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President's Message

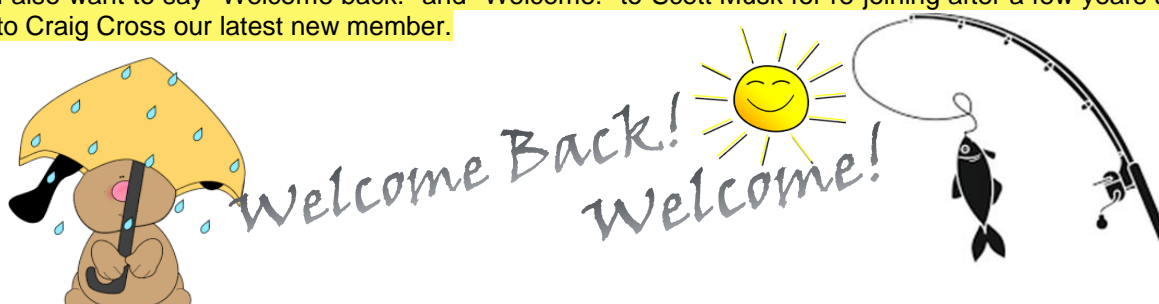


HAPPY NEW YEAR!! I didn't think it was possible to welcome in the new year with such a mixture of relief, hope and expectation, but after 2020 all of us were looking forward to a "better" year.

It's midway through our bass season now but due to the La Nina conditions, having some nice weather to chase our favourite native fish has been difficult to find. A lot of time so far, cool conditions and rain has kept most of us away. When we have been able to chase them in favourable conditions, the fish have been around and they look a little healthier than previous season.

It is our February Bass Catch this month. We need to confirm with the rangers at Bents Basin if we can have our free camping there this year. We will inform the membership what is happening there as soon as we can. Stay tuned. *Editor's note: see information re the Bass Catch on page 21 of this issue*

I also want to say "Welcome back!" and "Welcome!" to Scott Musk for re-joining after a few years and to Craig Cross our latest new member.



OCTOBER BASS CATCH 2020 POINTSCORE

Matt McHugh	108 points
Garry Blount	92 points
Douglas Chang	90 points
Shane Alexander	82 points
HS Tham	60 points
Damian Balfour	50 points
Alan Izzard	20 points

Some catch cards haven't been received, can you please email them ASAP, so I can compile all the results.

Largest Fish Top 3

Garry Blount	400mm
Shane Alexander	380mm
HS Tham	344mm

Top 5 Fish

Gary Blount	1631mm
Shane Alexander	1530mm
Douglas Chang	1356mm

OCTOBER SUMMARY

Largest Fish	400
Smallest Fish	110
Most No. of Fish	28
Most points	108
Total No. of Fish	108
Total fish length	23378
Average fish size	216

Bass Catch Officer

Derek Sonter



Good luck for 2021

MACDONALD RIVER BASS'N

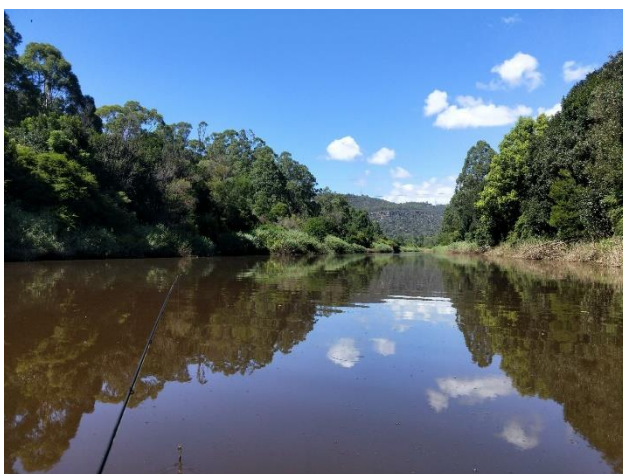
By Milton Lazarus

At last, some warm sunny weather after the cold, wet and windy days we've experienced since Christmas, such a nice change so it was time to think about casting a lure or two on a river somewhere. Brian had fished the Macdonald above the tidal limit once before trying the spot Peachy had sussed out and fished, so it was decided to give it a go. We arrived about 7-30am with the mist beginning to lift and made preparations to launch. We were a bit too late, first light would have been better, but as we age it's harder to get out of the cot super early.



