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President's Message

Another bass season draws to a close! I feel that I haven't done enough bassing and fishing in general in the last 8 or 9 months, due in part to some shocking weather. As I reflect back on the season just past, I note with some satisfaction the following achievements - kicking off our project at Emu Plains, an increase in membership, an increase in the club's profile and two successful grant applications. We've also been asked to support 2 other grant applications, one in the Lane Cove NP and the other being the Redbank Creek Regeneration project. Some of our new members have definitely given us a boost in vitality, sorely needed. On a personal note, in between disasters on the water, I've managed to catch some nice bass and a new PB (finally!!), so I can't really complain about Season 2011-12.

It is also with sadness that we note the passing of Garnet Noble, until very recently stricken with illness, a valuable and hard-working member of the club. Garnet will be missed by many of his mates in the club and by his family. His Celebration of Life Service was attended by a dozen or more Bass Sydney members both old and new and many of Garnet's friends and family.

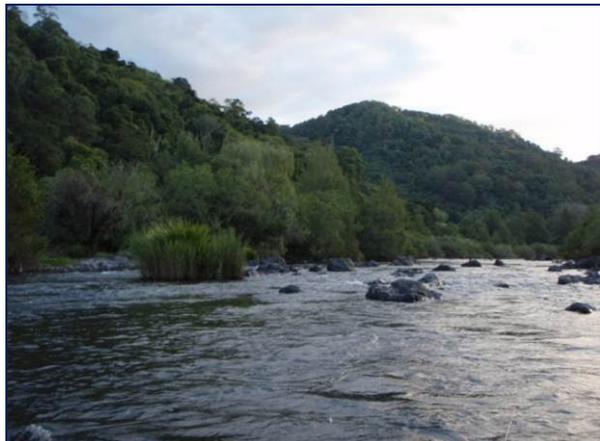
Yet again, my attention turns to tide and swell forecasts and squinting at a bobbing float as I transition into blackfish season. I may have another one or two new companions on the blackfish front. Others, I'm sure will either turn to tackle maintenance or other species. By next bass season, I hope to have replaced my lost gear, repaired a thinning patch on the kayak and added some extra rod storage to it; in time for more river fishing!

HS Tham

End of season overnight paddle

At this time of year before the winter shut-down, I typically have an overnight solo outing on one of my favourite North Coast rivers. The barometer looked promising for the weekend and there was minimal rain forecast – which was a relief after the drenching that the area has suffered this season. Mates from the Hunter who'd fished this system in the last two weeks reported that the water was fairly cold and surface action was minimal. But there was always hope.

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Planning was on track with Paul, a good mate in the area, arranged to drop me and the kayak upriver and leave my 4WD at his farm 12 km downstream. I have to admit that a selfish part of trips into this area is a good fang on the gravel back roads. I'd packed the trusty and battle-scarred Minnow and gear the night before and left home in Wahroonga at 5.30 am with the intention of being on the river by 11.00. On the drive north, memories of earlier trips where I'd dragged a canoe (on trips with a mate) or the kayak (solo trips), 12-15 km upriver through a number of rapids and runs turned the plan into a nostalgic repeat of these little adventures. On arrival, I told my mate to abort the drop-off, as I would push upriver from his place. Driving down through another mate's paddocks on the neighbouring property enabled the gear to be unloaded and the car parked within 30 metres of the river. It's a real privilege to know people like this and to have ready access to water that holds a significant population of large bass.

When I set off, it immediately became apparent that recent rains had dropped the water temperature a lot lower than I'd have liked, so sub-surface lures looked to be the choice. Those massive surface smashes of the Jitterbug on still, warm nights - to which many of us are addicted - would probably have to wait for another season.



I hadn't been there since last season and it became obvious that recent floods had re-mapped much of the river with the tragic loss of many river oaks and continued extensive bank erosion. Although some erosion is part of nature, much of this degradation points to 100 years of neglect of vulnerable riparian zones. The only benefit from this is more snags for fish habitat. I planned to push up to a previous campsite on a deep pool fed by several hundred metres of tree-lined deep water that has produced numerous 40 FL+ fish.

