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Presidents Message

Firstly, thank you to Alan Izzard for the last 2 years, being President again. We really do appreciate all you do for the club and hope you stay on for many more years to come. I've still personally got a lot to learn from you! A thank you goes out to all the committee members for their efforts they put in the club for the last and coming two years.

For me this is a first. I've never been President of a club before, but when I got asked to do it, there wasn't much hesitation—I love the club, what it stands for and what we do. Also the committee members who stayed on and the new ones joining made it an easy choice to put my hand up for the task.

Unfortunately Bass season is over for a few months. I didn't get to go 'Up North' for a fish as I would've liked, but still managed to upgrade my PB (not hard to do when it was 356mm, but I was stuck on it for 2 years and wanted to crack the 400 mark!) During the Christmas break my local river produced 2 fish just over the 370 mark just within 2 days. So 374mm is now my PB. At the moment I'm just going out every Sunday morning for a saltwater fish somewhere around Sydney. It's already a good start to the winter season—patiently waiting for the Sambos to start playing ball! If you have a spare Sunday morning and want to go for flick, send me an email and we'll catch up on the water somewhere.

What's new:

- John Stokes and Matt Mc. Hugh have been working really hard and spending a lot of spare time in putting a new website together. There's a few things that need to be finalised and tweaked to get it to work properly, but you will see the results soon. We'll sent you all an email when the new site goes live.
- We're going to do a photo competition. More details in this battler (awaiting Jasons reply he's going to sent it to you Pete but has trouble with his computer and internet.)
- A planting and fishing day has been organised already for November. This is our Lane Cove river Bass catch. Matt Mc Hugh has been in contact with Daiwa and they have kindly donated a rod and reel combo for a lucky participant! Some caps , Lanyard and stickers as well.
- We're also looking into working closer with Bents basin conservation area. More info will follow.
- We'll have another big Raffle for members only. The first prize is a custom made DUSK rod up to the value of \$350 with a Shimano Stradic Ci4 2500 thanks to BCF Bankstown. Tickets are \$2 each and can be purchased at any of our club events (see Rico) this is only for club members.
- Next meeting is Tuesday 13th of June. After the meeting Matt Mc Hugh is going to show us how to maintain your valuable reels yourselves. So come on down to the meeting room at the Northmead bowling club. Meeting starts at 730. Hope to see you there.

That's it for now, Stay safe, wear a life jacket!

~ Rico

Outgoing Presidents Message

The 2016-2017 season has been a reasonable one. Membership has decreased a little with some guys moving on to other pursuits . The new committee might have to think up some kind recruiting drive if we are to maintain the club going forward. Russell St. Regen. is still going well despite the low numbers of members attending, we are nearly at the stage of just maintenance, very little planting to be done in the future. Attendance has been pretty good at most club events, including the closed Bass season events where we had Luderick and some other salt water events. Next seasons calendar is looking pretty good as well, hopefully we will maintain or increase attendance at these events.

It appears that we now have a good relationship with the NP people at Bents Basin so if members are prepared to do a little bit of cleanup work there we can possibly get free camping for a weekend or maybe 2 during the year. Just goes to show that if you are prepared to work with them they are prepared to reciprocate, just like at LCR.

I would like to thank all members for their continuing support and especially the committee men for taking on the roles that are so important to keep the club moving forward.

~ Alan Izzard

Bass Sydney Photo Competition

Hi members—after some nice pics circulating from recent fishing trips we've decided to run a monthly photo competition open to all members. You are encouraged to get involved and submit one photo per month. Photos can be of anything fishing related and do not need to include Bass so be as creative as you like. There are a few rules:

- Photos must be from the current season only (from April 2017 onwards)
- No Bass photos to be entered during closed season (May 1 to August 31)
- One photo per member per month

All entries to be emailed to Jason at mcmasterj@tradies.com.au and the Committee will decide on one winner each month and will be published in the Battler. Each monthly winner will then be considered for the Photo of the Year to be voted on by all members before the 2018 AGM. The winner will receive a great prize (to be confirmed soon). We look forward to seeing some great pics!!