Unfortunately, the river was an awful dark coffee colour - there had been a rise of about 1.5 metres, the launching spot and all the sandy beaches were covered in a thick layer of sticky mud. It was so disappointing, this is a tricky launch at the best of times off a small flat rock just below the surface, but it too was covered in slippery mud which made getting aboard risky, not to mention getting out.

There's not a lot of snags or shade here so once the mist cleared, we struggled to find any spots holding Bass. Initially we thought due the water colour the Bass might be out and about anyway and not holding in the shade, but in the end all four fish we caught came from shady spots.





Paddling upstream we came to a narrow section with a nice inflow into the top of the pool and here Brian landed two Bass in quick succession using a yellow and orange Stump Jumper. Ah, a good start we thought. I put on a similar coloured Knoll's Native, but alas not a touch. I had a 1/16 oz Chatter Bait on my second rod and kept alternating casts hoping for a hit, but nothing.

We fished back to the launch spot and I managed a 275 in some shade against the bank using a Z-Man Slim Swimz Electric Chicken. I was pretty happy as this was my second Bass of the season, I know, pretty poor, but this was only my third Bass outing. We kept paddling downstream fishing any likely spots where Brian caught a little tacker on a 1/16 Oz Chatter Bait. Finally defeated we headed back to face the get - out. Very glad I had Brian to haul me out of the yak as my knees are pretty much history now.



After inspecting the old cemetery just up the road and reading some of the headstones dating back to 1838, we headed to Wisemans Ferry for lunch and reflect on the morning.

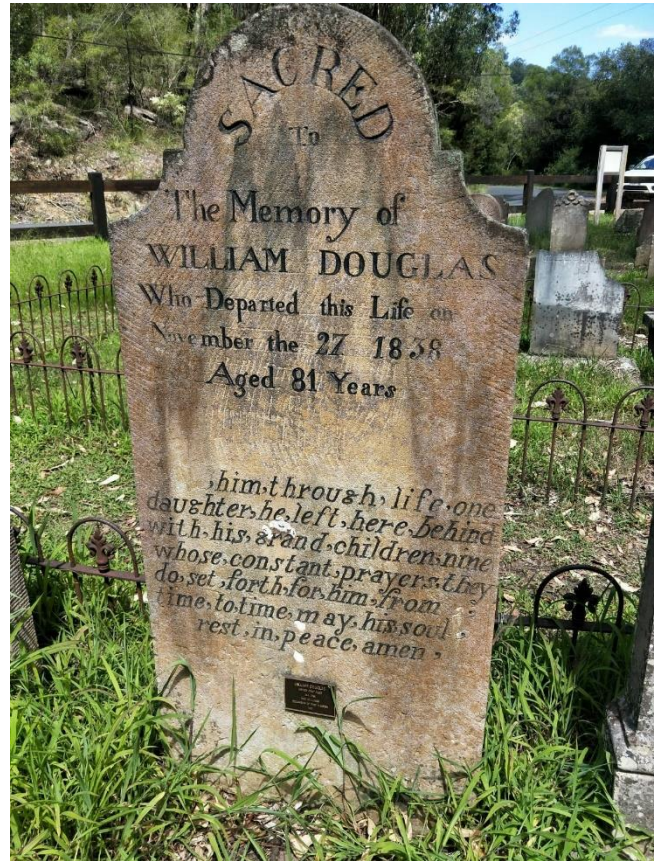
Brian mentioned Peachy had suggested this is only a very early morning or late afternoon / evening spot due to the lack of shade. And, Peachy is spot on with his assessment, definitely a low light spot.

