



Club Newsletter

December 2017

Merry Christmas everybody!

Welcome to the December newsletter. Once again, we have a series of entertaining and informative articles for your literary degustation.

First up in this edition we have a trip report from Lando on this years' 20th Anniversary trip to Borumba Dam.

Next we have another instalment of Jason Stratford's 50 Friends on Fly series. This time it's a trip to Kuala Rompin to snag some sailfish.

Then we have a report from Treasurer, Peter Nolan, on a trip a few of our guys took to Kiribati.

Next up is a follow up report from moi to my report last year on river side etiquette at the Eucumbene River.

And lastly another report from Jason illustrating a different perspective to that same Eucumbene trip.

Many thanks to all the contributors. Stirling work, gentlemen.

Now just a couple of housekeeping things before we get into it.....

JANUARY CLUB MEETING 10/1/18

This is the meet where we hash out our calendar for the year so please come one and all and put forward your favourite trip proposals.

This is also an excellent opportunity to suggest any feedback or ideas on where you want the club to go. This is your club, it is what you make it, so bring your best ideas with you whether it regards fishing, tying, casting or even just socialising. Come and throw your ideas into the ring.

CLARRIE HALL DAM TRIP DEC 2017

Recently we had our annual Clarrie Hall trip with it's associated bass competition. And this year the Brian McDuffie Memorial Trophy will be presented to President Paul Goodey for his 44cm and 36cm bass. Congratulations, Paul!

The trophy presentation will also occur at the January Meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES

10 January 2018

Club Calendar Meeting

23 February 2018

Club Trip: Ben Falls

14 February 2018

Club Meeting

14 March 2018

Club Meeting

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BEN FALLS COD TRIP

This coming February we have a club trip to Ben Falls at Emmaville in NSW which promises to be an exciting trip. All places are technically gone though we may be able to squeeze in one or two more if you're willing to camp. We look forward to the stories returning from this trip which has the potential to become an annual event.

Well, that's all from me. Hope you enjoy the read folks! And here's wishing you all a Merry and Safe Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope to see you at the January meeting. :)

Stu Jamieson
Vice President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2017

We reached a club milestone this year spending a weekend at Borumba Dam fishing the Variety Toga challenge. The twenty years the club has been going is a testament to past and present members of the committee and its helpful members that get things done, including helping with fly casting, fly tying, donations of fly fishing paraphernalia to help the club out, cooking bbqs and generally getting involved. It's also good to see many members helping the newer members out and shortening the learning curve to this obsession we all share.

Some of the great fish caught looking back over the year through the forum, meetings and club outings are Trout, Carp, Bass and Saratoga to various Tunas and Sailfish. A trip to CXI with several club members present resulted in some catches of Bonefish, Triggerfish and various Trevally, Ezz's flats caught GT being pretty special. The last early evening of the trip stands out in the memory for me as a huge school of GTs began busting up in front of the lodge just off the beach as we were all having a drink after a hot days flats fishing, hilarious moments shared the entire trip.

Let's make 2018 even better, so get involved, give some input and we will carry on our tradition of being a helpful progressive fly fishing club full of friendly sometimes inebriated, funny and always full on sledging bunch of fly fishers.

Cheers,
Paul

BORUMBA DAM - 20th Anniversary Club Outing October 2017

By Lando Leadbeater



This year saw the thirteenth year the toga competition has been held - certainly a pat on the back needed for Jeremy and Judy Wakelin for keeping this competition going.

Always a good time to be had at a great location at Borumba. Those who attend regularly know that it is a low pressure competition with the emphasis more on fun than being competitive.

This year the competition was combined with the Club 20th anniversary and there was a good roll up of members to partake in the weekend.

Borumba is well known to be a tough and challenging place to fish and this weekend was no different with not only the fish being tough to catch but the weather turned out to be another adversary to deal with! We had to deal with a constant drizzle on Saturday, only letting up at lunch and then really coming down in the afternoon which drove some back to the ramp and a flooded camp site.