Cheers,
~ Jason

The Editors Message

Guess who's back? Back again? Pete's back....tell a friend! The Editor in Chief is back on the Battler with a renewed vigor and always plenty of stories to tell! Thanks to Damien Balfour for carrying the torch for the past 2 years. It's not an easy job, especially when contributions are often at times quite low. My aim is to try and make the Battler more exciting and engaging for people to read. Perhaps sharing this with other clubs or people may also spread the word of the club and encourage membership. Something to discuss at the next meeting perhaps! Anyway, I'm excited to be back in the role and although I may be mostly absent from club meetings and events, this is one way I can contribute to Bass Sydney. I hope you enjoy this edition and the many more to come.

Cheers,
~ Pete

An Irish Friend Visits!

Millennium memories & LCR paddle, possum and panic!

- Damian Balfour – Dec, 2016.

I got some good news late in November 2016, an Irish friend of mine, Paul, was dropping in on Sydney for five days and nights and needed an abode to welcome. His schedule was tight, what with visiting one of his brother's here in Sydney for motorbike trips and gourmet lunches then attending Melbourne for another brother's wedding, all at fairly short notice. We had a few days for some fishing and sightseeing but not much time. I'd first met Paul at the millennium celebrations in Auckland, N.Z. We were at a crowded pumping pre-millennial house party at the foot of One Tree Hill – famous for its, one wind-swept, leaning tree – an iconic image, so much so U2 sang about it on their Joshua Tree album. As midnight approached there was a slow exit from the house as a line of partygoers snaked up One Tree Hill, carting up more booze and keeping upright, anticipating magnificent views of Auckland city, fireworks and harbour.



I had my kilt on and was flashing less salubrious views but it didn't seem to matter, as the millennium tic-tocks into existence and we'd be the first in the world to see it. Accompanied with much grog and song, the clock struck midnight on Hogmanay for the year two thousand, the millennium party-bug 'us' were in full force apparently and we didn't care for consequences - cest la vie, the Y2K bug never showed up. It wasn't just us that was atop 'One Tree hill', there were Aucklanders, One Tree Hill locals and a variety of backpackers had also ascended and all were faced with the enveloping cloud and drizzly rain. To me it felt like Scotland, where weather breaks rather than makes an outdoor occasion. Eleven thousand one hundred and twenty-two miles I'd travelled and it was a Scottish night type experience; what had I'd flown twenty-seven hours for? We partied into the wee small hours on top of 'one tree hill' where a single security guard stood in defence of the tree as I remember. At some point, drunken fatigue and gravity dragged us back downhill, to beds which were fallen into, love was in the air if you were lucky or not fussy and by late morning we'd mostly surfaced and were hungover. Auckland's summer redeemed herself with bright sunshine and heat – a strange phenomenon for me, it being the first of January and having summer weather. The wet outdoor decking area dried up quick and the smell of summer rain, plants and wood mingled with fresh fruit punch, beer and bar-be-que, giving us a lift in time for the Northern hemisphere's turn at New Year. Time difference was fourteen hours and we resumed celebrations at mid-afternoon, we made the most of it. We were miles away

from any Irish Furth or Scottish Ben but we had our one tree hill, joyous at being somewhere special for the millennium.

It was at this point I could've suggested to Paul to go fishing:

- it would be great, I urged,
- we'd use pilchards and squid, I said,
- float fish from the wharf for kingfish, I instructed,
- it would be brilliant, I boasted.



Paul said “maybe later”. He'd never been fishing and after all the partying we'd just had, fishing wasn't quite the thing: squid and pilchards – meh, waiting on a bite – no thanks!

I'd been in Auckland barely a month, getting established after deserting the UK's second largest city – Birmingham. Busy finding work, accommodation and finding my feet. Already I'd been fishing for Kingfish though. Which was a new and exciting species for me. I'd been directed to Orakei wharf, opposite from Kelly Tarlton's Sea Life Aquarium on the Auckland harbour in view of a volcano - Rangitoto Island. I thought all this was amazing and I'd actually hooked and played two kingfish from the wharf – getting busted off when it went under the wooden pylons. Later, Paul and I did go fishing and Paul landed his first fish while float fishing, it was a small 'yakka', or possibly a Striped Trumpeter: it was small, a tiddler – but hey, it's a fish and a first. Celebrated the occasion with a photo. I've seen that photo framed on his mantelpiece at home, size doesn't matter apparently.



