



# **CANBERRA ANGLER'S ASSOCIATION Inc.**

**GPO Box 2237**

**CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601**

<http://www.actco.org.au/canberraanglersassn/index.html>

## **Newsletter – February 2005**

### **Minutes of CAA Meeting December**

December meeting (barbq by LBG) was called off due to the storm.

### **Reminder to members**

Noting our adequate financial situation, it has been suggested that the club purchase the motor on the 'club tinny' and its trailer from Max at \$800. Members can register objections directly to the president in private prior to the February meeting when it will be authorised or otherwise.

Next meeting is Wed 9 Feb 2005 at Royal's Rugby Club starting at 8pm as per usual. We have Bill talking about digital cameras/photography.

### **Jindabyne Outing December 2004**

By Peter

Fishing was very quiet with Friday being virtually rained out and one 40cm rainbow trout being taken by myself plus several small browns which were released at Paddy's Bend (just below the Hatchery) on Thredbo river. With continuous rain all Friday afternoon until well into the night not much fishing was done.

A bright and early start on Saturday saw me head up to Thredbo River again only to find the water had risen approximately 30cm, running very strong and had turned a dark brown colour. Anyway I tried from Paddy's Bend to the bridge without any luck although a couple of rises were seen.

John launched his boat but had engine problems and was unable to get any fishing done. He did however report that boats were returning to the ramp with fish.

Ian, new member Rob, dad Bill S and Scott spun and fished around Hatchery Bay with no luck at all although Rob reported a few trails of his lures.

Ian and Scott looked after them fairly well and Bruce joined them on Saturday arvo. We all with the exception of Scott ended up at Wollindibby Creek on Saturday Arvo/evening b4 the storm hit just as the fish were starting to rise...

Saturday afternoon we fished Wollondibby Creek which was coloured up without luck and only a few rises being seen. Scott fished Widow creek arm where he managed to hook a water rat (trust Scott to catch a water rat). Storms on Saturday night prevented any attempts at night fishing.

Sunday morning up early onto Thredbo River again which had dropped in level and cleared up. Several rises were seen but had no luck with the fly and headed back to check out at 10ish. Didn't see the rest of the crew so I don't know if they did any good on Sunday morning.



*Ian flyfishing Wollondibby Creek:*

### **Scott's report**

Just arrived back from a one day sojourn to Batemans Bay (Thursday 6th January 05) Had an absolute ball catching pan sized bream and snapper of the breakwall behind coachouse caravan park.

I fished right in front of the cleaning table as there was a constant fresh berley trail being provided by other fishermen cleaning their catch. I no sooner got started when I wore a morwong frame and head squarely in the middle of my back.

Had a ten minute battle with a stingray that was at least 5 feet wide, there were three this size and two smaller ones feeding on the fish scraps thrown in from the cleaning table. The fun

part was that I hooked him using a blackfish rig on my 7 foot bream fishing outfit. I also had two more run ins with rays on my heavy overhead gear.

I think all up I caught at least 15 bream, 5 snapper and 3 hookups with rays as well as a myriad of baby bream, sweep, a wrasse, and one fish that I am yet to identify all released to fight another day.

I finished off the day by catching an octopus that then proceeded to cover me in ink while I was trying to unhook and free it.

On my way home I called in at the Burbong bridge and nailed two small rainbow trout on a grasshopper patter fly. All in all a top day was had with a couple of coldies at days end.

### **Peter's report**

Here are a couple of photos of recently caught fish.

Photo 1 is a 47cm female rainbow taken in the Thredbo River below Paddy's Bend at approx 0700 on 29 Dec 2004. It was taken on a copper and hare nymph and I actually saw it dart out from under a log to grab the nymph. Later in the day there was a large hatch of tea tree beetles and I had inadvertently left my box containing geehi beetles and fur flies in the lodge. Never seen so many good trout rising to grab beetles before, with some being very close to trophy size trout. The previous evening I caught another rainbow, a 40cm male also on a copper and hair just below the rapids on Paddy's Bend but did not get a photo.



Photo 2 is a 43 cm female Brown taken on a royal wulff at Kiandra and I'd actually given up hope of catching a fish in the particular hole and was lifting the fly out of the water when all hell broke loose. I didn't see the actual take. Saw about 6 other nice fish in the same stretch of river but they were very easily spooked. Caught a couple of juveniles as well which I released. Water in the river is lower than at this time last year making it very hard to fish. Later that evening I tried Tantangara where there was a huge caddis hatch but only very small trout were rising within casting distance. Tried mud-eye patterns after dark with no success before venturing back to Canberra successfully avoiding roos on route.