Tossing WTDs and Buzzbaits - that were the lure of choice on a recent productive Macleay trip with Tham - into shady pockets proved unsuccessful, as did small divers. I changed to a No. 1 jighead with a Betts Spin and a green 3" worm. Flicked right into the sticks, this was soon grabbed by a 35 FL fish. She took the leader around submerged timber before my grunt of relief when she unwrapped herself and made for open water. This combination accounted for all fish on the trip and is my latest 'best daytime lure' - at least until next season when WTDs or Buzzbaits may take over again.

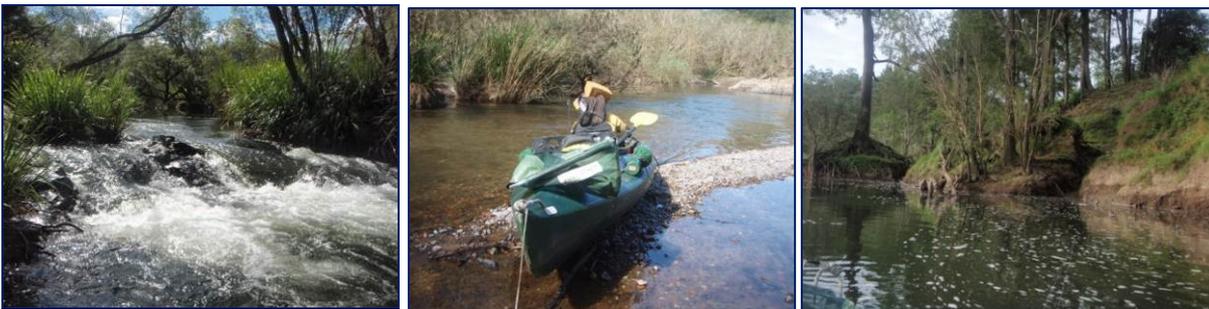
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Despite the relatively high barometer, the ratio of (few) hook-ups to the number of (too many) casts was confirmation that it was a slow day. Tossing the weighted worm deep into bank-side timber was occasionally rewarded with fish from high 30s into the 40s. All fish were in superb condition, carrying good weight with no deformities. Some looked almost as fat as a typical impoundment fish.



When this fish grabbed the lure in tight cover, I thought that I'd be immediately bricked. After some tense seconds, with a branch I could see flexing as the 14 lb leader ran over it, and with a lot more luck than skill on my part, she miraculously came out into mid-water and stayed deep, making long runs. With each run, the drag clicker on the little Stradic (that should be heaps louder) screamed and I was sure that this was the 50 FL capture that's waited over 2 years. She finally came to the side of the kayak and looked to be on the money. But a twinge of disappointment came with a quick rest against graduated marks in the yak's coaming showing that she measured 'only' 47 FL. Like many of my solo-trip fish photos, the images aren't prize winners but this one of her on the yak shows her great condition. If she is about to head down to the brackish for spawning, I hope she has a safe winter.



Since the last two floods, some of the short runs that could be easily waded became several hundred metres of portaging the laden kayak cross-country. Less fun than paddling or wading. The river was still slightly up and pumping hard on the deeper long runs. On arriving at the bottom of the now-longer 150-metre long rapid just below the intended campsite, it was obvious that I wouldn't be wading or paddling up there. It was mid-afternoon and the steep banks with thick timber on both sides didn't make another cross-country effort too attractive, so I turned back down to the next good hole with deep water and an eddy. After pitching the tent and having a very late lunch, I went out for a fish at dusk with high anticipation of some action in the huge eddies nearby. But I came up fishless for the session, despite being on the fishiest-looking water over drowned trees 'that just *had* to be productive'. I had only two half-hearted hits on a Jitterbug in a foamy eddy and no more

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response to the successful daytime jighead combo. Maybe the paddle back down tomorrow would produce that 50 FL fish I haven't seen for two seasons.



