



established 1932  
April 2020

# tight lines

Newsletter of the Red Tag Fly Fishers' Club

# 2020 Red Tag

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- President: Barney Stephens
- Vice President: Vin McCaughey
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- Treasurer: Don Amour
- Trip Coordinator: Dan Mamrot
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- Craig Bolch (Development Program)
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- Peter Coles: Trip Planner (Calendar)
- Sean Ehlert (New member coordinator)
- David Honeybone (Library & Newsletter)
- Andrew Rodda (Newsletter Editor)
- Tony Ryan



*Red Tag acknowledges the woi-wurrung and boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin nations on whose unceded land we walk and fish. We pay our respect to the ancestors and elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture.*

## News

### Editorial:

Well; where do we start? Just as the smoke from the bush fires were cleared by driving rain, along comes the greatest global disruption to everybody ever. While club events and trips have been wiped off the schedule, take a moment to look at team app; a site that shows while the club is down, it's not out.

Keep well and safe, by the end of the year, (hopefully), we will all be much better fly tiers, and if you are yet to take up the art, now is the perfect time to start. Also included the usual 'Easter egg' links, perfect for self-isolating.

*Andrew Rodda and David Honeybone.*

*Cover Page: Ian Mitchell's Italian master class. .*

## President's Message

**T**hese are extraordinary times, all of course due to the rapidly unfolding events worldwide that are related to the COVID-19 virus.



I wrote in the last newsletter about the devastation caused by the bushfires in Australia, and the impact they had on communities, bushland and rivers.

Bushfires are something we can see and potentially fight with normal resources, but this new invisible virus has attacked the world with catastrophic results, and fortunately Australia seems to be in a better situation than many other parts of the world, at least for the time being.

Like nearly all organisations we have suspended indefinitely all our club activities. This suspension was not a difficult decision given the available Government information at the time, as the health and well-being of all our members (and their families) is of paramount importance. No crystal ball can tell when activities will return to some semblance of order, but fortunately fish are not susceptible to the virus and will be waiting for us when the time is right.

There's an interesting thread on the Fly Life forum about whether or not it's okay to go out by yourself and have a little flick in a remote stream somewhere. I'd ask us all to seriously consider if this was wise or not. Remember, the advice is, if you don't have to go out, don't.

I have recently returned from a week's fishing in the North Island of NZ.

This is an annual trip I do with 3 others, and I must say we were very lucky to avoid all the cancellations and curfews imposed since our return. We had a great time in the Hawke's Bay region fishing mainly on the Tuki Tuki river.

Not a full report here but suffice to say we put over 120 trout into the nets over the 6 days, with more than that getting off. The usual response we had when asked how big it was, "It's just another 4 pounder".

From all reports the fishing in our local streams has been terrific and it's been lovely to see all the posts on our TeamApp. This platform is proving to be a wonderful way to keep up the communication between members and I'd ask all of you to regularly check it out.

The fly-tying section is becoming a highlight and will move from strength to strength as we all become more socially isolated. If you haven't posted anything on the site, please have a go. It's good fun and not difficult.

Please also maintain contact with others at this time as I suspect the worse is yet to come, and the Internet and our mobile phone will become vital tools to keep us on an even keel.

Let's get through this together.

All the best for safe times until we are able to flick a line together somewhere

Tight Lines 'n Loops

*Barney Stephens*

# Club Trip

## Big River

22-23 February 2020.

Stockman's Reward.

And so, it was that the five travelled out to the upper Big River on a glorious Saturday morning. Some came by more scenic routes than others leaving themselves a mere 40km of diesel to get back to Marysville. Others favoured more direct routes. This notwithstanding Barney, Bernie, Matt, Andrew and I set-up camp, and once leeches were picked off, we drove down to Frenchman's Flat campsite for a bit of a fish. Unfortunately, due to bridge repairs, this was as far as you could go but this didn't seem to matter too much as fish were caught and Rodders got a nice rainbow using Tenkara. We knew fish were about as a camper proudly displayed three plump rainbows on a plate as we walked past his caravan. After a leisurely lunch back at the campsite we split up and Matt jumped in and went upstream. Big River is ironically not too big at this point, but it provided plenty of fish as he returned 3 hours later having caught 18...



The rest of us picked up fish but certainly not double figures. All on a mix of Hoppers and Caddis patterns.

Retiring around the campfire trout were smoked, meat was cooked, trial bikes were cursed, flies were inhaled, and bullshit clogged the air.

Sunday saw Barney, Bernie and Matt leave first thing in convoy as bets were taken on whether the Karcher-mobile would make it to Marysville (it did...fortunately downhill most of the way). Matt went on to catch some more trout on the Steavo...