As a matter of interest, the water in Wright's Creek just down the road was absolutely horrible, worse than where we fished.

I think it will be some time before the water settles and clears as it's possible this effect has been caused by the Gosper's Mountain fire way upstream.

We enjoyed the day and I had a chuckle when Brian starting packing his gear in the car - he'd parked right on an ant's nest. They weren't

happy and came out in force biting his legs. After jumping and swatting, he moved the car to finish loading his gear.



Check out this headstone, William Douglas passed away in 1838 aged 81 years. Heavens, they must have been very hardy folk in those days.

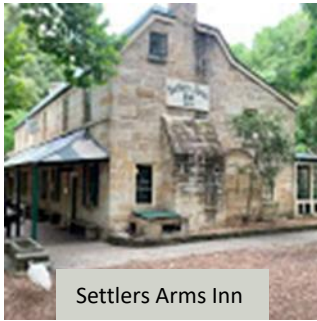
The take-out spot on the left, Brian is trying to position his yak over the flat rock just below the surface. It's about 1.2 metres square with a deep drop off on two sides so not a lot of room for error.

I have a soft spot for St Albans as I caught my very first Bass from the Common in 1965 or 1966 with my good mate (now deceased), former Bass Sydney treasurer Garnet Noble. In those days you were allowed to camp at the Common which is a large body of water upstream from town. The MacDonald feeds into the Common and the surrounding paddocks were used by farmers to rest their cattle. It was sort of a travelling stock reserve. Unfortunately, idiots spoilt it for everyone and now camping and fishing is banned.

Cheers, Milton.

SOME LOCAL HISTORY

The Story of St Albans



The "Village of Macdonald" was surveyed in 1837 but renamed St Albans on 26 January 1841 after the City of St Albans in Hertfordshire, England, north of London.

In the early part of the colonial settlement of New South Wales, the Macdonald Valley was an important agricultural area because of its accessibility by water. However, with the development of railways and extensive agricultural development west of the Great Dividing Range, the Macdonald Valley became less important and declined into a remote backwater. The valley is often referred to by the locals as the "Forgotten Valley".

St Albans is on the banks of the Macdonald River, a tributary of the Hawkesbury River which is about 15 kilometres to the south. The village was opened for settlement in 1842 largely because it had become an important stopping point for farmers and others in the area wanting to ship their goods down the Hawkesbury River to Sydney. St Albans was at the navigational upper limit of the Macdonald River. This upper portion of the river has since been drastically reduced to navigation with sand and silt.

The Story of Solomon Wiseman & Wiseman's Ferry



The tiny township was named after Solomon Wiseman (1777-1838), a Londoner who was a lighterman on the Thames until, in 1805, he was found guilty of stealing wood and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted and he was transported, with his wife and two children, to Sydney Town in 1806.

He was given his ticket of leave in 1810 and pardoned in 1812. As a skilled bargeman he became involved in coastal shipping until 1817 when, after two of his ships were wrecked, he was granted land on the Hawkesbury. He established an inn, "The Sign of the Packet" and when he heard that the government was building a road from Sydney to the Hunter Valley, he successfully lobbied to have the road pass by his holding. The result was that he supplied the convict gangs with food and he built a grand two-story stone house facing the river which became the town's hotel.

He subsequently obtained the license to operate the ferry across the Hawkesbury. It is now the oldest operational ferry in Australia. Wiseman died in 1838 and his land was first subdivided in 1857. There is a statue of Wiseman near the hotel.

COLO JANUARY 21st – A GOLDEN DAY

By Matt McHugh

Sometimes the most important thing about a fishing trip, especially one that takes a bit of effort to get there, is the planning. Doug and I have been doing quite a few trips together, but we have been wanting to get a Colo trip in all season. The Colo River is one of those special spots, tidal and fed from relatively pristine wilderness, but notoriously unpredictable and very susceptible to water quality changes from the Hawkesbury River into which it flows. Several club members had fished the Macdonald River recently, with the reports being of a chocolate-coloured mess. I sent Trent Deaves a message asking for a report and he judged that the good water flowing down from Warragamba had the main river in good condition, hopefully that translated into the Colo being OK.

