



Club Newsletter

March 2016

Welcome everybody!

Welcome to the March newsletter and the first for this year. Firstly let me thank this issue's contributors: Brian Kirkley, Tom Boylan and Paul Goodey. The newsletter is only ever as good as the content and Brian, Tom and Paul deliver the goods time and again. Thanks, gentlemen, it's much appreciated!

Anyone hoping for a shorter newsletter this time around will be sorely disappointed, I'm afraid, as this one has turned out to be the biggest yet! This is largely my fault for being unable to write a short article. You can end this reign of tyranny, however, by submitting your own content!

Seriously, the conclusion of Bob Knott's excellent and informative serial on the history of the club has left a hole in the newsletter, so we need more contributors. So any trips you're on, new gear you may have, angling tips and strategies, favourite fly tying tutorials or even just a good joke (they don't even have to be that good), send them in – they're all welcome.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

Kicking off this edition we have two articles from BrianK covering two fishing locations he visited during his recent extend trip to New Zealand. Then we have our quarterly joke from Tom. Paul shows us how to tie one of his favourite saltwater flies. Tom then guides us through the menagerie of trophies awarded by the club. And, finally, my rather verbose trip report of our voyage to the Ruakituri River in NZ.

Speaking of trophies, two club trophies have been awarded since the last newsletter.

Congratulations goes to Amber Tinker for taking out the *Brian McDuffie Memorial Bass Trophy* at the club trip to Clarrie Dam last December.

WELL DONE AMBER!



IMPORTANT DATES

29 April – 1 May 2016
Variety Bass Comp
Maroon Dam

13-15 May 2016
Trip: Uncle Billy's

June 2016
Trip: Lenthels Dam
Maryborough
Date TBA

July 2016
Gold Coast Seaway
Date TBA

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And congratulations also to Lando Leadbeater for winning the Variety Children's Toga On Fly Competition at Borumba Dam in October. Lando received both Variety's *Keith Wakelin Inter Club Trophy* and our club's own *Tom Boylan (née John Rowe) Shield*.

LOVE YOUR WORK, LANDO!



Happy reading and see you at the next meeting on 13/04/16, folks!

Stu Jamieson
Vice President

TRIP REPORT: PAUA. The place of SWAFFER Dreams

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

By Brian Kirkley

I spent a couple of weeks at a little fishing village called Houhora about 6 hours drive north of Auckland. The alternative is to fly to Kaitia and hire a car there, and drive the 50km north.

There's a four square, a bottle shop, two cafes and a fuel pump.

The fishing there from the long liners wharf or the big game wharf can be pretty spectacular. There are some unbelievable flats near Houhora Heads and the drop-offs in places, standing knee deep, can be 100 feet within a rod length into deep, clear blue water.

I took advice from a guy in a fishing shop in Kaitia, who told me his favourite place was a tiny village called Paua about another 50km north of Houhora. So I fished there a couple of times.

Anyone following my posts in Fishing Stories on the club forum would have some idea of how awesome I think of this as a place. Its like the best fishing spots in Australia were 100 years ago.



I saw acres of baitfish being slashed by pelagics and huge kingies pushing pilchards onto the rocks beside me and busting up around me, all on one day.

As the tide makes and flows towards the mangroves further into the harbour, the fish move onto the flats and while I saw many dark or silver shapes I was unlucky not to hook up. But remember I was only there a couple of 3/4 days.



Locals told me that the fish were snapper and silver trevs, and they could be encouraged within casting distance just by crunching some of the cockles underfoot.

Of course they use burley, which is a mainstay of the majority of SWAFFERS I met in NZ. They made it clear that you needed some way to encourage some interest because there was usually plenty for the fish to eat, so you needed to concentrate the baitfish to get the big fish excited enough to take a fly. I know there are various schools of thought on this, but that's how it's done there.

I had some success by waiting for cruising fish, but I have to say that once I got the baitfish schooling with a little fine burley, the big boys appeared like magic.

A few hardy souls were camping up there in tents, with no facilities at all. I saw a couple of guys with a mobile home which made a lot of sense, but in all when I was there, there would not have been more than 5 other guys within a 5 km spread.

This is a not-to-be-missed place.

There's a lot more I could share so grab me at a meeting for an earful.



TRIP REPORT: SOUTH WAIKATO SPRING CREEKS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

By Brian Kirkley

About 35 mins from Rotorua along SH5 is the town of Tirau. Its a pretty little place with lots of coffee shops and tourist shops but best of all it's the epicentre of some amazing spring creeks, within a few kilometres.

The Waihou River and the Waiomou Stream flow either side of the town and the Waihou is checked regularly by Fish and Game to confirm the 1000 fish per kilometre the system holds.



The Waihou has some amazing springs as part of its upper system and these contribute to the cleanest water in NZ and the clearest streams. This can make for frustrating fishing since the trout can see you clearly.



Small dry flies are usually the go, but small light nymphs can also be very successful. The springs are tourist attractions so its not always easy to find a quiet spot to fish around them. I tried around the whole area for a day and upper access can be from Leslie Road or Whites road.

I asked a property holder for access and it was freely given in a friendly way, and he assured me this was pretty normal for the area.

The day I was there was a holiday and anywhere near a rest area was full of people and many were swimming – ergo – no fish.