There was a mix of hardened competitors who stayed out until the very end and the hipsters who disappeared early to stake out the local coffee shops. Those who stayed did catch the odd fish but the going was tough with, from what I heard, most caught in the morning.

I fished with Mick Parry and we got onto a few fish at one spot in the upper reach of the Yabba arm.

Our biggest and first fish was lost at the net as I skilfully wrapped my line around the propeller! After that as practice, we then managed to land 3 between us after Mick dropped one after a brief hook-up. I was using black or black and purple flies on a sinking line in an 8 weight for the 2 days.



The weather for Sunday was clear skies but as I've found every time I have been there Sunday seems to be tougher fishing. The Yabba arm water was a lot dirtier than the day before and we didn't see or hear a fish where we had the day before. The Kingham arm was cleaner with lots of fish spotted but appeared not real interested in eating.

The results for the weekend were Chris Adams, myself and Geoff Volter in the top 3 spots with Chris and Voltzy being top team for the weekend.



As all who attended would agree a great weekend at a top place to fish. Toga are a great fish to target; tough to keep on a hook at times but the take and the fight of a toga sight cast to is hard to beat! At Borumba there is always the hope of a monster to end up on the end of your line as these fish are well fed and growing bigger every year. As tough as it is I'm sure everyone will be back to do it again next year!

50 FRIENDS ON FLY: KUALA ROMPIN

By Jason Stratford

Having done trips to Kuala Rompin (Malaysia) in 2015 and 2016 to chase sailfish on fly AND being in the middle of the 50 Friends on Fly effort, it was a bit of a spur of the moment decision to return in 2017 with good mates Lyall Crawford and Barry Maher.

Having very firm available dates to do a trip, contact was made with Billseeker Sportfishing (Dominic – formerly of Fishzone Sportsfishing) and Ian at Fishzone, who have both hosted us in the past. Having left it relatively late, it wasn't surprising that neither could accommodate us on our fixed available dates.

So, based on the recommendation of another fishing colleague, we contacted Flyfishing Asia / Sportfishin Asia (Juan Wei) who that friend had fished with in 2016. We were fortunate that Juan was able to arrange things so we could fish the week before the Rompin Billfish Tournament. (Prime time we assumed!).

Juan operates out of Kuala Lumpur. So, after a night in the big city, he collected us from our hotel and we were on our way. The wi-fi in the vehicle, on the 4-hour trip, meant Barry, the group's Facebook addict and food blogger who I think has a site called something like "LaksaBoy.com", could keep his 'status' updated along the way.

First stop was the local beer / wine store for stocks. Then it was on to the compact 3-bedroom guesthouse where we would be staying. No laundry facilities (i.e. a washing machine) but good wi-fi at the unit meant LaksaBoy could lodge his 'foodie' posts, as we ate our way through plenty of different places (dinners and breakfasts) over the week. It was also an easy jaunt to the local laundry and at about \$2 and a 25-minute wash cycle with free wi-fi....it proved a good way to wind down while checking emails for business etc, every few days.

On the water, we were treated to a large twin hull catamaran powered by two 225HP Hondas. The boat was larger, wider and faster than any of the other boats we had been on out of Rompin. Very comfortable and a lot more time was spent fishing. Because of the boats speed, we could get to the fishing grounds well before AND were able to leave well after the other boats. A BIG plus!



Being a big boat, longer teaser poles may have made it easier to keep the teaser spread clear of the wash. Stiffer poles would have also meant being able to rip teasers out of the water from farther away from the boat. This was important when the fish seemed reluctant to come close. They often turned away before getting to a range where the guys could cleanly clear the teasers.



Because this turning off had been observed a bit, we all wanted to deliver longer casts to the fish. But that sometimes lead to the teasers being cleared, more by skipping them along the surface, instead of fully lifting them from the water. So, the fish often followed the skipping teaser right to the back or continued under the boat, instead of turning to find the cast fly. Likewise, the absence of any sort of short set daisy chain 'might' have cost us a few raised fish...but overall, these matters were not deal breakers.