Well, now in Sydney, we had to quickly formulate an angling outing: our options were Black-fishing from the rocks, casting soft plastics and vibe blades in Botany Bay for Flathead or Aussie Bass fishing at Lane Cove river (LCR) in the Lane Cove National Park (LCNP). I wanted to do all three, but time didn't allow. There is much to tout when it comes to LCR, I've taken several friends there for an experience of Sydney that's quite different: kayaking there on the river, gives an experience of bushland and all from within the city – when its quiet on the water it feels like you could be miles from any city. LCR can be mostly quiet from cars and other city noises - bar the overhead planes

unfortunately. There's gum trees, flowers, water dragons, flying foxes, sulphur crested cockatoos, lizards, goannas, maybe an eagle and that's only what's above the water. Subsurface there's nice plump Australian Bass, big thick mullet, silvery herring, long and not too shy eels, turtles bobbing at the surface and leaping, crashing carp – 'leaping' being about one of their few redeeming features. I put the 'word' out for the generous loan of a kayak and got a very positive response, I also wanted it for two outings – so I was pushing my luck.

We arranged with Doug to borrow his kayak and as time on Wednesday got tighter he even delivered it to the water's edge at Cottonwood Glen picnic area inside LCNP. This practical help got us on the water mid-afternoon and much quicker if we'd gone past his house. Traffic in Sydney was its usual self and all plans were subject to lengthy delays.



Paul, although fished before - was a tad rusty, he's familiar with kayaking but new to combining both. So, after a quick overview and rundown on kayaking, fishing, launching, paddling, casting and retrieving combination: we set off, knowing that the two-minute theoretical will gel with practical application, commencing sooner rather than any later – we pushed out from the bank, thanking Doug for his help, his kayak and his paddle – we headed upstream.

Overhead the sky grew thick with cloud and it hung low, it was a touch humid, muggy and spots of rain threatened us with a likely deluge. LCR looks quite different when the sun is hiding, the afternoon light being dull and the air clingy, rain spitting and thunder brewing. Wildlife was thin on the ground, not so many water dragons, less sulphur crested cockatoos, tall gum trees looked less majestic with only a cloudy white background. LCR certainly looks less exciting when the weather is hinting tempestuous.

With a few practices at casting into open water we established that overhead casting was most accurate, the bail arm on the reel needs to be open for casting and closed for line retrieval, let the jigspin sink and retrieve at a fairly slow rate feeling for the spinning blade vibration. Thrashing the bankside vegetation with jigspins and lures adorned with treble hooks was deemed unproductive and time consuming. Keeping a hold of the paddle was deemed advantageous. To save time lost on lure retrieval from trees we opted for 'better kayak positioning' and 'shorter casting' into the snags: Paul's accuracy and growing confidence at casting the was quick and within ten minutes he was lobbing the jigspin into gaps in snags and edging closer towards the bases of tree stumps – the ideal spot.



We were in a bit of a quandary, to push up stream and miss out on fishing time, or fish nearby and miss out on opportunities further up. We were chancing the weather and hoping for the best. The waterway was mostly abandoned, no other anglers and the usual abundant wildlife had taken shelter. Wildlife was hiding, our angling attempts weren't producing any fish.