'No Reels' and I stayed on and we both caught fish. I even broke my Tenkara duck (bit of an accident but they all count). [LOL more than just "a bit" -A.R.]

Cannot recommend this upper stretch of the river enough. It's a bit gnarly in parts but the heavy vegetation and location make for a high fish population. And if you like early starts you could easily do it in a day but would recommend mid-week as the campsites, which are really the only access points, do get busy.

Many thanks to Dan for organising the trip.

*David Honeybone*

# Article



## Dry Fly Master Class Italian style - 21 March 2020

On 21 March, 7 intrepid Red-Taggers ventured out to Buxton to participate in the Dry Fly Master Class (Italian Style). It was for most of us the last chance to get out before the current lockdown. We met up at Buxton recreation reserve. It was an excellent venue for our course, as it is right on the river and has ample open space for everyone to have a cast and keep our distance. We had a little gusty wind, to annoy us, but apart from that the weather was perfect.

The course started with the following brief overview and then a demonstration of the casts we would focus on. Importantly this demonstration was on the river, where it is possible to understand how they work in practice.



### Overview

The philosophy of Italian Casting is to attempt to achieve total mastery of the cast. By mastery we mean precise control of the line, the leader and the fly. This includes:

- The size, speed, and trajectory of the loops
- Where and how we present the fly on the water
- Where and how we place the line and leader on the water.

All of these things together enable us to place the fly where we want, how we want, and achieve a natural the drift of the dry fly. For example, a mayfly will land lightly on the water, a caddis will plop gently, and a hopper might fall with a crash.

The course was divided into two parts, theory and practice on the grass in the morning, then putting it into practice on the water in the afternoon.

## The Casts

There are perhaps 10 different main casts we currently teach as part of the Italian Style of casting, the course focussed on two of these:

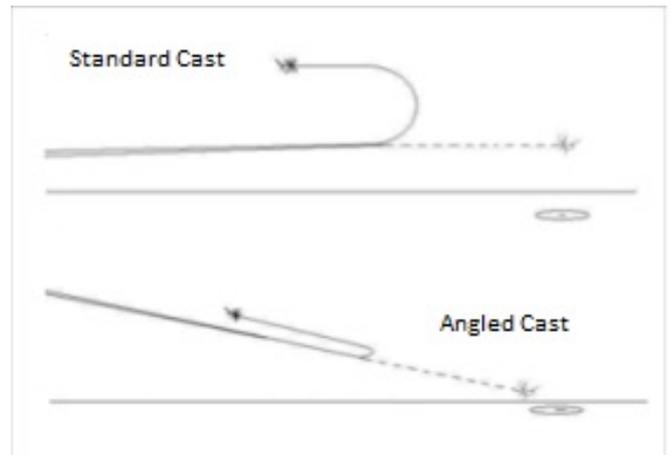
- The Angled Cast
- The Under-the-Tip Cast

**The Angled cast is the foundation cast of all of the Italian style casts.**

It is the cast I practice the most, as the majority of the other casts are variations of this. Until you master this cast, the other casts will elude you.

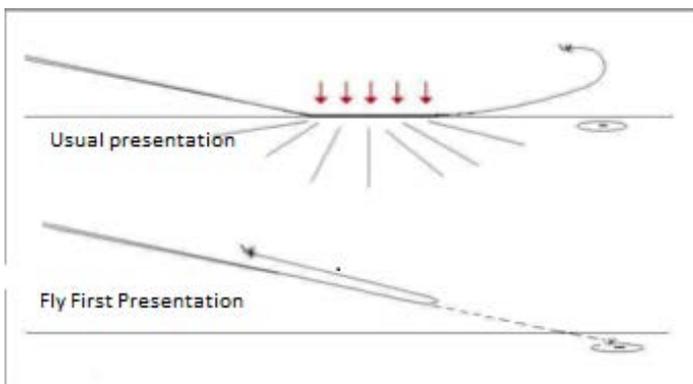
The key features of the angled cast are:

- An Angled trajectory
- A Tight loop
- A fast loop
- A fly-first presentation (with a long leader of course)



In a traditional task, the line straightens or parallel to, and well above the water. In contrast, with the Angled cast, the line and leader extend fully angled down at the water, which makes it possible to have the fly presented first and exactly where and how you want.

In a traditional cast, where the fly is NOT presented first, the line or leader lands first, which can spook fish, and also contribute to immediate drag. With the Angled cast the fly line and leader are at full extension and the fly touches down first. This is more precise and controlled. The presentation can be varied to have the fly touch down softly or crash it on the water like a large beetle or hopper.