We were fishing well before 9am most mornings and the lunch stops were pretty much just for as long as it took to eat the pre-packed meals (which were great - different every day). We would then be straight back fishing. We departed the fishing grounds each day around 4:45pm and one day we went through to around 5:30pm as we were still raising plenty of fish...no questions asked!

The only day lunch went longer was when the guys jiggered up some fish to tie into the teasers. While not as resilient as squid sweeteners (which they had plenty of) the fresh fish worked a treat at heating up fish that had otherwise been coming in half-heartedly most of the week. (Note: Don't fish the full moon in September /October as the fish are gorging all night on the huge numbers of anchovies that are in close. Sails often just looked at the teasers and went back to their easy meal).

The Captain was very good at finding fish AND mostly getting away & staying away from the hordes of boats that seemed to throng onto any sort of aggregation of Sails.



If you keep in mind that the three of us that went over are still all very green on this sort of fishing (at least on fly) with only around 35 Sails between us...we still managed to get some fish early in the week AND 5 good fish (up around the 40kg mark) on the last day. This was notable as some of the live bait boats that stayed close in with the "all you can eat anchovy buffet for sailfish" got only 1 or 2 fish to their boats!



Yep...it was extra tough fishing mid week around the full moon (for all fishing styles) as we heard first hand during dinner chats with other fishos.

I have already been asked by some would we use Juan's operation again? For sure...as he provided a very relaxed trip with some good fish and good service... at a competitive price. So why not!?!?



Other operators may have been able to deliver more fish (and that is a very big maybe given what we were seeing / hearing for the week), but is catching cricket scores of fish all that these sorts of trips are about? It may be for some...but it wasn't for us!

Note: In case that sounds like a cop out or excuse – it isn't. We did all get good fish!





Any minor concerns we may have had with Juan's choice of teasing equipment (in light of the larger but better size of the boat used) OR his approach to teasing fish, which was a little different to what we had become accustomed to from previous visits, was more than made up for through extra fishing time, an excellent variety of meals, the wi-fi, good accommodation, visits to grog and tackle shops AND a bit of foodie history when we visited Kajang (the town from which 'Satay' originated) for a farewell feed of the local meaty, peanut and chilli coated BBQed offerings, on our way back to KL!

So, bring on 2018!

Footnote: It's recommended that you DO NOT look at LaksaBoy.com. Seriously... you have been warned!

Kiribati – August 2017

By Peter Nolan

The club recently spent a week (plus about 4 days travelling) on Kiribati fishing for bone fish. Due to the fact that the bulk of the committee turned up on the trip the AGM had to be cancelled but it was worth it because I think we all had a good time.

The fishing was tough and I don't intend to go into details because the point of this article is to talk about the accommodation. The fish were very scatty and many of us had trouble seeing them though I think just about everybody (bar John Burgess) caught fish every day. I noticed there were a lot more people fishing and I think all the other resorts were full so the place is obviously becoming popular. There were quite a few GT's about and Ez managed to hook one.



We stayed at Arkari House which is quite good. The accommodation is certainly superior to Crystal Beach where we normally stay and the buildings, running water, are really good quality. The resort's in the middle of what is a small town and as such it gets a lot more water supply plus constant power. Unfortunately Crystal Beach doesn't get these but Gavin Platz tells me that Crystal Beach is getting water and power towards the end of the year so that will make a huge difference.

The food was good to the extent that the evening meal was excellent. Breakfasts are a joke in that it was just a big blob of cold scrambled egg and a piece of bacon that looks like it has been cooked with a blow torch. The toast arrives five minutes after you have all finished which is really helpful but in all at least it was a breakfast.

The lunches were quite good in that they were sandwiches plus various knick knacks which you could pick for yourself. To that extent the lunches are slightly better than what I recall at Crystal Beach but the breakfasts were certainly way behind. The evening meal was on any view excellent. There were a variety of things to eat and they were always laid out and always hot.