### **Oddity Corner**

Received via the internet. A photo of a rather large Murray Cod found dead in Lake Burley Griffin by Parks and Gardens workers.



## **Muddler Minnow**

By Mark F.

"Muddle": to mix up or jumble together in a confused or bungling way (Macquarie Dictionary).

A spate of success with muddlers had me looking for the "standard" pattern to tie some more. Despite being one of the most popular flies of all time the standard muddler pattern was elusive. Like dogs, muddlers are instantly recognizable, but enormously variable.

Here is the "consensus" view on materials and proportions, with some observations along the way:

- Hook:** 3x or 4x long size 4-12. Don't get bent out of shape about this. It's a "streamer" hook.
- Thread:** Tan, gray, brown, some say black.
- Tail:** Mottled turkey quill. Usually tied short, not normally longer than half shank length. Quill segments have a natural curve, so naturally there is a divergence of views whether the tail is tied in curving up or down. Although this is possibly the dumbest thing I have ever written (its reminiscent of the Lilliputians in Gulliver's Travels who went to war over which end of the boiled egg should be opened, big or little) for the record tail curving down is the preponderant view. It's a tail for heaven's sake.
- Body:** Gold tinsel. Some say gold mylar, gold braid, silver tinsel.
- Underwing:** The traditional tie calls for grey squirrel tail (a little not a lot). However no less an authority than Dave Whitlock uses white calf tail or kip tail with a bit of brown over the top (See Flick, Master Flytying Guide). I have tied muddlers for years with white calf tail thinking that was standard. Squirrel tail does not flare. To make it stand up you need to build a thread dam under it. Length is usually to the start of the tail or overlapping it.
- Overwing:** Mottled turkey quill. Turkey quill is not the same as turkey tail. But turkey tail is used (See Hughes, Essential Trout Flies). Turkey quills can be a variable quality and some are not particularly well marked, especially at the tips. Be a bit careful about colour selection. You want it to work with the deer hair head. I have light quills that works with the light deer hair, but looks a bit weird with darker hair. I have used tan dye to get the lighter colour quills to a colour I am content with (the fish don't give a hoot, but I do).
- Length of overwing? To the start to middle of the tail. Some go to the end of the tail.
- Collar:** Deer hair. There is no clear view on the density of the deer hair. Some are like shaving brushes (Rowney, Pursuit of Flytying), others are sparse. I prefer sparse and a bit untidy. What is the point of doing an underwing and overwing and then cover the lot up with an impenetrable collar? Length of collar varies from stubby (one third shank length) but most would have some deer hairs going back to the hook point and beyond. Tip: tie the collar in a series of small clumps around the hook. This gives a more consistent and controlled look than trying to spin a big bunch of deer hair. Also if you try to spin the collar you run a real risk of twisting the underwing and overwing around the shank.
- Head:** Spun deer hair clipped to shape. Compact deer hair is not important. As John Gierach notes in "Good Flies and How They Got That Way", commercially tied flies come with heads packed like cork. That is great if you want it to float, but sometimes you want it to get down. Muddlers



can be ornery, floating when you want them to sink and vice versa. For some time I have tied them with some "give" in the deer hair so I can squish water and sink in there and make the fly sink. And it's easier to tie.

The length of the head is usually one third the hook shank length (it can be one quarter but usually on a 4x long hook). It is usually no wider than the gape of the hook. There is no consensus on head shape: some are like the nose cone on a rocket, other are bulbous, other meld smoothly from head to collar, some have a head visually separate from the collar. Go wild.

**Weight:** Traditional tie is none, although adding lead wraps is common. The only trouble I have is recognizing the weighted ones in the flybox. You may need a red tag or marabou tuft to differentiate the weighted variety. A nice variation is deer hair spun around dumbbell eyes on Daiichi 1870 hooks, which would be great if you could get Daiichi 1870's. You might as well ask for moon rocks.

Does it matter if the materials, colours and proportions are not just so? The answer is "no", except in your own mind. As one tyer put it, a muddler can look like road kill, it will still catch fish.

Resources: Flick, Master Flytying Guide; Gierach, Good Flies; Rowney, Pursuit of Flytying; The Orvis Fly Pattern Index; Coulson, Austrlian Fly Patters; Andrews, Basic Flytying; Flower, Australian Trout Food, Trout Flies.