I went back along SH5 towards Rotorua a bit more than a kilometre to the first or second bridge, where there was a delightful stream and easy access. I fished there for an hour and saw several nice fish but could not tempt any.

I intended to go back and spend a couple of days getting to know the area better, since I think this is an untapped area, for some reason, but I ran out of time.



I recommend anyone intending to travel anywhere near Rotorua or Hamilton, to put this on your to-do list. Its a real gem.



Details from Fish and Game Auckland/Waikato Region (South Waikato Spring Creeks) Trout Fishing can be found [here](#).

FLY YARNS

Policeman contacting his controller: "An old lady has just shot her husband dead for walking across her wet floor."

Controller: "Have you arrested her?"

Policeman: "Not yet, I'm waiting for the floor to dry"

Submitted by Tom Boylan

FLY TYING: PAUL'S SHAGGY DOG FLY

By Paul Goodey



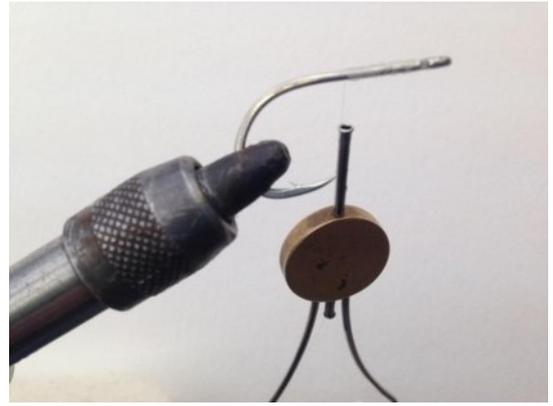
I originally tied this fly for a trip to Trinity Inlet up in Cairns, it produced my first saltwater Barra on fly, as well as catching Trevally, Queenfish, Estuary Cod and Mangrove Jack. I have also used it for Tuna with good results, e.g. when the fish are moving fast and the boat arrives as the fish disperse, I sink a PSD on a Striper IV and it has been hammered. The fly is easy to tie after a bit of practice, the materials are easy to source and the use of UV sparkleflash really lights the fly up in the water.



Material list:

- UV pink sparkleflash.
- UV green sparkleflash.
- Mono thread.
- Gamakatsu SL12s size 1/0
- Head cement / super glue
- 8 mm 3D eyes
- Zap A Goo glue

1. Secure hook in vise from hook point, wrap mono thread towards eye.



2. Take a pencil thick hank of pink Sparkleflash 2.5/3 x hook length slightly tapering with scissors then tie in on top of hook 5mm back from eye, seal with head cement.

3. Take same thickness only slightly shorter hank and taper and tie in underneath hook. Then seal.



4. Take a slightly thicker hank same length taper and tie in, on top, seal.

5. Tie in slightly shorter same thickness tapering hank underneath, seal.





6. Tie in green sparkleflash over wing on top, slightly thicker same length taper ends as before, seal.

7. Lay on flat surface brush and shape, I use curved scissors for the underside, starting from the bend of hook back to tip of tail. I have also found by rolling the material between thumb and fingers at the ends of the fly enhances the look.



8. Stick on your eyes with a cocktail stick and Zap A Goo glue. Don't squeeze the eyes on, I work some glue from hook eye to front of eyes, top and bottom of hook, create the head shape by pulling materials slightly up until glue sets.



9. Go and cast fly and check it swims correctly.



SOUTH EAST QLD FLY FISHING CLUB TROPHIES

By Tom Boylan

Our club has a number of important trophies and awards and I thought that we should establish and record their history, origins and purpose.

CHAMPION ANGLER OF THE YEAR

This is based upon, reported and recorded captures throughout the calendar year and whilst there is no trophy, winning members are offered a shirt embroidered with the club badge, their name and “champion angler of the year”.

Strangely, this award is not pursued with any real enthusiasm, we do not carry a great level of competitiveness within our club and, I guess, this is not such a bad thing. A bonus is that our secretary is not overburdened with catch reports pouring in from braggart hopefuls.

FLY TYING AWARDS



We have two trophies: a master flytyer and novice standards, both contested annually.

Subject flies are nominated as saltwater, trout or native and members are asked to submit their creations for judgement.

The master trophy was constructed by Dennis Shaw and consists of a golden vice mounted on a timber block and holding a deceiver which was kindly tied and donated by Lefty Kreh. It also carries badges for winner names.

The novice trophy also created by Denis Shaw is a stylised wooden vice holding a small baitfish imitation again with name shields.

SEQFF BORUMBA SARATOGA SHIELD



In the mid 90's John Rowe, a Tasmanian trout guide, took a position at the Borumba fish hatchery where they propagated silver and golden perch fingerlings for sale to property holders. He quickly discovered the Saratoga population and developed a variety of flies and angling systems for them.

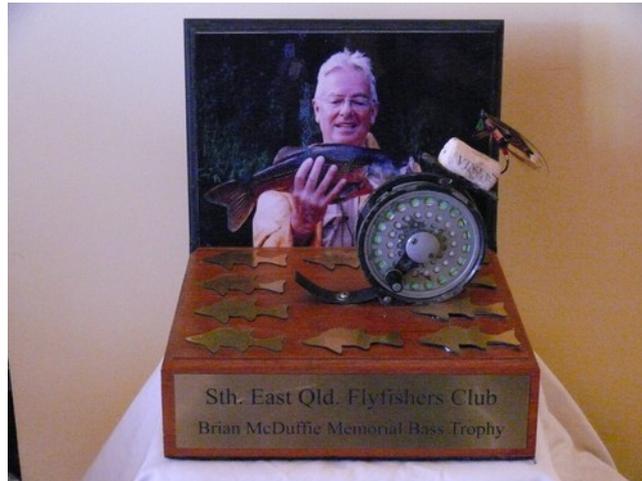
I read of this and with a friend on Noosa holidays arranged a visit and the opportunity to fish with John and subsequently visited many times.