The return paddle proved fishless until the last 500 metres before the pull-out when a 36 FL fish that punched well above its weight grabbed a plastics craw bait. Unless this outing was my penultimate season trip, or I come across some in my EP or bream haunts, this was my last bass until September. Loading the gear and heading back to Sydney was anti-climactic and reminded me that northward trips are always those that I anticipate the most. If I still fished the Southern rivers frequently, the reverse would apply. Maybe it's because I'm originally from the far North coast, but it feels a bit like going home when I get North of Hexham. As the bass gear gets a rest in winter, it's time to look at what repairs or upgrades are needed. I service my reels each season and the rods are repaired as needed. As I eventually learn to hit the water more often than the trees, the 2-3 kg Penn Pinpoint with a Stradic 1000 is now seeing a lot more use than previous seasons when the gear of choice was the 2-3 kg Loomis GL3 baitcaster with a well-used Chronarch SF100. I still can't get the accuracy with the threadline that I can with the baitcaster, but it's catching fish. I recently fitted these reels with Carbontex carbon fibre drag washers from Jack Erskine and these are really the goods that give very progressive and predictable drag control. I have fished with later baitcast reels, but none seem to be smoother or cast better than my very battle-scarred Chronarch Super Free. I still have my treasured ABU 1500 and 2500 classics, and will make a point to use them next season. In my early days of born-again bass fishing in 1999, the sound of the screaming drag clicker on the ABUs added to the fight with a good fish, and the absence of this feature on most other bass reels is a great pity.

Ron Rogers

GARNET NOBLE'S "CELEBRATION OF LIFE" SERVICE

As many of you know, we lost a great friend and Bass Sydney member on April 30th. Garnet sadly passed away after a short battle with cancer.

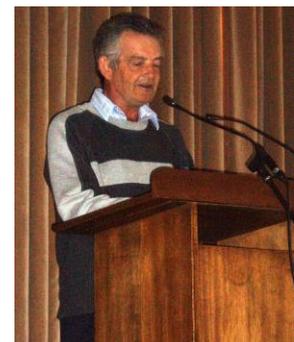
His family arranged a Celebration of Life Service for Tuesday May 15th so family and friends gathered to farewell a very special person.

I welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming then followed by saying:

"So Garnet, may I say to you, because I know you are listening, that we are all gathered here, family and friends to celebrate your life, a life sadly cut too short. We will talk about the good times and we will have some laughs, but rest assured Garnet, that we will always be thinking of you and you shall never be forgotten".

I talked about our great friendship over the last 49 years, about all the fun we had, about our early drinking and driving experiences before breathalysers and speed cameras and of course, our fishing trips. I mentioned Garnet joining Bass Sydney, buying his kayak and the look of delight on his face when he landed his first ever Bass.

Alan Izzard spoke next and his talk was a more-light hearted story about a typical weekend with Garnet and all the funny little things that happened



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making us laugh. Like when we would be all packed ready to hit the road and Garnet would have to sit on the loo for 15 minutes before we left. And about the mozzies and sand flies that always loved Garnet, but never touched other folk around the table.

Garnet's daughter-in-law read a short piece from the bible then his two boys Scott and Grant spoke about what a great Dad Garnet was. It was very difficult and emotional for them both, but they managed to get through their eulogies. Finally Garnet's sister-in-law, Debbie Noble spoke fondly about Garnet, of what a great job he'd done raising his boys and the good times they all shared together.



We all moved downstairs for drinks and finger food. Guests mingled and talked about their experiences with Garnet, how they had met and the good times had. It was a very relaxed and pleasant service, a fitting farewell to a terrific bloke.

Alan & I set Garnet's kayak up the front complete with paddle, fishing rod, his 400 Club Award and his hat. On the other side of the lectern was a table with family photos and awards.

It was wonderful to see so many Bass Sydney members attend and I would like to thank you all very



much for coming as it meant so much to his family.

Milton Lazarus.

An Autumn Trout Trip

Two crazy Bass Sydney members headed in down Crookwell way to brave the cold, drink some fine wines and chase a trout or two.

Accommodation was at Gundowringa where visitors stay in the shearers' quarters. The stone bedroom block is reasonably warm, but the unlined corrugated iron clad shower building below is a different story and most mornings the thermometer was hovering around four degrees. Not a lot of fun stripping down and standing there in that temperature, however there is plenty of hot water so eventually one warms up in the process even though the icy plastic shower curtain keeps sucking onto your back.

Sitting in the living room eating a large helping of bacon and eggs for breakfast with a big fire going helps to get the old body moving and it's



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the best time to discuss the day's plans to catch a trout or two.

The first option is to try Pejar Dam and whilst the sun was out, there was a cold south westerly wind making fishing rather unpleasant. Never mind, they say you never feel the cold if you are catching fish.

Well, we weren't catching fish even with set rods and power bait as well as chucking Tassie Devils all over the place. OK, it's time to try plan B and relocate to another dam up the road.