Doug's misfortunes on the cricket field really settled it, a strained Achilles (age shall not weary them!) meant he wasn't inclined to wrangle a kayak, and a boat-based bass bash really meant Hawkesbury or tributaries, so we took a punt on the Colo. A 9 o'clock high tide meant an early start would get us up near Putty Road before the tide turned so that we could attack the long straight section on the outgoing tide.

Fishing the Colo is really about searching for fish and looking for a pattern. Shade, weed edges, eddies, pools near the bank behind weed beds, fallen timber, rocky banks all play a part at different stages of the tide and time of day.



We started off fishing the exposed rocky banks early and it wasn't too long before we started getting a few surface hits from small fish. Always a good sign early on as it gives you confidence to keep going on the surface. I was fishing a Ripple Cicada, a new acquisition for me.

Ripple Cicada pros, heavier than soft shell, nice swimming action, lands with a satisfying plop, and cheaper. Ripple Cicada cons, takes on water especially after a strike, fouls more consistently and treble attach points bend easily. All in all, a good addition to have with some soft shells, especially as the colour range is different and much more natural colours.

Doug was fishing the Mazzy Popper, one of his personal favourites, but a lure I haven't yet warmed to. The advantage of the Mazzy is that it casts beautifully, especially on the back-hand cast, and usually gives a 2-foot skip at the end. A real advantage when the fish are right up against the bank. Fishing this way with two different lures is something that me and Doug have found really effective. We also favour different lures most of the time, which also works well. Having someone back-hand casting in



your tinny is also effective and makes for efficient use of the platform, and if I am casting a cicada at the front of the boat, by the time Doug gets a shot at the old water, his different lure is appealing to different fish, or maybe ones that aren't keen on a surface offering.

We reached the shady banks of the bends and were picking up the occasional small fish on the surface. I switched to a 1/8th chatterbait with a bloodworm squidgie prawn and we started to get a few fish sub surface. Doug swapped to a little black diver, chubby style and continued to pick up the occasional fish. All of these were small fish and before long we were each at double figures leading into the big straight stretch with the big, moored boats. On the last cast at the start of that stretch I picked up a nice fish just over 300 from a shady patch against the bank on the chatterbait.

By this time, it was high tide, so we decided to motor up to where the river turns towards the Putty Road Bridge and ride the tide back. We found the going tough while fishing the deep banks, but anywhere that there was a lot of vegetation in the water, trees hanging in or fallen timber, there was a chance of a fish. As the land flattened out around the side creeks and the water shallowed off, we started to get a constant stream of fish. Doug was getting a lot fishing outside of the shade with the black diver, sometimes with 3-4 fish fighting over the lure. I was picking up fish on the Ripple by throwing into the shallow pockets in the shade behind the weed beds. Doug also picked some up on a soft shell and then Mazzy popper. Before long, the score was 25 each. No big fish but the constant surface bite, made up for the lack of size.

We had ridden the tide down to where there were now a lot of people in pleasure boats and we thought the fishing would drop off. As we rounded the corner, we switched banks, by now it was after midday and the shallow side of the bends was in the shade. The tide had dropped to the point where you could clearly see the weed bed out from the bank. Doug's black diver really worked in this situation, with the fish flying out of the weed bed to nail it.



My chatterbait and on the other hand, was only picking up the occasional fish. Doug got his best fish of the day, just over 300 from this stretch and picked up another 10 in total to take his day to 35. I just took my total to 31 for the day. We packed it in once the river got too busy with pleasure boaters, jet skis and swimmers.



