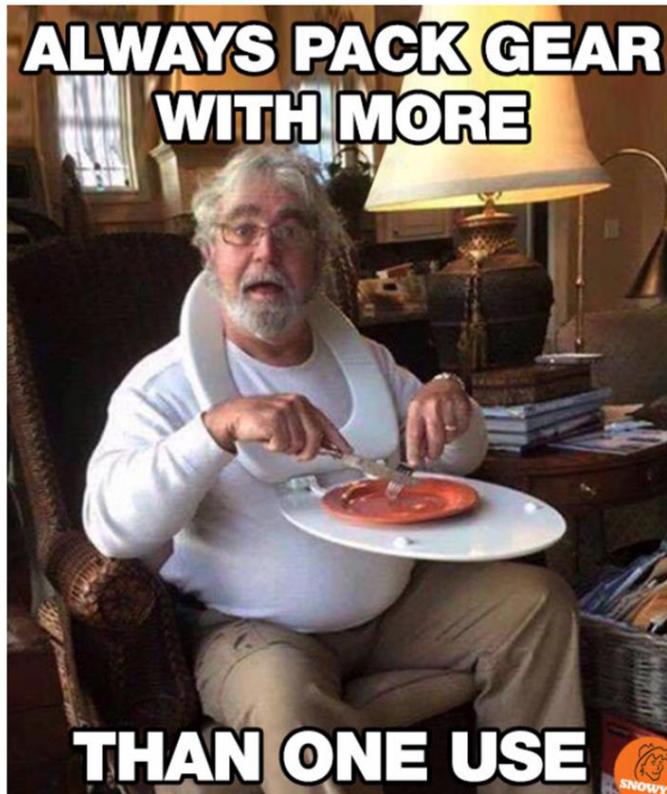
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Inter club casting	Postponed
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup>	AGM followed by normal meeting	Paranaple Centre

## August

Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Inter club casting	Grindleworld - TBC
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## February 2021

8-14 February	Lake Burbury	Phil Bloomfield - TBC
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Sun 28 <sup>th</sup>	Talbot's Lagoon	



And when packing to go away, remember this tip ..... is it?

## Club Office Bearers

### Office Bearers 2019 - 2020

<b>Patron</b>	Ashley Artis, Geoff Wispear		
<b>President</b>	Stan Laskey	0409525492	64241678
<b>Senior Vice President</b>	Max Jones		
<b>Junior Vice President</b>	Damian Hingston		
<b>Secretary</b>	Bruce Marshall		64282197
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Vacant		
<b>Treasurer</b>	Reid McLaughlan	0412636109	
<b>Security Officer</b>	George Surman	0427057455	64245269
<b>Librarian</b>	Malcolm Murray	0408130092	64284071
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Julie Butler	0429354022	64354557
<b>Life Members</b>	George Surman, Peter Burr, David Best, Barry Jacobson, Wayne Bellette		