When the hatchery closed John continued to live in the council house and established a guiding business.

After moving to the Gold Coast and joining the club in the year 2000, I arranged a club trip where John gave me an unadorned shield made from a piece of silky oak. Upon returning home, I fashioned a small saratoga from custom wood and mounted it on the shield and named it "The John Rowe Borumba Shield" with brass name badges. We then competed for it in an annual club trip which nowadays is generally "The Variety Club Children's Charity Bash". John has now retired to Tasmania.

Recently the shield was rejuvenated with fancy writing etc, and renamed the "Tom Boylan Borumba Shield". I am embarrassed by this undeserved honour, it should have retained the name of the originator John Rowe who contributed so much to the development and promotion of the fishery and I feel it should be reverted to the original name lest his efforts be lost to memory.

BRIAN MCDUFFIE TROPHY



Brian was a stalwart of our club and came to us with an interesting history. A TV producer and director with both the BBC and ABC, he was responsible for shows like *Z Cars*, *Blue Heelers*, *Prisoner*, *Patrol Boat* and many other documentaries, specials and news programmes. He lectured in film and TV production at Bond University Gold Coast.

A keen and accomplished flyfisherman, Brian developed a love for our native bass and pursued them throughout the Tweed Valley and the many remote tributaries to the Tweed River. Through his guidance the Tweed at Byangum became a regular fishing spot for our club and on the loss of Brian in 2008 to a sudden heart attack it seemed important that we celebrate his memory with a trophy.

The development of the trophy was a collaboration between myself, Paul Goodey and Denis Shaw. The trophy was constructed by Denis and topped off by an ancient fly reel I had donated. Atop the reel is a salmon fly tied by Paul from materials supplied by myself and Paul's good friend, Kerry Mitchell. A photograph of the great man, Brian McDuffie, adorns the backboard.

A day is set aside early summer each year somewhere in the Tweed region to compete for this trophy.

TOM BOYLAN CLUB MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Many years ago I brought this home from Indonesia. It is a carved wooden fish with brass fittings standing on brass fins. When drawn out, the head and tail become handles for a knife and fork carving set - an interesting table piece.

It sat on a shelf for a number of years until my wife disdainfully asked what I intended to do with it so I decided that it needed many homes and donated it to our club to be given each year to the member who had contributed most to the welfare of the club and our members.

This I am proud to say has become the most prestigious award in our club and when I introduced it I was sure that it would always have a home among our many deserving members.

I set down that the winner be decided and awarded by the previous year's recipient as they knew best what it took to deserve it.

TRIP REPORT: RUAKITURI RIVER, NZ

NOVEMBER 2015

By Stu Jamieson



Around 18 months ago, I met Lance Zivec at the Brisbane Fly Fishing Club. Lance, and a couple of his buddies, had acquired a property in New Zealand on the [Ruakituri River](#) - a fly fishing only river voted recently by anglers as the [second best angling river in all of NZ!](#) Known as the [Ruakituri Eco Retreat](#), the property has a house on it which sleeps 10 and when Lance and his mates aren't fishing there, they rent it out to other anglers and holiday makers for \$140 per night - that's \$140 for the whole house not per person! So get six people together (as we did) and that's accommodation in a fully furnished house with cooking and laundry facilities on a beautiful river for just over 20 bucks a night!

This was a bargain too good to be missed so I consulted with my usual fishing buddies, Jim Jamieson, Jason Stratford and our mutual friend, John Klose (AKA The Crackenback Crew) and they were keen. Vince Margossian got wind of it, so he was in, followed soon by Brian Ware.

So we had a house, a 30 kilometre stretch of river and 6 keen fellas - perfect! Time to start booking stuff.

A travelling party of six presents a small problem. While it's easy enough to find a vehicle to carry that many people, finding a vehicle which will carry that many people *plus their luggage* is another matter entirely! We considered a minibus or a trailer but ultimately settled on two vehicles. This would give us more than enough luggage carrying capacity and would also give us ample flexibility in terms of fishing options. It would mean we could split our party into two and fish different locations on any given day.

So we settled on a Toyota Rav 4 and an old banger for \$33 per day. The old banger would turn out to be a Nissan Sunny Saloon.

The plan was to hit the river in November. A 9 day trip in total including 5 days on the river with 2 days travel to and from Auckland Airport. We could have caught a connecting flight from Auckland to Gisborne and saved a bit of travelling time but most of our party had not been to NZ previously so it made sense to make a road trip of it. And the flight to Gisborne is expensive so the cost is comparable to driving anyway.

Prior to our departure, I spent a couple of hours with Lance poring over a map marking out hotspots and the numerous access points along the river. We certainly weren't going with a dearth of information! I had pieced together the map from Google print-outs and the final article was around 3m long. It drove home just how big a stretch of water we had to play with!