A useful variation of the Angled cast is an underpowered or slowed-down angled cast. This can be used to present the fly with a collapsed leader. Imagine you wish to cast the fly to the still water behind a rock. The drag on the fly line will straighten the collapsed leader, but importantly it allows the fly to sit in this quiet water for 10 maybe 15 seconds. Similarly this cast can be used to fish the tail of the pool from the fast water below.

## **The Under-the-Tip cast.**

A variation of the Angled cast, and it is generally used for casting under obstacles. The key features of the Under-the-Tip cast are:

- A lower, angled trajectory
- A loop that passes below the rod tip
- An upside down loop: fly leg is lower than the rod leg
- A Tight loop
- A fast loop
- A fly-first presentation (with a long leader of course)

From these features, the only difference to the Angled cast is that we vary the loop and its trajectory.

With this cast it is possible to penetrate below an overhanging branch or log for up to a couple of metres.

The underpowered variation of this cast, is often used for casting an upstream curve. Often there is quiet water on the other side of some fast water, by placing the fly in the quiet water and the curve on the fast water you can add a precious ten seconds to your drag free drift.



## Practice on the Water



We ventured to an easily accessible section of the Steavenson River. There was already a car there, so we would be following another angler. Not the best fishing situation, however it added a challenge for us. With seven of us on this small stream, it seemed a little crowded, but as a group we worked slowly up stream and then put into practice the casts.

The first section was a little fast water stretch, here the challenge was to present the fly first on a short line, and then steer the fly along the current stream. Bill was third up and his cast and well managed drift was intercepted by a solid fish which immediately headed down the rapid for a self-release.

We found stretches of water to practice the various casts. At one point I think four of us hung up on the bush trying out the under-the-tip cast. Dave showed us all up presenting his fly beautifully under this obstacle. Sadly, we had probably already spooked any trout under this one, so he was not rewarded for his efforts.

Richard extracted a nice brown from under the bridge using an Under-the-Tip cast. I managed to pick up a nice brown from slow water an inch from a big log, on the other side of a rapid. Craig and Dave were unlucky not to convert the few chances they each had.

We all watched as Sam put ten or more casts into a likely looking run, to no result. I encouraged him (strongly) to shorten up and use the Angled cast and control the drift. The first such cast saw him hook a cracking brown that had ignored his previous presentations; a firsthand demonstration of the benefits of the Angled cast and the ease of generating a drag free drift.

Unfortunately Bill insists on using spider-web instead of decent tippet, so his excellent presentation to the slack water on the far side of the last run was wasted when he broke off a solid fish on the strike.

Taking it slowly and working all of the possible holding water we only covered a few hundred metres, however we encountered more than twenty fish, all while following another angler (who may be the person who dropped this rather large weighted fly).

I am looking forward to next season, when we can all get out on the water and I can run a couple more courses for those who missed out.

This Fish...



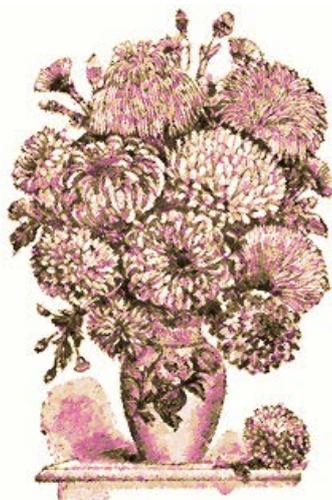
...came from this tricky spot.



*Jan Mitchell*

# Club News

## Vale



### Valerie (nee Eva) Whelan

09/09/1930 — 16/03/2020

A lovely lady, Val passed away on 16 March 2020 after two and a half years in a Bacchus Marsh nursing home.

She was the wife of Barry, mother of David and Jenny (Dec), grandmother to Lauren and a much-loved friend to many.

Val was also a cousin of Fred Eva, who was a member of the Ballarat Flyfishers Club — Val a skilful dressmaker married Barry Whelan in 1958, a union that was to last 61 years.

Barry joined Ballarat FFC in 1965 and was ultimately awarded Life Membership.

During that period, he joined the Red Tag Fly Fishers Club in 1987 and attended Red Tag club casting events at the Yarra Bend Park casting pool on Saturday afternoons.

Barry has been very generous in donating fly-fishing gear to be raffled at the Red Tag Annual Dinner — not only does he donate the prizes, should he win them, he will put the prizes up again for next Annual Dinner.

*Geoff Newman*



### Team App:

With the focus currently indoors, Team App has started to offer some ideas to keep us all from going stir crazy.