We tried several snags, sunken logs, weeds, shaded areas, undercut embankments and the edges of low lying foliage. And not a touch. So, there was a dilemma I was struggling with and it was this. Do I push on and try for a Bass in one of the snags? That way Paul would get to see what an Australian Bass looks like. He'll know that there's fish here. He'll have more confidence in these strange lures we're using, the jigspin. Paul hadn't fished with lures much before and didn't look to be convinced by them. Or should I hang back and not spook any, and get Paul to try the snags that had the biggest potential and hopefully he'll hook-up on the undisturbed water with a 'first cast'. By now it was becoming obvious that the Bass were not ravenous – if they were there at all? In the end, I reconciled the dilemma with a bit of both, trying one side of the snag myself and leaving an area untouched for Paul. I was really keen for Paul to get a fish, even if it was a small Bass: he'd get to see a native fish and it'll prove his efforts at paddling, positioning, casting and lure retrieving were good enough, he wasn't doing much wrong, he was going well in such a short time - he deserved a hit. His casting fell a foot or two short most times - but that's okay as it meant he wasn't pulling the jigspin out of tree

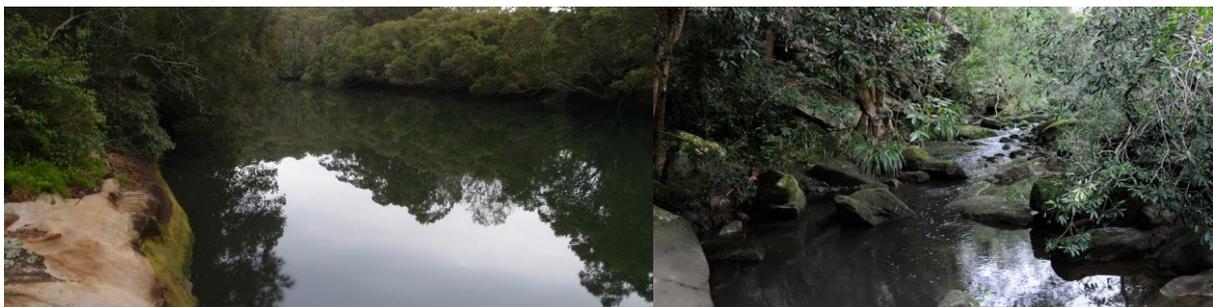


branches or getting tangled up in those fine hair roots that lie flush against the bank. There were some leaf litter in the water but even they weren't in the way. We approached a big thick grey trunk of a fallen gum tree, that was horizontal in the water. The solid tree had fallen into LCR and swung round, its many branches pointing downstream – going with the flow. The base of the tree and some

of its roots were still entangled in the bank, a nice deep alcove had formed with bankside vegetation growing up and over casting shade. So, this was another of those optimal snags that should hold a Bass – but we'd been here before with others and little sign of fish – still I was hopeful, offering encouragement and enthusiasm – bordering on annoyance I'm sure, as I tried to convince and convey anticipation. Paul was probably still in some state of jetlag and it might have felt like 4am. I pointed out where to cast and by now he was getting the idea. His cast fell short, he let it sink and then retrieved – nothing. His next cast was better, still short and still nothing. Third cast sent the jigspin into the alcove area much better and it plopped in, again Paul let it sink, flicked the bail arm and started to retrieve, he was well out of the alcove and the jigspin was still retrieving deep when quite suddenly the braid tightened up and the rod bent over and juddered, Paul was winding steadily and kept the braid taught, keeping tension on the rod and line, winding but the reels drag let out a bit of line, the fish kept deep and arced around the front of the kayak. Paul was getting turned and towed somewhat. At this moment, I felt it was important to inform Paul that he had a fish on – in case there was some confusion – there wasn't. Paul played it well, a nice plump Bass and a good size for his first. I paddled up parallel and scooped up the Bass into the landing net – I wanted it safely landed, not dropped. I was surprised and pleased and relieved at the same time, it was a nice fish and worthy of a photo. Paul's first Bass and it measured 300mm (tail fork length). He did well!



We fished on for a while and continued upstream, before turning around and heading for Cottonwood Glen. It was getting late, park would be closing soon and the rain felt only minutes away. We approached and glided into shore only to be met with a long tooting of the horn from LCNP Ranger's jeep, as he blasted away calling 'time' on our fishing. As we were still in our kayaks and low in the water, the ranger couldn't see us approaching. Obviously, we would be cutting it fine and as the ranger drove off without seeing us, we hauled the kayaks out of the water, carrying Doug's kayak carefully up to the car and mines, well it got dragged. We loaded up 'chop-quick' and had the kayaks mounted on top of each other, strapped down securely and got going, panic stifled until we got outside the LCNP gates before lockup time.