66 fish for the day and two very satisfied fishermen at the end of a beautiful hot Sydney day. A range of lures used included surface, but also the very successful black diver and the Mazzy Popper. Shallow stretches in the shade on the run-out tide was where the fishing was at its best. Notably, larger fish were absent. Most larger fish I've picked up in the Colo have been on the deeper corners in eddies and under timber. A very low barometer may have had the

bigger fish shutdown. Still a very good day out thanks to some nice intelligence from Trent and a good partnership with the ever-easy-going Doug Chang (winning the very important competition 35-31!).

Cheers, Matt

Macleay River January 2021

By Warren Chalmers

In the past we had fished the Macleay from Bellbrook to Fredericton, but in the last few years have been unable to access the stretches from Bellbrook to Torooka because of low water levels making it impossible for canoe and raft travel.

However, minor flooding In December/January put enough water in the river for Don & Robert Clark and their respective spouses, Helen & Irene, and myself to make a trip to Bellbrook during the week of 18th January.

We were not sure of the actual water level as the gauging station at Bellbrook is not functioning any more, and we were relying on readings from George's Creek and Turner's Flat, and information from our friend Tony who lives at Kempsey.

As it turned out the water was about 50cm higher than what we call ideal, but it was almost crystal clear (so that meant we had no excuses for not catching any fish).

In previous years we stayed at the Bellbrook Cabins but found they were declining and as we had the ladies with us, Don contacted the hotel and we were all able to get accommodation at the house adjacent to the Hotel, which had four bedrooms and sleeps 10 people.

The lady Publican apologised as the stove was not working, and agreed to provide meals at night even though the hotel Bistro was not operational (very kind of her to do so).

Outcome was accommodation for five people, for three nights, meals included (chicken schnitty, lamb shanks & scotch fillet), all placed in our fridge late afternoon and all we had to do was to zap it then in the microwave (way better than McDonalds or even Uber eats).



The total cost of accommodation and meals for three nights was \$1100 - \$220 each, which we all considered very good and would highly recommend it to others.

On the Monday after checking into the house we went back to Devil's Nook with a STIHL brush cutter and cut an access path down the bank in readiness for the following day's raft retrieval.



We launched Don's Aire Raft at Bellbrook (shown above) on the Tuesday morning at 0730hrs and fished down to Devil's Nook where the landslide blocked the road to Armidale for about six days earlier in the month. The photo below is retrieving the raft at Devil's Nook.



Irene came to Devil's Nook at 1600hrs with the Land Cruiser and trailer. We backed the trailer over the bank and winched the raft across the mud (up to our knees) then went back to the house to rest and enjoy happy hour. On Wednesday morning we launched at Devil's Nook and travelled all day to Torooka, no incidents to report, where

again the ever-reliable Irene rendezvoused with us at the bridge. (good to have a land support crew)

Recovery at Torooka was not ideal as the water was running fast at the best location. Fishing wise we were a little disappointed with the quantity and size of the fish we caught.



The raft safely loaded at Torooka after the trip down from Devil's Nook

Over the two days, Don fished mostly with a Chatter bait jig fitted with various soft plastics, Robert fished mostly a Bett's spin type lure with a soft plastic, usually motor oil. I started with a Black Spinner bait, then a Chatter bait and by 0900hrs on Tuesday went to Janice Blackshaw's (a very knowledgeable local Bass fisher) lure of choice, a pink StumpJumper on which I caught all my fish.



For some reason, none of us fished surface lures, although Robert bought two Pompador's at the Kempsey Compleat Angler. (He has caught a 300mm bass on one of the Pomp's on the Nepean River at dark, since coming home.)

