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Presidents Report

I am honoured to be the new President as per the recent AGM. I hope I can be as inspiring as many of my predecessors. I think I've inherited a club that is in a good space now. Our numbers continue to be lower than ideal, but we will still punch above our weight for the causes we believe in. Penrith City Council (PCC) has given us permission to rehabilitate the Russell Street riparian zone at Emu Plains with their assistance as needed. Even though Bass Sydney has been involved in various works over the last few years, this big long term project will give us an environmental project we can call our own. Over time, we should be able to see the fruits of our labours in an accessible location in the heartland of Sydney bassing. It will provide a tangible, community-based showpiece of what concerned recreational fishers can do. Thanks must go to Alan Izzard for his efforts in working with PCC to secure permission, Alan Fowkes for providing a technical report/assessment of the area and the other parties that have pledged their support – BMNDAA, HNBA, I&I NSW, Hawkesbury Nepean CMA, Greening Australia and member Ged Delany for getting some of his students from McCarthy Catholic College Emu Plains involved. Alan Izzard will liaise with PCC and we hope that work can commence this winter.

Another bass season has come to a close and my fishing thoughts turn to blackfish for the next 3 months. However, I reflect on this past season and note that I continue to learn about new techniques both for bass and in the salt. I also continue to enjoy learning from the people that I have the pleasure to fish with, experienced anglers or newbies.

I would like to finish my President's message with a welcome to our new members and I hope that we can get mutual benefits by the injection of new blood and energy into the club with the ultimate goal of the betterment of our native fish.

HS Tham

Habitat Forum 2011

Ashley and I had registered to attend this year's Forum in Tamworth. I think Ash's main reason was the opportunity to catch a Murray Cod and I would be telling a porkie if I said that I did not consider that also. We set off from Sydney early Thursday morning with the intention of checking out some likely fishing spots on the way. A slight detour off the main drag at Quirindi led us to Quipolly Dam. There were actually 2 dams, Old Quipolly and the new bigger and a lot less silted one. We drove down alongside the dam looking for access places and then we spotted a sign, No Boating, No Fishing, No Shooting, No Nuthin I guess, a bit disappointing as the dam, though small by comparison, still looked a nice place to paddle on. We pushed on through Werris Creek and into Tamworth. We decided to find the house we were staying in and

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drop off our gear before looking for access to the Peel River. Once settled we set off to first get fuel and then do a spot of Cod bothering. We set off down a street that would take us near to the venue for the forum and also had 2 likely river crossings nearby. The first was totally unassailable but the second at the Cockburn River was easy. We launched and fished for about an hour or so and then gave it a miss, we had come to a small type of weir and the water below was so shallow and the banks very rock strewn that we could see no reason to continue.



Cockburn River

Up reasonably early Friday morning for the first day of the forum and Ash remarked how good it was to be able to sleep in without being jumped on by a couple of kids, unfortunately experience tells me that that finishes all too soon. We made it to the venue quite early and were cornered by a local as soon as we entered the building and registered. Richard, the local, was looking for help regarding his patch of riverbank and was showing pictures to all and sundry. He also mentioned that he allowed access, hmmm, an opportunity here. He ended up on our table and before long we had ingratiated ourselves and scored an invitation for Sunday morning, good work all round.

The forum was a great success, the main speaker, Martin O'Grady, was bloody brilliant, we will go through what he had to say at our next meeting, however I will tell you that he backed up EVERYTHING Bass Sydney stands for, both Ash & I were gobsmacked with his presentation especially with the last 2 bits. He said that it has been proved in Ireland and Europe that stocking rivers is a waste of time and when asked if he thought we should stock brown trout in Australia his answer was "NO". Everything went sort of quiet at that point.

Saturday we decided to avoid the bus trip, figured we had seen and done enough reveg. and that maybe a spot of research into the local cod population was in order. We found a launch spot right near the playing fields in Tamworth and headed upstream for an hour or so and then turned around and headed down. Unfortunately the local cod did not feel the urge to be researched, bugger. Returned to the car and low and behold the buses were there. Les Simshauser was on one of the bus's and said that he had asked about us when he arrived that morning and figured that we must have gone fishing. We pointed out that we were actually doing research, and the thing is we found some sections of riverbank just about ready to fall, about 10-15 meters high and looks like it had been cut with a knife, almost dead straight and 1 single solitary tree. Worst part is, is that it is council land. Oh well, enough research we headed back to the venue for lunch and the finish of the forum. Les mentioned that if we wanted to continue our research he had spotted a couple of good launching spots upstream during the bus trip so we were keen to accept his advice commendation of the work we were performing and set off straight after the forum ended. Researched till dark, cod still of the same mindset, although Ash did get 1 hit near a large log.