We packed everything away and drove up to Doug's house through the rain and the fading light and returned his kayak – in pristine condition and metaphorically bloodied by Paul's first Bass 300mm FL. It was now dark. It is with great appreciation from Paul and myself for the help from Doug that day, I think he also advised us to fish up stream – good call.

On Friday, we returned and revisited LCNP early, this time Andre kindly offered his kayak and we collected it that morning. As a bonus, I meet his darling baby daughter, bright eyed and beaming a big smile. The smile was as bright and fresh as the weather – quite different to Wednesday's weather. Now it was blue sky and wispy cloud, warm sunshine and a much brighter day. We launched at LCR weir, viewed the stone fish-way and its run-in/feeder stream - all looked clear of flotsam or rubbish and then we paddled up stream. It was a much warmer start to the day, but shaded areas of river still had surface mist curling and hanging around, we got beyond the boatshed and had a few casts in likely places. It was nice and my anticipation was high. The foliage and scenery certainly looked brighter in the sunshine and there was no thought of rain. It was going to be sunny and hot.



I managed one very small Bass of about 120mm and that was it, we paddled our way upstream as far as we could go, up to the last wide pool just before De Burghs Bridge on the A3. Along the way we paused and fished for mullet as there were schools of little fry leaping and skirting across the surface 'en masse', there was the occasional mighty splash-crash of a carp but despite their presence we weren't hooking anything. We arrived and Paul stretched out, closed his eyes and rested on the sandy beach, a break from the kayak. The large pool was deep and quiet except for ducks, little wind, and soaked in sunshine. We quenched our thirst. I set up the carp rod outfit in a forked branch rod rest and cast out the float with bread for bait. The rod was at right angles to the bank pointing up and out towards the middle of the pool. Not expecting anything from the carping so soon, I picked a Bass rod and waded across the shallow sandbar at the pools exit to cast from the other side. I casted around with a surface 'cicada', focussing on the half-submerged log there, but again to no avail. Paul had closed his eyes and was resting on the sand, snoozing momentarily, ignoring the drone of vehicles as they crossed De Burghs Bridge high above. I made my way back to our 'taking it easy snooze spot' and lo and behold I couldn't believe it. My carp rod was balanced precariously in the rod rest, now it was horizontal to the rod stand, cross shaped, the rod butt was level with the rod tip and the whole setup had rotated on its own axis, it was now pointing directly upstream towards the overhanging bushes. The braid was stretched out tight and disappeared into the bush. The reel was spooled! I alerted Paul and started to wind in tentatively, quickly the tension in the line disappeared as the float got dragged out from the bushes across the surface. and everything came winding back minus the hook, I was disappointed. Something had taken the bread and run upstream with it: a carp, a mullet or an eel possibly. The drag being set light enough, had let the mystery fish run unhindered until of course it run out of line. Then it must have applied tension enough to snap off the light leader. I asked Paul why he hadn't heard the reels' drag singing zzz'd zzzzzz'd zzzing, but in his defence, he was resting and the traffic's monotonous drone above was loud enough to camouflage any drag sounds. All this had happened in the short time when we'd arrived – who'd have thought it? Not!! I was a bit deflated at this occurrence but we had to start making our way back down stream to the weir. It remains a mystery. It was getting hotter and there wasn't much wind. We tried a few spots on the way back and I got a surface hit twice from a spot inside an upright slither of rock that had a narrow channel of water between it and the overhanging rock cliff. This was midday and about the only fish activity we saw, two surface hits with a momentary hook-up, my line was on the rock and the Bass dropped off.