We also discussed flies and rigging. The Ruakituri is primarily a nymphing river; the odd fish can be caught on dry, but the numbers are in the wets.

Lance had impressed upon me how the river fished best when it was low - water level around 700mm or below - so it wasn't ideal that a week and a half before we were due to arrive, a downpour raised the river above 2m. All hope was not lost, however, as the river famously drains quickly, but when it rained again the day before we flew out to Auckland, it was time to start working on contingency plans.

FRIDAY 13/11/15 - Departure Day!

John is in Canberra and Jason is in Tamworth so they converged on Sydney and flew out from there. The rest of us flew out from Brisbane.

Jim and I arrived at Brisbane International Airport to find Vince and Brian already there with Vince complaining about the price of the pens. He had to buy one to fill out the departure form, you see, and I think he paid \$2.50 for it - outrageous! No wonder there were only empty, pen-less strings dangling from the counters around the place!

After Jim and I filled out our departure forms using Vince's pen (which was available to hire for a small fee) we headed to the departure lounge. This went mostly smoothly except for Brian who raised the ire of customs officials by attempting to smuggle out an illicit tube of toothpaste, a bottle of biohazardous shampoo and a small pair scissors. But with that little hurdle out of the way we were off flying to the Land of the Long White Cloud at the speed of an Airbus A380.

Arrival at Auckland Airport was again mostly smooth. Our change pockets were lighter still for having filled out our entry forms; Australian Border Force had clearly rang ahead because we all passed effortlessly through customs except for Brian who was made to empty every rod tube and tackle box to satisfy the Peoples Republic of New Zealand that he hadn't stashed another tube of toothpaste somewhere; and Jim misplaced his passport. We joke about how deportation could be an affordable option for return home. Thankfully he later found it in his luggage when we arrived at our hotel and upon calling his wife to confirm a safe journey, the missus politely enquired, "Have you still got your passport?" Wives, eh? They know!

After checking into the hotel, the first order of business (as mandated by Vince) was to acquire some coffee making facilities. Anyone who has travelled with Vince, knows his coffee and understands the importance of this ritual. Luckily, right across the road was a Warehouse (NZ's \$2 shop) with a star of Bethlehem shining above it and so it was that we duly acquired an electric kettle, a large mug for brewing and a collection of coffee mugs with handy carabiner handles.

We retire back to our room to the warm embrace of Vince's Turkish coffee, cheese, crackers, arak, whisky and Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels playing softly on the idiot box.

SATURDAY 14/11/15 - Journey to Sulphur City



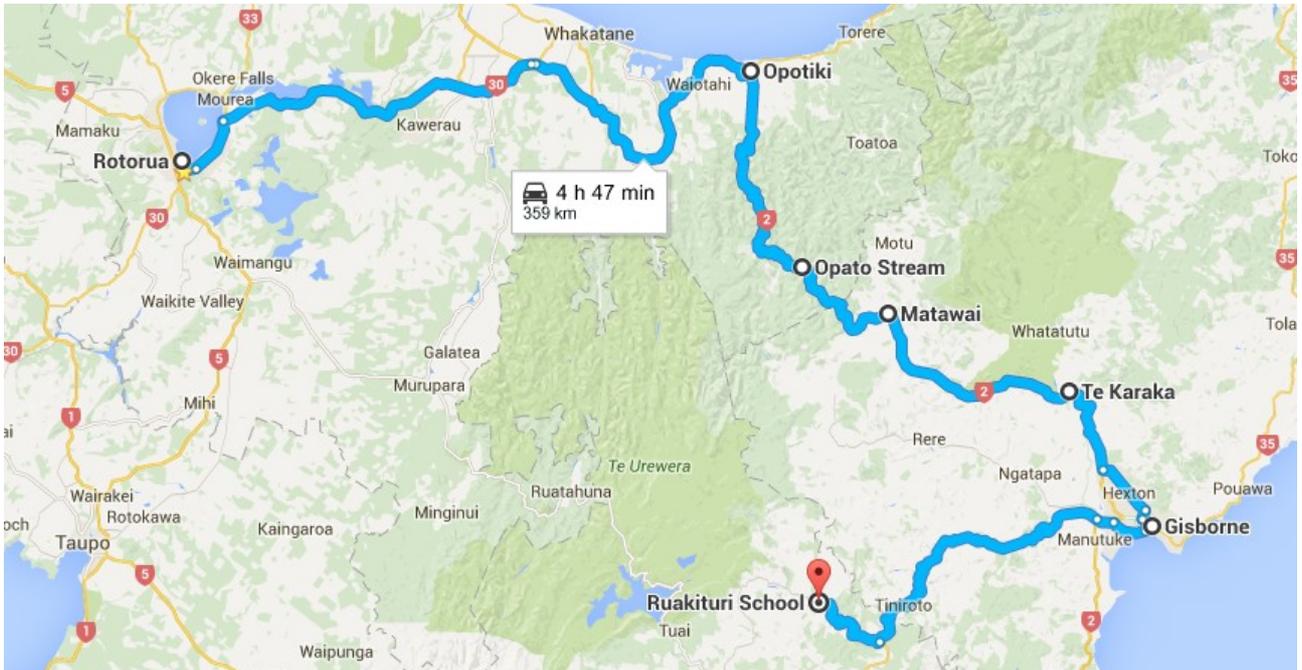
The first stop on our journey across the North Island is Rotorua. We checked into [Fairy Springs Motel](#) which provides cheap, comfortable, albeit spartan accommodation in the shadow of Rotorua's Skyline Gondola.