The place is quite well run though there are a couple of little issues that were very annoying. The guides are twice the price of what they are at Crystal Beach so you need to bring lots of \$20.00 notes and \$5.00 note for the boatmen. I have never heard of money for the boatmen but that's how they do it. They also have an unofficial (not talked about) levy on fuel where they allocate a certain amount each day and if you go over that allocation you find out at the end of the trip that you are up to this fuel levy. It really annoyed me because if we were told it would have been different but it was just one of those sneaky little things that people do when they are running these sorts of establishments. I don't think the guides were as good as the ones at Crystal Beach but at the end of the day there wasn't a huge deal of difference between them.

In all the accommodation was very good and certainly better quality than Crystal Beach. However if Crystal Beach gets power and an uninterrupted supply of water it will match this place reasonably well. The only issues we had were caused by me unfortunately. My boots fell apart on day 3 and I was lucky to be able to buy from one of the Kiwis who was in rooms nearest a brand new pair of boots. This caused much mirth because someone decided that it would be a really good joke to convince me that I had been ripped off. This didn't go down well causing me to be quite dummy spit about it.

The second incident with boots concerned Jim Williams who was sharing a room with me. Because I am half blind, I kept mixing his boots up with mine which caused a problem when I packed his boots away at the end of the trip and stuffed all my dirty socks, undies and dirty singlets inside them to save space. Unfortunately Jim sprung me tearing the dirty washing out and was very unimpressed. I offered to pay for the fumigation of his boots but he didn't seem to be interested. Other than that we had a good time.

The biggest problem didn't affect us personally in that Air Pacific (Fiji air) have developed a habit of offloading people's luggage in Nandi so that when you arrive at Kiribati none of your fishing gear is available. It took a group of Kiwis in our resort three days to get their gear and a substantial number of Australians from other parts of Australia at other resorts had to wait the same two to three days to get anything. We were lucky and got everything.

The reasons that this happens are largely irrelevant given that it does happen but I think if we ever went back we should plan for it. My advice would be to get the biggest carry-on bag you could lay your hands on at the baggage shop and put a complete change of clothes in it. I think the smart people in our group wore their wading boots onto the plane and that's what I will do in future. You could also put your fishing gear to the extent that I would pack my fly, gloves, sand guards and a pile of small packets of leader. I'd also put a small empty box in because people can lend you hooks and flies but they can't lend you a container.

The other thing I would look at doing would be to carry a light weight nylon belt with a bait bag attached to it which would take up no room at all and you could at least get by fishing for some days. Take only critical medication and limited toiletries. We will have to look into whether you can carry a rod on board with you and I think if you can I would do so but if you come prepared for the fact that your gear might go AWOL in transit you can certainly be better prepared for it than a lot of the people were that I saw. Again we were lucky but you can only be lucky once.

In all it was a good trip and I think everybody enjoyed it.



A woman is in bed with her lover who also happens to be her husband's best friend. They make love for hours, and afterwards, while they're just laying there, the phone rings. Since it is the woman's house, she picks up the receiver. Her lover looks over at her and listens, only hearing her side of the conversation...

(.....in a cheery voice)

"Hello? Oh, hi. I'm so glad that you called. Really? That's wonderful. I am so happy for you. That sounds terrific. Great! Thanks. Okay. Bye bye."

She hangs up the telephone and her lover asks, "Who was that?"

"Oh" she replies, "that was my husband telling me all about the wonderful time he's having on his fishing trip with you."

EUCUMBENE AND THE ART OF ETIQUETTE....REVISITED

By Stu Jamieson



You may recall an article I wrote back in the Club Newsletter June 2016 about my experiences fishing the spawn run on the Eucumbene River. That article was basically my dummy spit on the rise of fishing pressure on the river at this time of year and the subsequent decline in stream etiquette in response to increasing angler competition. Following that trip, our party arrived at a unanimous decision that we would abandon our regular late May spawn run trip to the Eucumbene and turn our attention to an earlier trip in March. We understood that the fish would be smaller at this time of the year (something we collectively cared little about) but it would be a better time of the year for fishing dry fly (a new experience for us) and we hoped the bankside competition would be less.

It turns out, all our expectations of a March trip were entirely correct!