I proposed finding another beach downstream and beryling up for carp again, but by now it was hotter and the prospects for fish looked bleak, Paul was a realist and probably had had enough. Wildlife was a bit more abundant and the scenery was nicer, we had a decent paddle back to the weir and on the way Paul spotted something I'd never seen before. We were paddling past a protruding tree branch stump, well above the water level, Paul looked at the rotten trunk and at its end was a fluffy end to a Davie Crocket hat – a tail. Even though it was quite camouflaged, Paul's jetlag had vanquished completely and he was alert, sharp as a tac – spotting a marsupial in the tree, a possum sleeping peacefully. We paddled back and forth quietly, getting a closer look and a few photos. Possum hiding in a tree, sleeping. Possum crawled further in when we'd hung around for a while.

Much thanks to Andre and Doug for the generous loan of their prized kayaks, we had a great time and a fantastic experience. Paul said he loved it and thought it was a great way to fish and see wildlife, a good craic. He says we're lucky to be able to do it all year round. At his home in the west coast of Ireland, Sligo, kayaking would be great but mostly a summer thing. Still, I've seen some Irish loughs and it'd be a great way to fish for pike, trout and salmon.



I know Doug and Andre would be welcome in Sligo, Paul would put you up and there's fishing to be tried in the freshwater loughs and estuaries. It's also WB Yeats country and quite romantic, suits partners and the like.



The Fisherman by W. B. Yeats (1865-1939)

*Although I can see him still,
The freckled man who goes
To a grey place on a hill
In grey Connemara clothes
At dawn to cast his flies.....*

Late Season Impoundment Bass – Peter H

With the Bass season now officially closed, the only place to chase our beloved Bronze slabs are in the inland impoundments. I was invited along to a trip at Lake St Clair near Singleton in the Hunter Valley. It was late April, and I had suspicions that the Bass had started to school up deep given the change of weather and the arrival of much cooler mornings and nights.



After launching the boat and to much surprise the water temp was still a very balmy 21 degrees! This led to me deciding to target the edges rather than to try and find schools in deeper water. I started off with a Jackall Mask Vibe, I thought the more subtle presentation minus the rattle might be more effective for this time of year. I tied on the same lure colour in a TN60 for my Dad with a rattle so we could work out what mood the fish were in. We sat the boat in about 20ft of water and started to pepper likely looking shorelines. It didn't take long before Dad had a hit and miss! This was still very encouraging so early into the session. About 5 minutes later a little further down the bank, Dad was hit again, this time the fish stuck, "I'm on" he yelled, as he frantically turned the handle on his reel and the fish bounced on the end of his line -- the Kistler Custom rods blank easily absorbing the aggressive lunges we all love that Bass are famous for. I helped net the fish and we both turned around to each other and said "they're on!" It didn't take long before my Mask Vibe was engulfed and I too landed a very healthy Bass. For the next 2 hours we picked up a number of fish, mostly off banks that had some rocky rubble features and weed beds sitting just off them in the deeper water.



As the sun started to set, I wondered to myself whether there would be a surface bite this far into autumn. I tied on my trusty black jointed Jitterbug and began casting a more shallow bank with lush weed, the depth between the top of the weed and surface was less than a meter. BOOF!! hit and a miss.....Dad rarely fishes the surface so whenever he hears the boofs of Bass or Cod you can see his

excitement! Plop plop plop plop BOOF...I'm on! Using the spin rod now the fish pulled some line and the drag worked to smooth tire the angry fish tugging on the end of the line! This felt like a great Bass, to my amazement as the fish got closer, I gazed into the water and was amazed at what I saw...my first Yellow Belly off the surface! This greedy little fella must have been taking tips from his Bronze counterparts, very cool! I continued to work this bank, plop plop pause, twitch.. twitch BOOF!! On again...to what felt like another quality fish, this time a 400 Bass....NICE! I am still amazed at what good surface action we had while the ambient temperature was quite cool especially with the absence of insect activity.



I landed 13 fish that session, including 10 Bass and 3 Yellow Belly. It seems the population of Golden Perch in St Clair is thriving, great to see! The colder nights meant a fire was a must, and it wasn't long before the Port Appreciation Club started its proceedings (of which many Bass Sydney members are well acquainted). The absence of city lights meant the night sky was an absolute spectacle with the cosmos putting on a fine show, countless shooting stars meant a perfect end to a perfect day. I look forward to maybe squeezing in one more session there in the coming weeks, hopefully with similar success.