Slept in again on Sunday, we had decided to get to Richard's place at 7, but did not get up until 6.45. Quick breakfast and we were on our way. We had pretty good directions but when you have never been to a cocky's place before I always start to worry about the mud map that I have been drawn. Anyway we found the place pretty easy and Richard took us down to his stretch of river, shallow gravelly stretch with one small pool upstream. Trying to cut short the chat we finally got the yaks into the water and set off. Ash remembered that he had left his sunnies in the car and went to retrieve them while I paddle upstream casting a jitterbug. At the top of the pool just below a shallow race there were 4 sticks sticking up out of the water, perfect spot I thought and decided to let ash have a cast there. I decided to re-rig while I waited for him to catch up and tied on the ever faithful 'Chatterbait' in black and blue. Still no Ash. At the dinner meeting on Friday night the local guru, Dave Hodge, said that we should be using stinger hooks. Another 5 minutes stuffing about saw a stinger attached to the chatterbait. Still no Ash. Bugger it I thought I could not contain myself any longer, I had a cast and within 4 turns of the handle I had a sudden heavy weight on the end of the line, pulling me towards the snag. I pretty soon had a small cod around 500mm to the boat. Unfortunately the stinger had found its eye, luckily not in the eye itself but just below. I called out to Ash to come and have a look but received no answer, that's also when I discovered that I had left the camera in the car, too bad I returned the fish and went looking for Ash. He had decided that seeing the pool was pretty small to leave it to me and had gone downstream instead. We fished until about 12.00 with only 1 other fish landed, a small Golden Perch of 390mm, small in comparison to the cod that is. The pools downstream were absolutely magnificent with some of the biggest snags I have ever seen and as you look at the pics. you can see that there will be



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some more in the water soon, some of the banks are so eroded by cattle that it is a crying shame. I don't know how we will ever convince these cattlemen that they are actually losing some of their land every time there is a flood in the river.



Peel River. Note the size of the snags and the condition of some of the banks.
Alan Izzard.

NEWS

Russell St, Emu Plains

Well our application has finally been approved by Penrith City Council and work will be starting soon on our new project site in Emu Plains. Some begging is currently going on as we search for funding for a few essentials. Unfortunately the grant application I submitted a few weeks back was unsuccessful so a new plan is needed as far as funding is concerned.

New Member(s)

We welcome the addition of 4 new members to Bass Sydney Ron Rogers, Trent McMurray John Stokes and Graham Pike. It's great to see a few new members at meetings and I hope you all get something out of your membership with Bass Sydney, I know I have certainly learnt a lot.

Here's a short biography from new Bass Sydney member John Stokes:

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John Stokes

I'm 32, married with a 2.5 year old girl and a baby due early July. Grew up in Grenfell (Central West NSW) and moved to Sydney in 1997 to study mechanical engineering.

Family and friends were predominately bait fishers (with set lines), so I grew up bait fishing creeks, rivers and dams in the Lachlan catchment, catching Golden and Silver Perch, Murray Cod, Catfish, Redfin and innumerable Carp. We were often in a car topper tinny, so the best job was to be the driver, and I had much fun navigating the currents and snags in the rivers to check the lines through to the early hours of the morning - Actually most adults would have been in no state to navigate a vessel anyway... Set lines were allowed in the 80's if you wrote your name and address on them. Even more set lines were allowed west of the Newell Highway, which included our favourite creek... When we did see fisheries inspectors during this period, we were found to be compliant, but have seen people caught using square hooks (gill nets and cross lines) on the same stretch of water.

During the 90's I spent many hours casting lures from the bank, with very very little success apart from 1 Rainbow Trout on lure. Even this was enough to start the drive to acquire better tackle and more lures. However, once I got a full boat license, Water Skiing became my focus.

During 2003, something ignited my interest in fishing and I hiked down to the Cox's River from Blackheath with some mates to catch trout. I learnt there are not too many Trout options around Sydney, but did learnt about Bass and tried the Hawkesbury Nepean landbased at Tench, Delvin's and North Richmond, without success.

Finally in 2009 I caught my first Bass at Lake Glenbawn (350mm Fork Length) and was not disappointed.

Still unsuccessful in Sydney, Ashley offered some advice on a forum. After buying a kayak, I had some success at Tench, but really got it together at the February Hawkesbury Nepean Bass Catch when Ashley provided some Betts Spin Lures and guidance on some new water. It was great to meet other guys and share (listen) to some stories.

I have now landed 12 Bass :)

I still head west to chase Silver Perch and Murray Cod when time allows.



Ed's Fishing Report

Well it's the middle of the year already and the fishing has been getting consistently cooler over the last 2 months in more ways than one.