Plan B turned out to be a good decision as yours truly managed three lovely fish in three casts. According to the old



scale the weights were 1.5, 2 & 2.5 pounds. Boy, it's been almost 15 years since I caught a trout, so things were looking up. By the time I landed the last fish it was very brisk and getting dark so we headed for warmer places. One should not complain, but it was really cold cleaning those fish back at camp.



We decided fresh BBQ trout was the go, so being gluttons we ate the two smaller fish for dinner. Wrapped in foil with butter, lemon juice and seasoned with herbs, pepper and salt produced a wonderful evening meal. Naturally we chased this down with a very nice bottle of Hunter Valley Brokenwood Sauvignon Blanc Semillon. It can't get much better than this. To finish off we sat in front of a raging fire drinking coffee, port, eating dark chocolate and thinking, boy, what a great end to a good day.



The next day we went in to Crookwell and sampled the delights of Lynhams cafe for lunch. Mr and Mrs Lynham have been cooking meals and making great cakes for over 60 years and we enjoyed the special of the day, lambs fry and bacon on vegies. Some people can't eat lambs fry, but I have been brought up on the stuff and if it's cooked properly it's really good, and it was. A huge hot meal on a cold autumn day was just the shot. We were both too full to squeeze in some homemade desert.

We probably should have headed off fishing after lunch, but instead offered to take Garnet's father-in-law, Stan Osborne out for a drink at Garnet's favourite watering hole, the old Laggan pub. The only thing in Laggan apart from a house or two is the pub. It's a tiny little place, but has loads of character and they serve the best old beer. Publicans Margaret and Ron were saddened to hear about Garnet's passing as they had got to know him really well over the years. We drank a toast or two to Garnet and whilst I'm not an old beer drinker I agree it was really a good drop. Somehow Stan got his wires crossed and he was not home when we called in on the way to Laggan. We did visit on the way home.

We had arranged to meet Geoff, the owner of Gundaowringa, on one of his private dams for a spot of fly fishing later in the afternoon. Can't remember the last time I used a fly rod, but it was too long. My casts were a bit erratic, but I did manage to get the fly out and to my amazement hooked and dropped a



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fish on my first cast. Bugger! I did the same just on dusk, so unfortunately it was not to be. Having a 15 pound leader set up for Bass fishing didn't help either. Way too heavy, but I didn't have time to change it and my fingers were freezing as the thermometer was plunging. Graeme hooked and dropped a fish on his Tassie Devil so we came home fishless. Never mind, medium rare scotch fillet, potatoes baked in the fire and served with sour cream and chives together with minted peas made a great meal. Naturally dinner was washed down with a very nice bottle of Annie's Lane Clair Valley Cabernet Merlot. Then it was off to watch NSW win the State of Origin at Geoff's son's house up the road. Just as well Graeme took another red and a few beers to drown our sorrows.

Thursday's plan was to fish the Crookwell River at Binda. We packed a BBQ lunch, a few beers and coffee. The plan was to cook lunch beside the river, but the wind was blowing and the clouds were looking threatening so we fished until the rain started.



Graeme caught a lovely fish weighing in at two pounds on a Celta, so he was really happy to be on the board at last. We packed up and headed for the picnic shelter in Binda to cook lunch and avoid the rain. After lunch we took the narrow dirt road across to Laggan for a few beers, but on the way managed to get a puncture. Boy, changing a wheel in the rain, wind and cold was challenging especially when the jack kept sinking into the soft soil. We arrived wet and cold but managed to dry out in front of the fire and enjoyed a few quiet ones with some local shearers'. We got lost on the way home as there are so many dirt roads going all directions and in the dark and rain it's really hard to get your bearings.

Even Graeme's GPS sent us the wrong way.

Dinner Thursday night was crisp Trout cutlets and pan fried in oil together with Graeme's baked potatoes. The 2.5 pound fish caught on was big enough to feed both of us. Once again Lynham's lemon tarts, port and dark chocolate. boys. In finishing I would like to say that had



passed
would
with us
loved
he
fishing,



seasoned
legendary
Tuesday
coffee, Mrs
Way to go
Garnet not
away he
have been
as he
this place,
loved the
the

company of old mates and the country. So this was the first time Graeme and I have been to Crookwell without Garnet and we missed him so much. There was a big hole and as I've said before sitting around the dinner table enjoying a glass or two of red will never be the same without Garnet.