~Pete Hatzidimitriou

SEASON ENDING BASS TRIP

With the end of April fast approaching it was essential to organise a few days away with fishing companions Alan Izzard and Les Simshauser. As you may remember the second half of the season was hot and wet with extreme temperatures followed by flooding rains along the east coast so with the weather and river levels settling it was time to begin planning something.

Due to time limitations, we decided to fish the Karuah rather than head further north to the Manning or Macleay rivers. I was keen to check out a new place on the Macleay, but this will have to wait until next season. The plan was to arrive at our camping spot about midday on Friday and go from there.

Les decided to bring his Jayco Drifter, a neat wind - up slide - out camper trailer that has two double beds separated by a stove, sink and dinette so I was really spoilt, old age advantage I guess. Alan used his Blackwolf Turbo tent and we found a quiet secluded spot by the river. This was the last weekend prior to the kids' return to school so we figured most families would be home getting organised for the following term, and so it was. The camping area was deserted except for one long-term visitor.

After the camp was all set, we jumped in our kayaks for a late afternoon fish. It was cool, but clear, however the water was quite cold so we didn't expect much action and that's how it turned out with two or three hits and one brief hook up. Back to camp and rally around gathering some firewood as the temperature was dropping.



Les had set up the awning so we used that as our dining room rather than cook and eat inside. With a led strip light above, a table and our gas stoves at the ready it was all go. At six o'clock it was unanimously, declared happy hour so Al cracked a nice bottle of Merlot and we shared cheese, dip, chips and nuts whilst enjoying our first catch up since February 2015. It was great to talk about the events of the last two years, how our respective clubs were faring, new fishing gear etc. Good times again.

After dinner Al produced a bottle of port so two members of the Bass Sydney Port Appreciation Club enjoyed the spoils with dark chocolate and coffee as you do. We had the fire going and warmed ourselves for the evening whilst sorting out a plan for the following day.



It was decided to fish from camp downstream to a takeout spot Les knew about so we were hopeful the weather would do the right thing.

It dawned a beautiful warm morning so after leaving a car downstream we set off all keen and eager. The river height was reasonable so whilst it was necessary to get out quite often it wasn't too hard. I am finding it harder to get out of the kayak now so managed to get through the day without falling in. Alan and I hadn't fished this reach so it was nice to see a new part of the river for a change, just enjoy being in our kayaks and flicking a lure or two. The fish were a bit picky so it was tough going now and then. You know how it is, you get a few fish then they go all quiet for a while.



The notable fish were low to mid 300's and finally a 410, which was a surprise to us. We've fished this river many times before catching large quantities of very small fish so it was encouraging to see some decent ones for a change. The 410 was caught on a 1/16 ounce Z-man chatter bait and proved to be a tough critter as any Bass above 400 does. I think the river was illegally stocked some years ago so the ratio of small fish ballooned to a point where we wondered if there'd ever be anything decent in the future.

Back to camp for a hot shower then happy hour with much enjoyable chit chat about the day's events. As the sun sank below the horizon, the temperature plummeted and it was warm jackets and beanies with more red so we didn't feel cold. After dinner we enjoyed sitting around the fire and discussing a plan for Sunday. Unfortunately, Alan had to head home on Sunday morning so Les and I decided to fish the Myall. It was a much different day with a cool south westerly blowing, partly overcast which I found unpleasant and by lunchtime we donned spray jackets to keep warm. Les had one hit from a small Bass, but not a touch for me. Just before we headed back, two guys came down stream on an

American Bass Hunter powered by a Minn Kota. I'd never seen one before, but the guys said it was a great way to fish and you don't even get your feet wet. They take it down rapids and find it very stable, but you sit quite high so I'd rather have my backside below the water line thank you.



Sunday night was a bit quieter without Al, but we still managed to enjoy a red or two in his absence. The fire was stoked up to use the remainder of our wood so the sides of the half 44 gallon drum were glowing. Nothing like our great Aussie tradition sitting around a campfire on a cold evening.