At this time of the year, we barely saw another angler on the river. This is the kind of fishing we'd been seeking - quiet, contemplative, laid back fishing. Lazily moving upstream; casting into pools and riffles; unworried about whether somebody else was going to drop in on that great looking pool up ahead and spook everything in it before you got there.



We also benefitted from having local angler, Lyall Crawford, with us who put us onto some sweet small stream action in the neighbouring surrounds (see Jason's article following) along with the strategies to fish them. We all owed a great debt to Lyall for his local knowledge.



Vice President Stu: The Fish Juggler

It's clear that our days of fishing the May spawn run are over. With the change in our scheduling; advice from Lyall; and also from our experiences fishing New Zealand in the last couple of years, we've realised that there is much better quality fishing to be had than what we had previously considered to be the norm. I guess this is the path that many fly fisherman follow and all it takes to find your own fishing Nirvana is time.

P.S. Just as an update to my previous article, the Monaro Acclimatisation Society has since succeeded in having 4WD access to the banks of the Eucumbene River prohibited. Anglers must now park their vehicles at the Denison Campground and walk to the river from there. This is an encouraging development for both increasing riverside etiquette and reducing bank erosion. In any case, we've found a better time of the year to fish this river and we'll be sticking to it.



50 FRIENDS ON FLY: EUCUMBENE

By Jason Stratford

Never too old to learn OR too late to change an opinion!

Not wanting to bore any 'exclusive' saltwater fly fishos here, its prudent to put forward a warning before this recount of the experience with friends 16, 17 and 18 in '50 Friends on Fly'...

If you are a 'trout hater'...stop reading now!

For anyone else that is still here (anyone...anyone?), 'twigwater' trout hunting may just be some of the most technical, yet addictive, fly fishing there is!

Everything about the 'small end' of the sport of flyfishing, particularly when hunting in the narrow, high alpine streams, seems to be stacked against the angler.

'Twiggin' calls for light rods (1-3wt), microscopic flies in the order of size 18, 20 or 22, tied on 'blind' hooks. Blind because they don't seem to allow anything thicker than spiderweb thin tippetts (2-3.5lb), to pass through the hook eye.

Further, 'twiggin' often requires short 'leader only' casts that are affected greatly by the lightest winds (...think anything more than a grasshopper fart). Yet the angler must still deliver a fly ever so softly into a portion of a stream that is often not much bigger than a teacup. Then manage line to achieve that 'drag free drift' and all the while applying sniper like stealth and ripple free movement in overgrown, but beautiful surrounds.



These difficulties were not something I was adequately prepared for when I met up with Lyall Crawford (Friend 16), in the Snowy mountain highlands recently.

Lyall and I have fished together a couple of times, chasing sailfish in Rompin and once before in the twigwater around his neck of the woods. Problem was, that during our last attempt at twiggin' back in early 2016, we (read: 'I') was hampered by 90km hour winds, which aren't friendly when trying to put flies into tight places. (Well that was my excuse for not catching fish on that trip anyways!).

The experience hadn't, at that time, changed my long held belief that trout on fly (at least in Australia) doesn't deserve the high regard that 'trouties' seem to hold for the introduced species. In fact, the other introduced, but considered 'feral' species (carp), provides the best pound for pound fight there is in freshwater rivers of this country. So why isn't it held in such high regards?!?! (oops...I digress).

So Lyall agreed to drop in at a semi regular gathering of a band of 'mates' comprising the previously introduced, Stu Jamieson (Friend 13), his father, Jim Jamieson (Friend 17) and John Klose (Friend 18).

These three guys fish for trout more often than I and it's fair to say that they were much more experienced leading into the trip. For that reason, my regular questions to them were the standard, 'what fly', 'how long of a leader', 'what size tippet', 'where do I cast' and more often than not...'why the heck do we have to have all this sh#t clipped to a vest and carry half a tackle shop full of gear on our backs all the time'???