Robert on the left with a nice Bass



Warren with his biggest Bass looking happy & Don with his 360 below

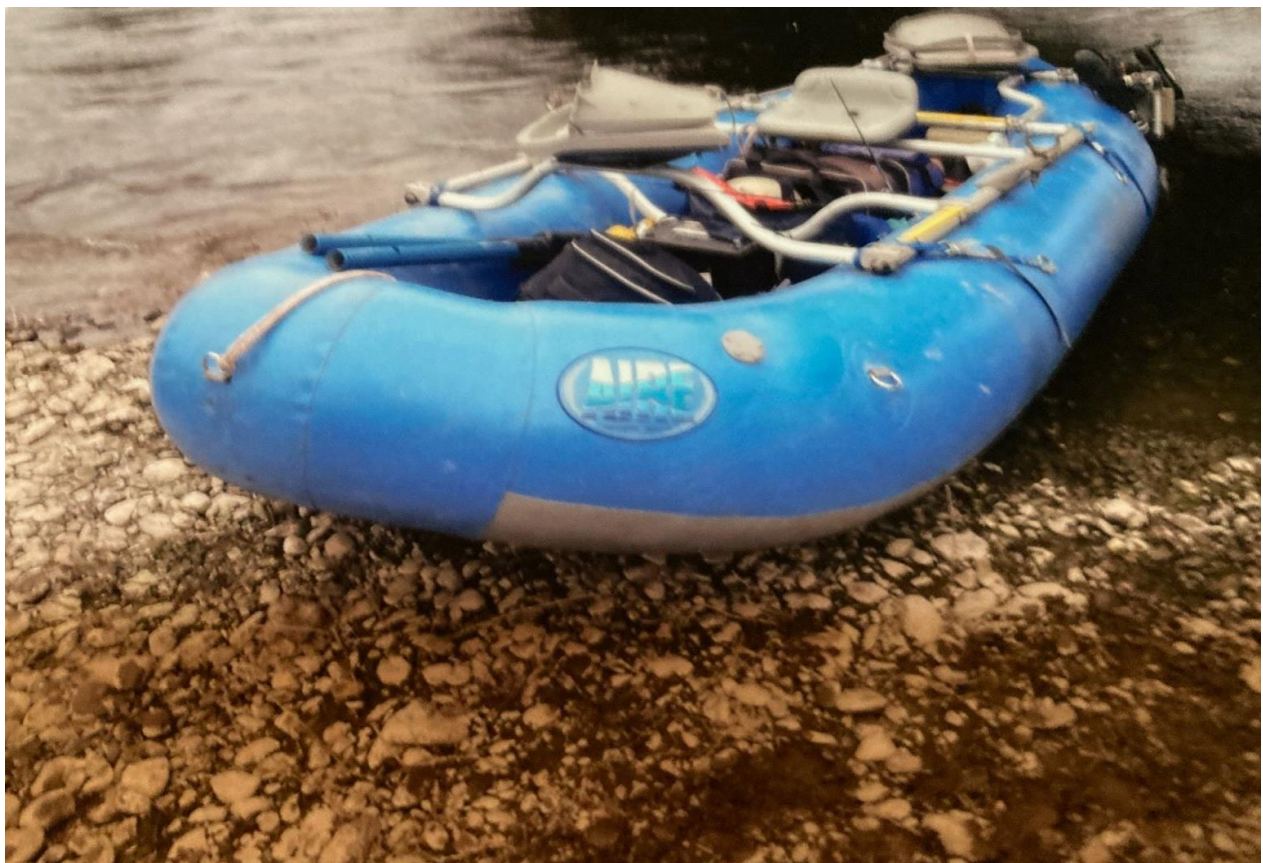


For those Macleay river fishers amongst us. The landslide on the road to Bellbrook is located on the straight section as you approach Devil's Nook bridge. The lane against the cliff is closed with a line of shipping containers probably filled with rocks to act as a retaining wall with lower concrete barriers in other areas. There's a mobile traffic light setup to allow safe passage in either direction on the one lane left.

Fishing Results (in mm's)

Bellbrook To Devil's Nook	Don	Robert	Warren
	310	340	310
	360	310	270
			220
			250
Devil's Nook to Tarooka			
	260	340	250
	260	250	340
			270

We are watching the water level and conditions and will try to get back to Bellbrook before the season closes. (personally, I was pleased to catch some fish as up until this recent trip, my 3-year-old great grandson in Victoria has been outdoing me by catching squid and a small whiting off the beach)



The American Aire raft, an excellent fishing platform for three. The centre person uses the oars whereas the person in the rear controls the electric motor. The motor is raised and the oars are used when negotiating rapids. Very comfortable and safe.