Lake Rotorua

I was hoping to meet with my friend, [Simon Robertson](#), who had been my fishing guide the previous year (see [Newsletter Nov 2014](#)) but he was out on a river with clients so it wasn't to be. I did manage to speak with him on the phone that evening, however, and we discuss contingencies given the high water level in the Ruakituri. He suggests heading to the Ruakituri via Gisborne and stopping at the [Waioeka River](#) along the way. We also discuss fly choices and rigging, which align very closely with the advice I had received from Lance. Indeed, I receive a text from Lance around the same time recommending we try fishing the Koranga River, a tributary of the Waioeka (see linked map above). That afternoon we had also visited the local Hunting and Fishing store and the fellow there also recommended the Waioeka and confirmed once more our fly and rigging choices. We certainly were not short of advice and the fact that the advice from all sources aligned perfectly gave us confidence in the integrity of it.

SUNDAY 15/11/15 - Waioeka River



By Saturday, Vince was itchy to hit some salt water so he and Jason take the banger and depart Rotorua at some ungodly hour on Sunday morning with a plan to meet with the rest of us at Gisborne later that afternoon.

Jim, John, Brian and I rose at a reasonable hour and, after a nutritious Maccas breakfast, were on our way to the spot on the Waioeka recommended by Simon.

Upon arrival at the Waioeka, we were all impressed with the beauty of the river and the pristine condition of the water despite the amount of rain which had dumped on the region in recent weeks. Unfortunately, the fishing proved very hard and only Brian hooked into a smallish rainbow. Still, the river showed a lot of promise and we had enjoyed our afternoon there. And it was early days yet.

Upon our return to Rotorua the following weekend, however, we would learn from Simon that this was not actually the spot he'd recommended and he was unsurprised we had caught almost nothing there. At this time of the year, the bulk of the fish would be found in the main river and, as it turned out, we were not fishing on the Waioeka as we'd thought but rather the tributary, Opatō Stream. Oh well, mild disappointment at the missed opportunity but lesson learned.



Waioeka River

Meanwhile we meet with Vince and Jason at Gisborne later that day to find they'd had a cracker of a morning fishing for kahawai and kingfish at the mouth of the Waioeka at Opotiki. Small fish but good fun.

After grabbing supplies from the local Countdown supermarket we head to the Ruakituri, arriving just before dark.



When we arrive at the Retreat, we can't believe what a score this place is: a two-storey villa nestled amongst fruit trees with a large backyard descending to the river across 12 acres of farmland. Upstairs via a timber spiral staircase are three large bedrooms with a queen size bed in each and a bathroom. Downstairs is a smaller bedroom with a double bunk bed, a sun room, a living room with a fold out double sofa bed, a dining room, kitchen and laundry. All bed linen and kitchenware is supplied. Our stay here will be very comfortable!

There's also an adjoining garage, perfect for hanging wet waders, boots and other assorted fishing gear.



Ruakituri Eco Retreat

We get settled in and then we are treated to a Vince Special for dinner: marinated pork cooked over an open metho flame. Naturally, it's delicious.



After dinner we break out the map and plan the following day over a whisky or five.



Some hit the whisky harder than others....

MONDAY 16/11/15 - First Contact

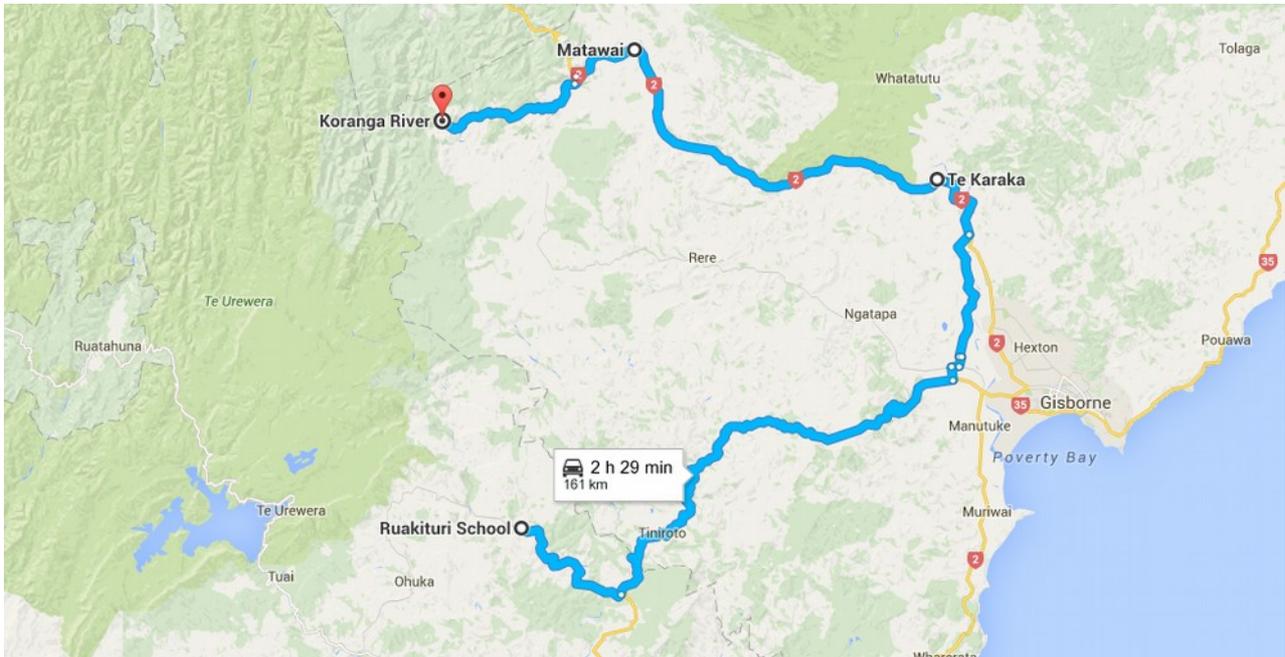
Over the previous couple of days I've kept a keen eye on the [river levels](#) and the [weather forecast](#). Rain was forecast for today and, for once, the prediction is unfortunately correct. We fish through the rain today and it's miserable and unrewarding. The water is running hard and so is the fishing. We'd noticed the colouring of the river the previous day and this rain won't help. In the back of my mind is the knowledge that the river level will drop quickly once the rain stops but this will take 3 to 4 days. We need the rain to stop.