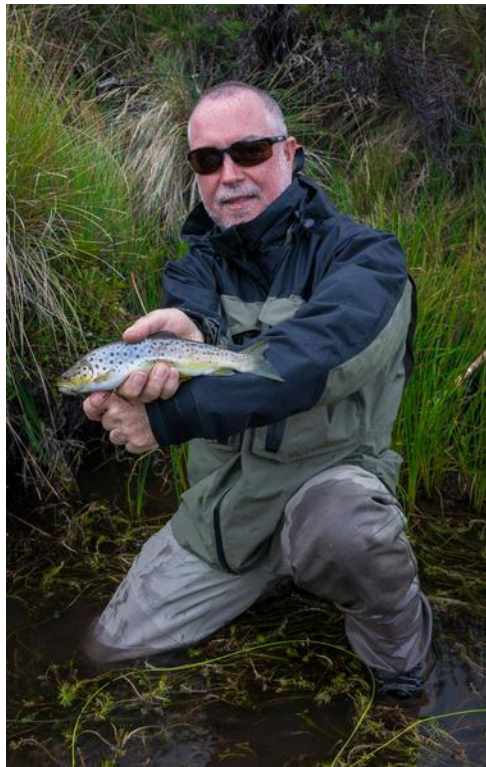
The guys 'tolerated' my cynicism toward trout on fly and had in the past given enough info for me to catch a few fish each trip. So part of the disdain for trout really extended from knowing 'sweet F A' about how to target them correctly.

So, to improve my previously poor trout catch rate, the goal for this trip was to milk Lyall for all his local info, stream craft and trout fishing knowledge that, as it turned out, he was more than willing to share.

So, for the first one and a half days, the other guys frequented their tried and tested spots using their personal tactics. While Lyall and I fished together in what was more like an intensive 'trout master class!'

While the opportunity for learning was great, it was also rather nice having someone who was happy to give instruction, provide flies and tie them on, net your fish and hold them for photos plus carry a spare rigged rod for you. But most importantly...Lyall would quietly retrieve all flies that I cast into the bushes...so I could continue to fish. This was full service 'guiding' at its best.





On return to the accommodation each night, the normal exchanges of 'how did you go' were starting to show some very interesting changes. As a result of Lyall's tuition, it was evident that my catch rate was significantly better than the rest of the group. A point not lost on a few of the guys who later in the trip would avail themselves of an opportunity to fish with and learn from Lyall also.

As it turned out, Jim had been struggling to land a fish despite having been a trout on fly fisho for many decades – starting in Scotland as a wee boy. So it was really pleasing to see that after spending time with Lyall, Jim not only began landing fish, but also improved his casting too. (Lyall is working toward his CCI qualification so provided valuable advice linking both casting and how best to fish the conditions correctly!)

John on the other hand was content to absorb Lyall's advice on fishing locations and accesses which turned out to be the difference between catching a few fish in the main river adjacent to our accommodation and his higher catch numbers taken in the smaller feeder streams.



What also became apparent during the trip was that fishing the main open river for trout was nowhere near as challenging, nor as enjoyable, as fishing the beautiful twigwater streams.

For twiggin', being able to throw long casts to 100+ feet is of no importance if you can't put short casts right where the fish are likely to be. In some cases, as little as a few centimetres off target was the difference between eliciting a successful take OR spooking the entire pool because you snagged the fly in bushes near an undercut bank where these ambush feeding little rockets often hold up.



Likewise, the speed at which the dry fly can be taken and rejected if a strike is not made equally quickly...means that your eyes must be on the fly and your mind remain on high alert at all times. Awareness of your surrounds, for things such as loose rocks in the stream bed, bushes in the back cast area, changes in wind direction or speed, seams, bubble lines, back eddies and lots more, were all things that had the potential to easily bring you unstuck. It really is 'active' fishing and something I enjoyed much more than I had expected.



In fact, my opinion of trout fishing, well at least in twigwater trout fishing, has definitely changed. So much so that I may just have fallen further into this fly fishing addiction!

Beware...if you ever run across Lyall Crawford (Canberra Anglers / ACT Fly Fishers) he is a pusher of dirty twigwater drugs!



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