Set out below is my muddler and those from various websites. The URL's are also given.





*Mark F's Version*



[http://www.flytyingchronicles.com/Flies/FTC\\_MudMinnow.htm](http://www.flytyingchronicles.com/Flies/FTC_MudMinnow.htm)



[http://www.danica.com/flytier/dsmith/muddler\\_minnow.htm](http://www.danica.com/flytier/dsmith/muddler_minnow.htm)



[http://www.michigan-sportsman.com/fly\\_pictures/muddler.htm](http://www.michigan-sportsman.com/fly_pictures/muddler.htm)



<http://www.flyfishingconnection.com/patterns/flies/29/Muddler+minnow/>



[http://www.akflyfishers.com/fom\\_muddler\\_minnow.html](http://www.akflyfishers.com/fom_muddler_minnow.html)



[http://www.flyline.com/fly\\_patterns/streamers/muddler\\_minnow/](http://www.flyline.com/fly_patterns/streamers/muddler_minnow/)

## **Book Review – John Gierach, "At the Grave of the Unknown Fisherman".**

By Mark F.

"At the Grave of the Unknown Fisherman" might just be another quirky title from John Gierach (eg Dances With Trout, Death Taxes and Leaky Waders, Even Brook Trout Get the Blues) but one quickly discerns there is deeper meaning. Thus the inscription reads:

"I was awfully happy, not because life was good, but because it was my life, and I was in it" – Scott Spencer

The story is loosely based on a year in the life of the author, commencing in early spring and concluding mid-winter. The format is unusual for Gierach and significant (four-seasons-as-metaphor-of-life) for Gierach clearly feels time's fell hand weighing upon him:

"On one of those cold, solitary, late November walks, I'll set to thinking about that one beaver pond I never made it too and think, what the hell did I do all year, sit on my ass?"

And later:

"When we're not worrying that there's too little good water left, we worry there is too much and life is short. It makes a few of us frantic, a few greedy, and a few other sad, but for most of us it just works out as a kind of low grade wanderlust"

Not that it is all introspection. Principally this book is witty wry anecdotes about fishing, flies, fishing buddies, road trips, river and lakes, delivered in that easygoing manner that Gierach has made his own. But with it is a wistfulness about yesteryear, fatalism about the future (Gierach says he is resigned to becoming a geezer "because what else can you do?") and halfhearted satisfaction about where he is. On the last page and the last day of the year he is simply glad to be on the right side of the grass. None of the risks he took in life has killed him, thus avoiding an embarrassing epitaph:

"How you live life is up to you. Life is there to be lived, and no-one gets out of it alive. On the other hand the one thing you don't want carved on your tombstone is, "The dumb son of a bitch had it coming.""

What would be an appropriate remembrance is another question:

"Can you adequately sum up a man's life just by saying he was an avid fisherman? Well, I think you could mine"

Adequate summation maybe, but what is its worth? The author seems ambivalent about the legacy of a life writing about flyfishing. In a heartbreaking digression, he devotes a chapter to fishing journals or, rather, how they end. One such journal, picked up for \$1.00, contained 38 years of entries, then nothing:

"And that's it. In the universe of Clarke's cabin on the Laramie river, next weekend never came ... The real lesson is that you should write whatever the hell you want in your journal because chances are no one's gonna care".

Well it depends on the quality of the writing. Journals are one thing, a Gierach book is different. Flyfishing may be goofing off with the possibility of fresh fish for dinner, as Gierach suggest, but that does not reduce the importance of writing about it. The opposite is true: Tom McGuane, another great fishing writer of our time, observed that Gierach's charm is in finding meaning in what appears to be idleness. For those of us engaged in idleness that is something to cling to.

I gave a copy of this book as a birthday present, without having read it. In retrospect a book that leans heavily on the theme of our mortality may not have been a prime choice for a 50th birthday present but, then again, it may spur us to visit those streams we have long talked about but never quite got to.

Good fishing.

MDF

### **Flathead Follies**

From Mark F.

This is a true story. Location: NSW south coast. Drifting for flathead, Christmas 2004. Strong take, fisherman pulls up 6lb flathead and boats it. The flathead disgorges a 12 inch flathead, which is firmly hooked. The big fish was not hooked at all but merely ate the smaller one and refused to let go.

### **Mark F's Report**





*Katherine and Bisika, Lake Wonboyn NSW*



*un-captioned shot but the shot appears to have been taken early on Boxing Day last year*