The forecast says there's no rain after today until Friday, from which point it will be a wash out over the coming weekend. We don't care if it rains on the weekend but it looks like later in the week will be our best hope. In the meantime, time to instigate that contingency plan.



That water is running awfully hard!"

TUESDAY 17/11/15 – The Best Laid Plans.....



While we wait for the rage of the Ruakituri to subside, John, Jim and myself go on a scouting trip to check out the Koranga River that Lance had suggested. The access point to the river is at the end of a windy, single lane dirt goat track through a sheep station which is slow going but, hey, this is New Zealand. Life kicks down a gear here - it's part of the reason why we come here. The scenery is beautiful and the slow windy track prepares you for the tranquillity greeting you at the other end.

And "tranquillity" is the perfect word to describe the Koranga River. Whenever somebody waxes lyrical about small NZ trout streams, this is what they're talking about. This is one of those places where it matters little whether you catch fish. It's just a fabulous place to be. It calms the soul.



The beautiful Koranga River

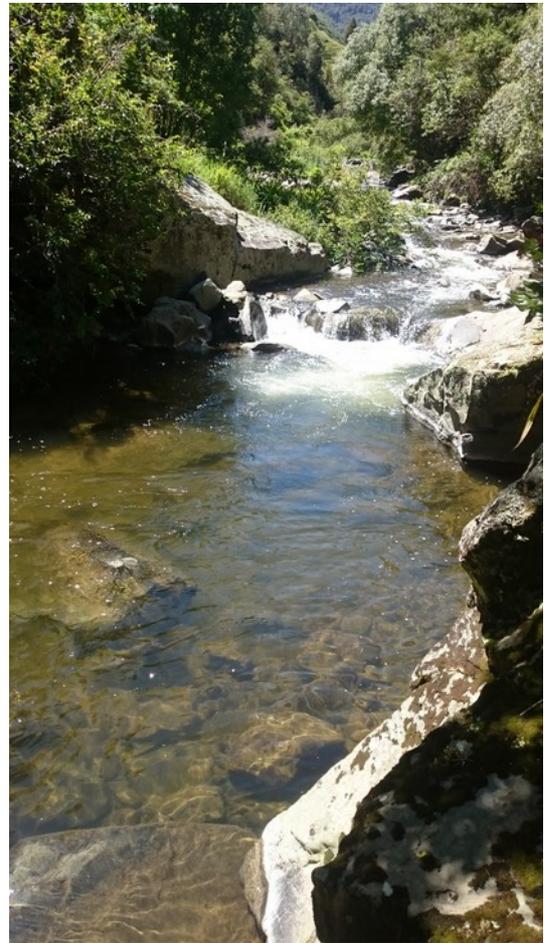
Flowing into the Koranga River is the Moanui Stream. A tiny slip of gin clear water which proves irresistible to us. So we head up it for a kilometre or two and amazingly don't see a fish. No matter, despite that minor frustration, we feel better for it. In hindsight, we probably didn't find any fish in the Moanui for the same reason we struggled in the Opato but we didn't know this yet.

So we head back to the main river and start fishing the drop offs and runs into the afternoon.

I hook into a strong rainbow hen in one of the pools but I play it too hard and straighten the hook on it. It seems the hooks on my flies may be a little on the soft side. No matter, I'll go easier on the next one. A few casts later and I'm into another fish - landed. Awesome, got one on the board!

It's getting late into the afternoon now. We work the river a little more but no more fish are caught and we decide to head home.

It's been a pleasant days fishing. Not a lot of fish caught but the signs are promising, it's a beautiful place and we are in fine spirits. We resolve to return the following day.



The exquisite Moanui Stream

Vince, Brian and Jason also had some success on the Ruakituri and Vince brings home a fish for sushi.

On our return to the Ruakituri I get a message from Jason on my phone: "I think we broke the car." Nooooooooooooo!