Unfortunately our outing to the Colo was a little slow, but a great day was had by all despite the numb toes. Congratulations to John for catching the most fish on the day.

With the closed season upon us it's time to give Google Earth a good workout and I'm sure I'll be doing a few bushwalks with the kids over the coming months to find a few likely places to try out when things warm back up. With the discovery of some magic spots already I am well and truly counting down the days til September.

The local estuaries are still producing good fish with plenty of bream hanging around, however some days they are sitting very low so it pays to play around with the depth you are fishing. The salmon are moving in with their typical sporadic bust-ups and there are still a few kings lurking around which are great fun when you're expecting a bream on the end of your line!

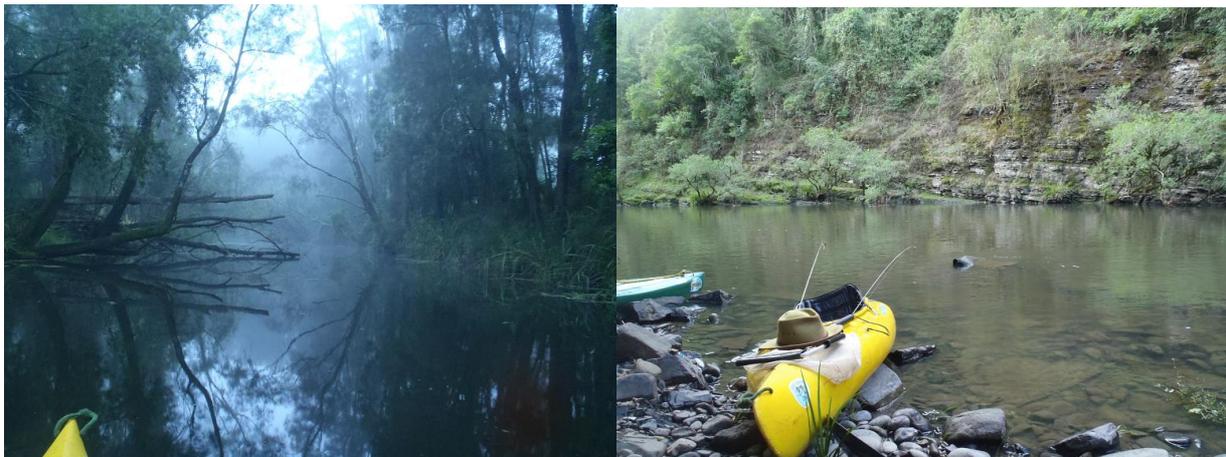
Williams Basscatch

Once again a few keen Bass Sydney members made the trip up to Clarence Town to fish the Williams Basscatch.

We had an enjoyable dinner at the club on the Friday evening and Dave C had some luck in the meat raffle which meant we could once again organise a leisurely breakfast on the Sunday morning. I hope this will become a bit of a tradition (as it's a great way to wrap up the weekend. Thanks to Dave and the chefs for the great feed.

The fishing on the river was good and the flow wasn't too bad this time around, the river was up a little but not too much which was very welcome after the last trip! Once again the sliders did the damage for me and I slowly gained a little momentum after a shocker of a start to end up with a healthy tally of fish. There were even a couple of encounters with the elusive 30+cm Williams River Bass, a few of which had me in the sticks instantly.

I managed to sneak away early on the Sunday morning as well for a quick trip up sneaky creek which was looking great with a little more water in it. One guilty look from me as I returned told Garnet exactly where I had been, I think that's the last time he's going to show me one of his creeks!



Ashley Thamm, Editor



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End-of-Season Trip to the Manning

On my season-long quest to break my pathetic PB, it was easy for me to be convinced to go on a end-of-season bassin' trip to renown Big Bass waters of the Manning R. Ron Rogers did the convincing and says that it's the site of his best 3 or 4 best ever bass. I had never bassed the Manning River before and I was looking forward to it.

The plan was to get to Ron's place early Saturday morning and leave in his vehicle for the Manning. He had arranged for a property owner to ferry us to our launch spot and drive Ron's car back to the property where we'll be taking out. We planned to overnight on the river on Saturday night.

The weather intervened! A week before the trip, the weather forecast was for rain all weekend. Ron was desperate to get a trip in before he hangs up his bass rods until next season and I was desperate to break my PB so we decided to go ahead with our plans and see how we go. However, we had to modify our plans when we got there, confronted by ugly weather. We decided to abandon our plan to camp overnight and just fished around where he intended to take out.