Monday was a warm sunny morning so we managed to pack up the camper with dry canvas and headed to Les's place near Maitland. Put the camper away and unpacked the gear. Les is an old motor cycling enthusiast, racing dirt bikes and also rode trials in his youth. He is currently restoring two old trials bikes and one enduro so we spent the afternoon talking bikes whilst I admired his handy work. It's amazing that these day's new parts for these old bikes are still available locally or overseas.

After a shower and dinner, we headed off to the Hunter Native Fish meeting in Newcastle. Les is the Secretary so it was interesting to see how their meeting is run compared to ours. Also nice to catch up with some of the guys I've met over the last 20 years attending the HNF Bass Catch.

It was a great weekend, too short as always, but we hope to repeat it sometime next season and head off for a week. One of the great things about being retired you can head away pretty much any time when the stars align.

I headed home on Tuesday morning, although Les did ask me to stay so we could fish Lostock, but I had been trying to keep a cold at bay all weekend and felt pretty much worn out so politely declined.

Nothing like a few days away with some old mates doing the stuff you love, so get out there and enjoy yourself at every opportunity.

~ Milton Lazarus

Cool water Cod – Peter Hatzidimitriou

As the Bass season ends, the cooler mornings and evening start to come about, signaling a change in target species and the willingness to get out of bed of a morning. During the winter, I like to target big blue nose Bream and Salmon in the Hawkesbury River and have been known to do the occasional trip to chase that elusive big Cod down in Canberra. After the heartbreak of losing an absolute monster of a Cod in May 2016, due to a failed lip grip attempt -- I returned to the same river to try to exact some revenge! I compare this type of fishing to that of chasing Mulloway -- many hours, thousands of casts, hoping for the chance at that one trophy fish.



The alarm clock sounded at 3.45am, I jumped and scrambled to switch it off before it woke anyone else in the house I was staying. There is one thing I should note -- it is not easy getting out of bed when it is below zero outside! We had the rods and gear packed into the car from the night before, so after a quick cup of tea to warm up we were on our way. Today we decided to venture a little further, to parts of the river that do not see much pressure. This involved a 6km walk through some at times, quite dense bit of bush. Loaded up with a heavy backpack and head torches, we made our way through the dark, to our designated pool. When it is cold, there tends to be a lot of dew and frost on the grass and with the inclines and hills combined this makes for some very interesting times! Finally, we arrived at our pool as first light hit the river -- the view was spectacular! We began peppering the calm still waters with large oversized Aussie made timber paddlers and snake imitations.

The anticipation of fishing new water is always exciting and with every cast, you're on high alert, waiting for that explosion of water and the infamous muffled shotgun BOOF that only cod can give. Unfortunately, for 3 hours there was only one small boof between the three of us, and no hook ups. I decided to switch over to a chatterbait with a



large soft plastic paddle tail to fish the deeper water. When casting my chatterbaits I like to let them sink to the bottom, then I give them a quick rip and lift to get the action going and stir up any potential fish that had followed it to the bottom and then I begin a nice steady slow retrieve ALL the way back to

my feet. It didn't take long before I had a hungry little Cod follow my chatterbait up and over a boulder and slam it less than 2 meters from the rock I was standing on. After a short fight, I had a nice Bidgee Goodoo in my hands. I estimate this fish to be somewhere between 60-65cm. Unfortunately, that was the ONLY fish of the day and the only fish for my trip!



All up I walked about 25km over 3 sessions and made probably a thousand casts. It's a hard pill to swallow for most, knowing there can be such little reward for the amount of time and effort, but it still doesn't turn me off fishing that area, because I know that the big girls are there, lying in wait. It's just only a matter of time before the next one decides it's hungry enough to eat. Big Cod are very intelligent fish, even though they are the apex predator of the river, they are smart and cunning hunters, and only eat about once a week during the colder periods (or so I'm told).

~ Pete

Monthly Fishing Cartoon



***"When's the last time
Pete had a vacation?"***

**Next Meeting is on Tuesday
June 13
7:30pm at
Northmead Bowling Club**

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