WEDNESDAY 18/11/15 - Tie Me Koranga Down, Sport

Wednesday starts with the happy business of calling the hire car company to resolve our vehicular misfortune. They arrange for roadside assistance to come out and assess the situation, so Vince and Jason hold down the fort and wait for his arrival. The mechanic duly turns up, deems the vehicle a tow-away, complains about the drought (Wait! What? Drought?! and removes the vehicle to goodness knows where. Meanwhile Brian, Jim, John and I head back to the Koranga River to continue yesterday's success and praying that the "drought" holds on for a few days yet.

Unfortunately, though, today is not the day yesterday was. It's overcast and the wind rips down the river making casting very difficult indeed. Despite this, John picks up a couple of nice fish late in the day.

Upon return to the house we find that the broken car has been removed but not replaced. There's a message on my phone from the hire car mob asking me to confirm that we actually want the car replaced. Well, hello? Yes!



John's Koranga Rainbow

THURSDAY 19/11/15 - Ruakituri, The Second Coming

Another day begins liaising with the car hire folk. The issue is that they don't have a depot on the eastern side of the island so a vehicle will need to be trucked all the way across the North Island from Auckland Airport - a 7 hour drive! So they want to make sure we really, really want one. I reply in the affirmative and they promise to drop one off later in the day.

Suffering cabin fever from the previous day, Jason and Vince refuse to spend another day in the cage. So Jim and Brian graciously accept the task of awaiting the replacement vehicle while Jason, John, Vince and I hit the river.



A hard won brown.

The water level has not been falling as fast as we'd like but it is clearing so we give it a red hot go and fish are caught. The water is still running hard so heavy tungsten nymphs are required to plummet the flies through the deep, hard running water column and then, once hooked up, a tug o' war ensues to pull the fish out of the fast current. It's a combination which tests tippet and the angler's resolve but when it comes together it's a satisfying result. I broke off more fish than I landed.

Back at the house, however, more car shenanigans were afoot.

A young fellow turned up at the house early afternoon with a tray back truck carrying our Banger Mk.II. Following an unsuccessful attempt to back his truck down the winding driveway, the delivery boy stopped mid way down the drive and proceeded to back the Banger off the tray. Because there was insufficient room to reverse the Banger straight down the ramp, delivery boy had to swing the Banger around on the ramps to avoid hitting the fence and, as a result, dropped the front wheels off the ramp and hooked the front bumper of the Banger over the lip of the tray. Not to be deterred, however, he hops back into the truck and drives it forward, dropping the Banger neatly onto the ground albeit tearing off the bumper in the process. Apparently when the car hire mob said they'd "drop a car off", they really meant it!

Ordinarily we would rightly demand another replacement vehicle but we had already wasted 2 days getting this one and we didn't have another 2 free days in our itinerary to spare. So noting the damage on the paperwork, Jim and Brian sent the lad on his way and proceeded to reconstruct the vehicle with cable ties and wire. In no time at all, the vehicle was almost like new.....almost.

Meanwhile, we have one more day left on the Ruakituri and rain is forecast for tomorrow.....

FRIDAY 20/11/15 - Judgement Day

Today the weather man gets it wrong! Hooray for flawed weather persons!

It's our final day on the Ruakituri and the weather couldn't be better. It's blue skies. Warm sunshine. No wind. The water levels are still at 1.2m which isn't ideal but the water is quite clear so we give it one last push.

The stretch of water we have at our disposal is so long that we've barely scratched the surface of what is available to us. On this most splendid of days, we look to The Map™ for guidance and we choose the Erepeti Bridge, an inviting stretch of water we have been driving past all week.

John and Jim head upstream. John hooks into a great fish with a paddle tail the size of his hand but can't hold it back from the weir-like falls which flow under the bridge. The fish goes over the weir and John breaks it off in his attempt to hold it, leaving him with but a story of what might have been. With a seemingly impassable rock wall upstream (not so, actually, if we'd bothered to consult the map again - there is so much to learn with this river!), John and Jim and I join Jason downstream.



The Erepeti Bridge

I follow a tiny stream entering the Ruakituri from the west, the Mangarewarrewa Stream.

I work my way up this snag-ridden stream, and I lose about 10 flies out of my box before I remember how soft the hooks are. After this realisation, a firm but steady pressure sees my flies dislodge from the snags, ready to be pliered back into shape and cast out again.



The snag-ridden Mangarewarrewa Stream

Working through the skinny, snaggy water and coming up fishless I turn a corner and stumble upon a gorgeous pool. After a few casts towards the head of the pool and drifting it back towards the centre I hook into a good fish. After a brief fight the 62cm fish is landed - skinny as an eel but a good length. It's enough to snare me the inaugural NZ Trip Trophy.



Mangarewarrewa Pool

A few more casts into the pool are cause for some excitement: another strike deep in the pool but no hook up and another large fish which follows my fly over the top of a rock on the tailing edge of the pool before turning tail as my fly is dragged down the riffles below. But there will be no more fish from this pool at this time. I try to reposition to cast further up the pool but the surrounding foliage and submerged snags make an alternative approach difficult.



The NZ Trip Trophy presentation ceremony

We head to another spot downstream from the house where we find the river lined with submerged rock shelves which makes casting into the main run of the river easy. It's not difficult to imagine these shelves being above the water line were the river only half a metre lower and at it's ideal point. We can imagine that, under normal conditions, the river would snake between these shelves creating runs holding fish and would make traversing the river bank very easy. Under these conditions, however, walking the river is difficult and we don't get too far before we encounter impassably deep water. We try dropping some bombs over the shelves, searching for the trout which must surely be lurking there but it's to no avail.