Warren Chalmers

The Clyde River (Christmas 2020)

By Brian and Jason

It was so good to finally get back on the Clyde for a couple of sessions. After the last year with the bushfires and everything else that was thrown at us the river seemed in pretty good condition.

Day 1

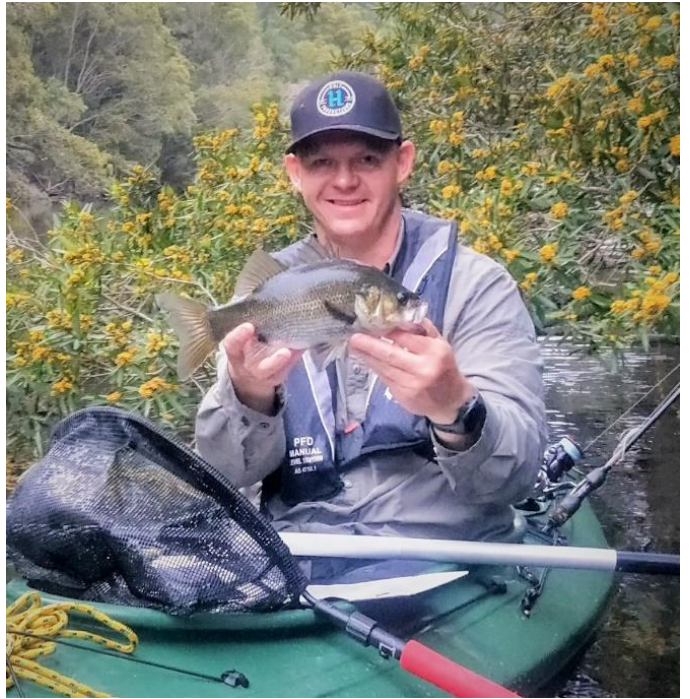
I agreed to meet Jason at the upside-down bridge at 5am to fish upstream from there. He was a little bit late and when he arrived, he explained that he'd had a run in with a wallaby. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out too well for the wallaby or Jason's car.

We launched from the bridge and headed upstream through the first small pool. Jason hooked up after a few casts, but the wily Bass managed to get off. We decided to venture down to the next pool and try our luck.



The river was alive with cicadas both on the water and even landing on us. I'm sure the Bass had been gorging on them as they would not touch a cicada lure. They were pretty deafening so I was glad I bought my ear plugs.

We managed 8 Bass for the session, my 3 on a 1/16oz chatterbait and Jason managed 5 with the biggest two 350 and 365 fl. All fish were in great condition and the river is looking great as well.



Day 2

A couple of weeks later we decided to have an afternoon session. We met up about 4.30pm on the Clyde to show Jason a couple of launch spots. Unfortunately, the 70mm of rain that we had the week before made it unfishable. The Clyde being so narrow up stream takes a while to go back down to a fishable and safe level.

We decided to try a feeder creek of the Clyde that I have fished successfully over the years. The track down to the launch spot wasn't the best, but we managed it ok. Jason was very impressed and couldn't wait to hit the water.

We launched and headed upstream using surface lures, cicadas and Maria surface lures. The pool is not that long and we could not temp any fish on the surface. I changed to a 1/16oz chatterbait and hooked up to a good fish that decided he wanted my lure (bugger).

On our return back down the pool I switched to a yellow / green Stump Jumper with immediate results. I ended up with 6 Bass. Jason switched to a similar style hard body and had similar success.

We ended up with 12 Bass the biggest just over 300fl.



It was a great session on a magic part of our country, we headed back home about 9.30pm very happy with our effort.

Brian & Jason.

DAMIAN'S NUMBER THREE



I'm proud to announce the wonderful birth of my third child and first son.

Born at Shoalhaven Hospital on Jan 25th (Robbie Burns day - Scots poet) weighing in at a healthy 6lbs & 3oz (2.84kg) & 53cms long.