That property had great access to the river so we finally launched around 1:30pm. Conditions looked very tough for a couple fo desperate bass fishos. According to Ron, the river was up by around 2ft from its "normal" level and it was flowing very well. It also had a bit of colour in the water, but lure visibility was quite OK. The weather was very wet, with cool southerly winds and cool water temperatures. At least the barometer was above 1015, but was very slowly dropping when I checked at 4:30am, before leaving for Ron's place.

We launched just above where the river splits into 2 channels – the larger southern channel and a smaller northern channel. Our modified plan was to go down the southern channel and return via the northern channel. When we've done that, we were to continue upstream of the launch spot to the top of that large pool and fish it until dark.

Ron about to head down the southern channel (on the right)



On went our rain gear and with the yaks loaded with our fishing gear and some food & drink. It was far cry from what I thought we'd be doing. In the week or so leading up to this weekend, Ron helped me to install some bungee straps on my yak so that I can fit more stuff for an overnighter. I spent a few days trial packing the yak until I managed to fit everything in & on the yak. This will be interesting, I thought! I have never overnightered out of my yak in all the years I've

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had it. Thought often about it, including a couple of times in the last season, but none of those trips happened. If nothing else, I learnt a fair bit about it and am prepared for next time. The trouble with me is that my camping gear is all cheap and not light nor compact. I also learnt that, for kayak trips, its better to have a few smaller dry bags instead of 1 or 2 larger dry bags (I have a 30L & a 20L dry bag). I was very interested in seeing how the yak felt after loading all the stuff in, including stuff on the yak, secured by the bungee straps. The centre of gravity is going to be higher and it may be easier to roll!

Back to the fishing! The higher than "normal" water flows and moderately discoloured water presented its own challenges. I made what turned out to be an inspired lure choice when I clipped on a large, white tandem spinnerbait with an added SP trailer. No trailer hook. It is much larger and heavier (I think it was a $\frac{3}{8}$ oz) spinnerbait than the small ones I like using. I thought it would get down in the flowing water quickly and be flashy enough to attract attention. If that didn't work, I was going to finesse with crankbaits and maybe even soft plastics.

Not long after starting, I had the first touch of our day. I got a little bite and saw a 30cm+ fish flash off after giving the lure a smack. At least I got a response I thought. Not long after that, I landed the first fish of our day. It was a healthy, well-conditioned fish of 40cm total length, so I guess it was around 38cm FL. Ron was using his favourite WTD lures and a diver I think.

My 1st fish of the day (Pic: R. Rogers)



Ron on the board with his 1st

Ron with a 40cm Total Length fish



About 10minutes later, I landed my second, another fish in good condition, going about 32cm FL. Ron soon switched to a large, single willow spinnerbait with a SP trailer, instead of a skirt. Pretty soon, we were both on the board with Ron landing one similar to my 2nd fish. I went up 3:1 when I got my third bass, around the mid-30's.

Over the next couple of hours, Ron soon caught up and we were 3 each. He managed to drop a fish on a WTD while I had no success at all on WTD's or buzzbaits. I also got one on a crankbait, the ol' Stumpjumper.

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We got to where the 2 channels met and then we turned up the northern channel. Ron moved ahead on the fish count when he got his 4th fish, a beautiful specimen that was identical in length to my 1st one, 40cm TL. I went on a quiet period until we got to the top of the pool we launched in. It was approximately 500/600m upstream of our launch. There was a rapids and bunches of rocks. It looked very fishy and is a spot favoured by Ron, but this time, with the higher flow, we could not stay in position under the rapids. We continued to fish the edges. On the stretch below the rapids I landed another 2 fish on the large spinnerbait, moving me ahead 5:4.

Moving up the northern channel –



Ron hooked up again in the northern channel -



Portaging up a section of the northern channel



Paddling towards the head of the launch pool



Jitterbug fish –



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It was getting dark and I gave up fishing for a while while I paddled downstream towards Ron. As we got close to our launch site, it was pretty dark and the water got shallower and moving a little quicker. I started fishing again, trying a buzzbait on a spin outfit and had a jointed Jitterbug on the baitcaster. I switched the Jitterbug to my spin rod as it was easier to cast in the dark. Earlier, I had a splashy hit on the J-bug, but no hookup. About 50m from our takeout spot, I finally landed a J-bug fish, a nice specimen around the mid-30's. This fish had 3 goes before hooking up. I could hear the hits – a boofy/sucky sound, but on the 3rd attempt, it hooked up solidly. My final tally, 6, all between 32/33 & 38cm and in geat condition.

Soaked to the skin, it was cold as we packed the car again for our return trip. In retrospect, we should have stayed in town somewhere (eg. Taree or Wingham) in cheap accomodation so that we could fish again the next day, but we didn't. It was a long day for an arvo's fishing, but I enjoyed it. My quest for a new PB will have to wait for next season !

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Northmead Bowling Club.

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