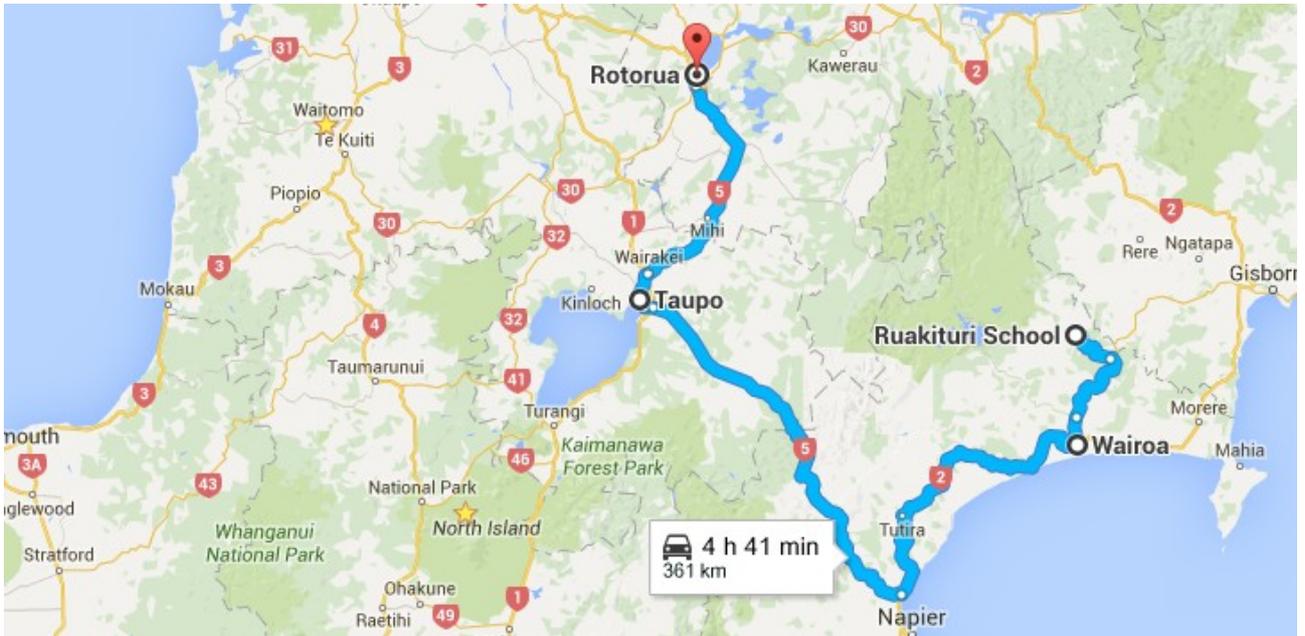


The water level would ordinarily be below these shelves

Scattered over the submerged shelves there are dark circles under the water. At first glance they look like patches of weed or perhaps depressions in the rock filled with the detritus of flood. I poke my rod butt into one and it goes down and down and down. I shudder at the thought of what might happen if I stepped into one - I guess they'd find the body when the flood subsided. I give them a wide berth and watch my step from then on.

Despite the promising nature of this spot it proves unproductive. No matter, we've had an enjoyable morning at the Erepeti Bridge. And with the weather rapidly deteriorating as the afternoon progresses, we retire back to the house to scrub all our gear clean in preparation for our return to Oz.

SATURDAY 21/11/15 – Farewell.....for now.....



With our gear packed and dryish we depart the Ruakituri for another stop-over at Fairy Springs Motel in Rotorua.

For our trip back, we decide to go via Lake Taupo. It's a scenic drive but we do no fishing - a separate licence is required to fish the Taupo region. Instead we check out the local [Wairakei Natural Thermal Valley](#).



Upon returning to Rotorua, I tee up a time to visit Simon and John, Brian and I head to his place, [Wildwood Lodge](#), a beautiful guest house on the shores of Lake Rotoehu. Over a beer we discuss our weeks adventures and Simon is an enthusiastic recipient of our stories. And he imparts much information which will help us on our next trip here. He also suggests another trip we may take in the future into the wilderness area of Te Urewera National Park, the back country from which the Ruakituri flows.....but there's always a river somewhere.

SUNDAY 22/11/15 – Homeward Bound

On the morning of the final day, we pledge to do our own thing. Jim, Jason and I hit the Luge on the mountain behind the motel; John, Brian and Vince hit the town for souvenirs (I think Vince was looking for a pawn shop to hock his pen); before we all head back to Auckland Airport for the trip home. Despite his prior trespasses, Brian is permitted entry back into Australia.



Jason does his bit to keep Rotorua tidy.

Ruminations.....

Fair to say that this trip did not go exactly as planned. We suffered somewhat from vehicular and meteorological misfortunes but the unpredictable weather did force us to push further afield and scout out several fishing locations that we would not otherwise have found. So we did learn a lot more about the fishing opportunities offered by the eastern North Island than we otherwise would have and this will put us in good stead for future trips.

We didn't get to see the Ruakituri in it's full finery, which is unfortunate, but we did catch a glimpse on Friday of what it had to offer and it is very enticing indeed. I'd no sooner left Auckland than began pining for my return to the Ruakituri to give it another crack and I'm already planning when that might happen.

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