Rather than gathering for fly tying, Team App is posting (thanks Dan), The Red Tag Fly Tying Challenge. The first one up is a “Hatching Pupa” with a YouTube link to walk you through it. Members are encouraged to post up their efforts, good or whatever.

# Foreign Correspondent

## Our Man in Europe

It's been a crazy time these past few weeks. My ticket back to Melbourne was booked for next month, but with the evolving covid19 situation I rebooked to leave last Thursday.

On my way to the airport I got word that Australia just announced it would be closing its borders 3 hours before I was scheduled to arrive, and I wouldn't qualify for entry. So, so, so disappointing. I'm stuck in Germany for the time being, but all is well. I'm living in Potsdam, which is outside of Berlin.

Only 60 cases here so far. Everything is shut down and I'm working from home, so things are as good as they can be! Really hoping to get back to Melbourne soon, but I think you guys are a few weeks behind us in terms of the virus progression, and I don't even know when things will get back to normal here. Such a strange time.

Hope things are going well for you!

*Mike Ogden*

**Below:** Alternative design proposal for Red Tag's Fairfield Casting Pool and Club Rooms.  
*(or gratuitous European Fly fishing image totally not related to the above article)*

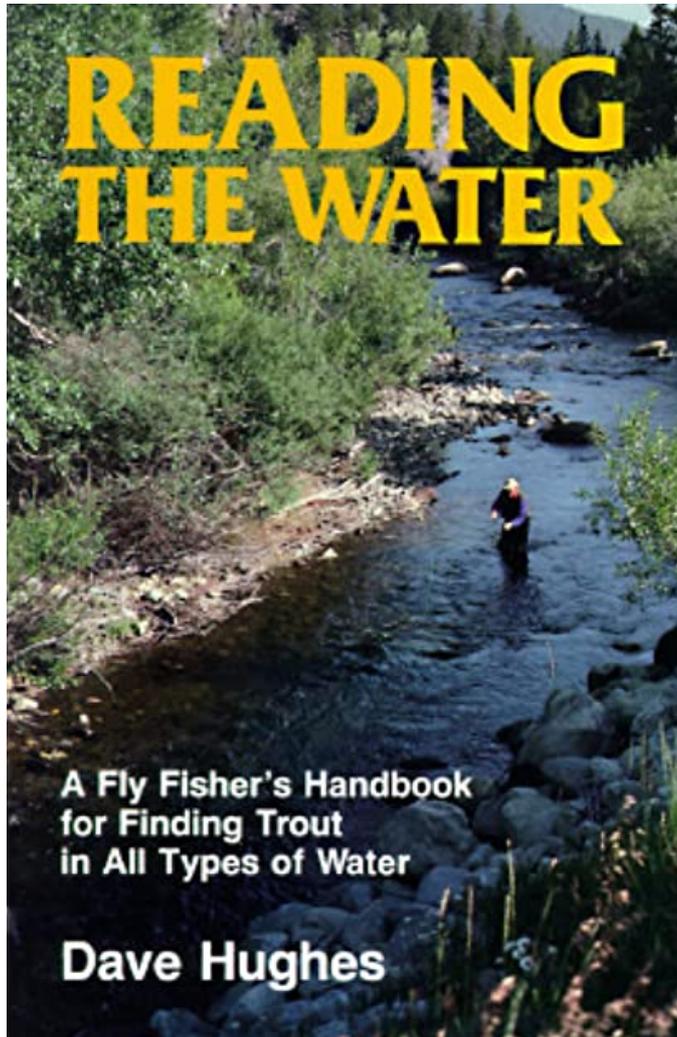


# Library Report

## Reading the water: a fly fisher's handbook for finding trout in all types of water

*Dave Hughes*

Stackpole Books Publisher.



The latest addition to the library is devoted entirely to finding trout. I think this is a first. I have also ordered the Orvis Guide to Reading Trout Streams but that will not be available until June (virus permitting).

About Hughes' book:

“A comprehensive sourcebook for finding trout in all types of water. Covers stream structure, trout foods, and effective flies for riffles, runs, pools, flats, and other water types in small creeks, average trout streams, and large trout rivers.” (Amazon.com)

Biography (Amazon.com)

Dave Hughes is author of more than 20 books about fly fishing. They include the classic Western Hatches with Rick Hafele, American Fly Tying Manual, Handbook of Hatches, Reading Trout Water, the massive reference Trout Flies, Nymphs for Streams and Stillwaters, Wet Flies, and Pocketguide to Western Hatches. In 2014 Stackpole Books published the 2-book set, Tactics for Trout and Seasons for Trout, authored by Dave with Rick Hafele and Skip Morris.