He surprised us all twofold by being five days early & being a boy - we'd suspected a girl & didn't know the sex in advance. A nice surprise.

Both mum & baby are doing splendidly & feeding well. His older sisters are delighted and the excitement is at fever pitch.

No name has yet been decided, but we've excluded the name Peter Pan-demic thus far.

Cheers, Damian

Congratulations!

Letter to the Editor, Bronze Battler From two Emu Plains locals

Dear Editor and Bass Fishers members,

Last September there was one of the most disheartening incidents of vandalism at the Russell St River-care site at Emu Plains, where hoons had come in with axes, chopped down two of the trees from the original planting and had also driven over many of our understorey plantings.

We were devastated but some of us locals who live in the area wanted to farewell and thank Alan Izzard for his leadership and contribution to the amenity of our local Nepean river bank as he stepped back to hand over responsibility to Penrith City Council to administer the site. This farewell was a heartfelt gesture as we had been involved with Bass Fishers for about seven years at that stage. We thought we'd remind Alan of his favourite weed, illustrated below, on the plaque we gave him.



Here he is looking very uncomfortable in October 2020 as we gave him his plaque, sang him a song and said our thanks.

It wasn't till I went back over back issues of *Bronze Battler* to research dates and activities of the Bass Fishers over the time we had been involved that I realised that there was a broader and longer back story to our local Russell St site. Not to take away from Alan's leadership, there has been a sustained group effort with various people being active and taking leadership over a long period of time, also a wider range of places you all had been working on before we turned up at Russell St. This letter is a thank you to those people, Milton Lazarus, master of the barbecue and apparently a practised submission writer and Alan Fowkes who has perhaps unwittingly turned our riverbank into a birdwatchers' mecca



Thanks guys, and also Damian, Tham, Rico, Ginger the dog and other Bass Fishers, for your work and friendship. By the way, the trees have grown back and the Russell St plantings are doing exceptionally well.



Kerith and Margaret.

NEW MEMBER CRAIG CROSS

I have been fishing for 40 years plus, have guided interstate and internationally.

Over that period a few fish species have occupied a lot of my time and money, some more than others. The Australian Bass is one of those species, it holds a special place in my heart. I

enjoy catching them in very skinny creeks and urban areas, and it's amazing just where Bass can be found.



A great bonus is you can avoid boat ramps around Christmas holidays by fishing for Bass.

Bass Sydney members I have so far met share the same interests along with caring for the environment.

I would like to explore new water north and south of Sydney on single day and multi-day kayak trips.

The Murray Cod is the next fish on the bucket list.

Cheers, Craig.



Hawkesbury/Nepean Bass Catch

9-20 February 2021

Dear Members & Friends,

It's that time of year again! Bass Sydney's Hawkesbury-Nepean Bass Catch is on again! The dates are February 19 and 20. Camping from 2pm on Friday the 19th of Feb. It's always a fun occasion, so support our club and NSW Fisheries.

Please register via our website. This link is Live and ready: <http://www.bassydney.com/index.php/bass-catch>

Campsite:

Our campsite will be in Bents Basin NP: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/camping-and-accommodation/campgrounds/bents-basin-campground>

If you wish to camp, please advise during the registration process. Details & directions will follow and please make sure you fill out your car licence plate number.

Camping will be free of charge for those attending the Bass Catch

Camping Friday and/or Sat night.

As always, camping is not mandatory.

Food:

Food and drinks are BYO. You will be required to bring your own cooking facilities due to Covid Restrictions.

Briefing & Catch Cards:

Briefing for Bass Catch virgins will be conducted during our GM at Northmead Bowling Club on Tuesday, 09/02/19 at 7.30pm in the meeting room, or at the campsite on Friday evening.

As always, Catch Cards will be issued at either the GM or at the campsite

Please have a good time and I hope to see you there!

Tight Lines always,

Derek Sonter

Bass Catch Officer, Bass Sydney



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