I am also working my way through the many donations made by Barry Whelan and Dennis Smart. Thanks to Dennis we now have an almost complete set of FlyLife magazines as his donations included issues 11 and 13. We just need Issue 7 so if you have any back issues at home gathering dust and are happy to part with them please have a look. It's also worth noting that the next issue of FlyLife will be issue 100, which is no mean achievement given the radical changes to the magazine publishing industry over the last twenty years.

*David Honeybone*

# Reviews

## Pod Cast Review

“The Intermediate Line”

w Jeff Volter, Andy Bolch and Chris Adams

“The Intermediate Line” podcast is a show presented weekly covering all things fly-fishing. Past episode topics have included impoundment Barramundi fishing, New England murray cod fishing, fly tying tips and tricks special and much, much more (even carp fishing!). The three hosts have a certain chemistry with one another that often results in extended off topic rants and jokes, and can quickly descend into rabbit warren after rabbit warren of chaos. Notable guests include Peter Morse, Nick Kniepp, Dean Butler, Pip Clements and Jim Bartschi. The mix of Australian fly fishing legends and other lesser know go getters make this podcast worth a listen. (I would give it 5 out of 5, but I know the level of crassness and general uncouthness will turn away more conservative listeners...You have been warned!)

3.5 Gamechangers out of 5



*Dave Murrell*

## Get in quick

### For Sale

Terry Vallence (not a member of the club) has contacted us with the following items for sale. Please contact Terry (located in Kilsyth) on 0414 622 200 to reserve any items you are interested in. Please do not collect until the current situation is over. Please be patient.

- Sage SP Graphite 1V 6Line 3 3/8 oz. As new \$250
- Sage XP 476 Graphite 111e \$250
- Jarvis Walker \$80
- Creek co Float tube, plus Creek co Flippers \$150
- Modula reel for 6wt plus 3 spare spools all filled with flyline \$80
- Okuma for three wt rod filled with flyline \$30
- Gillies for three wt rod filled with flyline \$30
- Flytying vice (pro rotary) plus a spare \$80
- Fly n Dry (mens) neoprene waders with gumboot bottoms \$50
- Two pairs thigh waders size 10 \$40
- Hodgman waders with neoprene boots size 10 \$80
- Simms wading boots felt spiked soles, plus neoprene velcro gaiters \$60
- Collapsible wading stick, fits in pouch on belt \$20

# And another thing

## The Glossary



*Above: Latest protective fly fishing gear.*

**Nail Knot** - method used to attach a leader or butt section of monofilament to the fly line, and of attaching the backing to the fly line; most commonly tied using a small diameter tube rather than a nail.



**Nariel Creek** – described by Weigall (p 99 2014) as offering “50 kilometres of very attractive pools-and-runs water...” Personally, fished it last year and can vouch for its reliability. Unfortunately, word has it that the bushfires and subsequent rainfall have destroyed it. Let’s hope it bounces back.

**Narrow Loop** - term that describes what the fly line should look like as it travels through the air; a narrow loop can best be described as the letter "U" turned on its side; it is formed by using a narrow casting arc.

*(also refer Ian’s article in this newsletter)*

**Natural** - the fly pattern that attempts to match the natural insect in size, shape, and coloration. *(see also Roy Hobbs)*

**Net** – Another sometimes optional item, that can range from the cheap Chinese tennis racket variety through to bespoke odd shaped timber model with hand woven macramé style fish friendly knots.



**Nippers** - a tool for clipping off mono. The best nippers are an inexpensive pair of nail clippers because of the leverage difference for ease of cutting.

**Nymph** - immature form of insects; as fly fishers, we are concerned only with the nymphs of aquatic insects. *(plural: nymphai)*

**Nymphing** - word describing fish feeding on nymphs; nymphing right at the surface can be difficult to tell from fish feeding on adults, careful observation should tell.



**Open Loop** - term used to describe what the fly line looks like as it travels through the air during a poor cast; caused by a very wide casting arc.

**Orvis:** If you have ever wetted a line or read or watched anything about fishing, chances are these guys have featured in part of it.

**Ovens River** – Described by Weigall (p53-54, 2014) as having excellent reliability from November through to April. Severely affected by bushfire in 2013 but thankfully avoided the same in 2019.

Would recommend the stretch from Harrierville to Bright.

(Weigall, P. 2014, Fly fishing North East Victoria, FlyStream, Melbourne.)

**Oxbow** – a bend in the river or a stream.



*David Honeybone*

Below: Upper Ovens River



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*With thanks for their own going support.*

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'appy snaps via redtag team app.

# KEEP CALM AND TIE FLIES