Milton Lazarus

NEWS

Guest Speaker June GM

Alan Midgely will be our guest speaker at the June General Meeting. Alan will be talking about his role as the Hawkesbury River Waterkeeper, including;
The role of Waterkeeper, How it relates to the Hawksebury River & HEN, How he was chosen or what

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the criteria were seeing as it's an international organisation <http://www.waterkeeper.org/>
Stuff about his PhD project which involves Aussie Bass

Russell St, Emu Plains

The first weekend of May saw the return of Bass Sydney to Russell St. As hoped the recent flooding of the Nepean River and the opening of Warragamba dam has cleared much of the problem weeds from our worksite at Emu Plains. With 75% of the site was still underwater for most of May we concentrated on removing some Lantana from the higher sections of the site.

Here are a few photo's showing that we will have one hell of a cleanup job once the river finally drops to normal levels. Also included is Geds photo of the site totally underwater. This shot was taken from where the club trailer is usually parked!!



HEN "Alive!" Presentation.

When we first joined HEN we were asked if we would be prepared to support a program that involved school kids from local schools. As we were already had McCarthy Catholic College through Ged. we gave our support. The idea for the day was to inspire each school to initiate an environmental project for which they might win \$1000.00 grant to help implement. I had no idea at the time just what our support would involve.

When Tham and I attended a HEN meeting recently I found out. I was asked to give a presentation on the work BS was doing and decided to add something about fish passage as well. The reason I added the bit about Bass migration and the problems involved is because I discovered at a previous meeting that the general public have absolutely no idea of the problems Bass face when there is a weir or other barrier. The program was held on the 5th June and I was to speak to a class of high school kids + a class of primary schoolers, who unfortunately did not make it to the day. The young ladies and

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gentlemen from Bede Polding College were attentive and switched on. I went through the work we have and are doing and then showed them the clip of the kids up north "Why the fish can't cross the road". At the end I then explained about Bass and other fish needs to be able to move both up and down rivers, this inspired a couple of questions which is what I was hoping for. The teacher also made the point that as we are fishermen we are utilising the resource and that was needed to be respected and that it should not be locked away, great guy that. I explained about BS and how we do things as a club, fishing wise, and got a reply from one the older looking young men at the back asking what was the biggest Bass I had caught on fly, had to admit that I was not an exponent of the "mystery stick" but the biggest I had caught on lure was 489mm, that created some interest.

All in all it was a great day, with about 200 kids in attendance from year 1 right through to year 12. As I am in the middle of moving house I could not stay for the full day so do not know what projects each school decided to take on but will find out in due course through my involvement with HEN.

On another note at the end of my presentation I was approached by 2 of the students asking if I could tell them how to get in touch with the NFA. I explained that by talking to me they were talking to the NFA and they were very happy to explain what it was bothering them. Evidently there is to be another bridge to be built at Yarramundi and to complete the works there will be massive riparian damage and the reserve close by will be removed, from what I can gather there has been several thousand of dollars spent here regenerating the reserve. As i am not exactly sure where all this is to take place I have given my contact details so they can send me all the relevant info. I have already discovered that Councils CAN do this kind of work without the need to get permission from the Gov. I will let you know more later when I get some more facts.

Alan Izzard.

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July 14th Picnic Lunch lake Parramatta

Once again our annual picnic will be held at Lake Parramatta. This is always a great social event in a family friendly location and we hope to see a few new members along this year.

April Reach 5 Outing

By Josh Pearson

An early meet with Dre saw me on the road at 3:30am met Dre at 3:45 and headed out to the launch spot, arrived at about 5:00am and setup in the dark waiting for Ash to arrive, it was a brisk morning and I was glad I chose trackies to put on top of my boardies for the start. Ash arrived on time and we were on the water soon after. Did I mention it was ridonkulously cold?!?!?! Perfect conditions though

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There was a little bit of action on the surface when we first launched but it was some time before the bass came on the bite. Tham had arrived just after sun up and I had one great hit on the soft shell that I could not tempt further. Ash already had a couple on the board before I got my first awesome hit that stayed connected. Cast was in tight between a fallen bit of timber and some storm debris, as soon as it hit the water this bass launched itself out and absolutely nailed it, all in full view of everyone which was awesome too.



The fish was fat but had some fin rot as evident in the picture, went 25cm FL. Was followed not long after by another on the soft shell that was only around 15cm, released him yak side to prevent any harm coming to him. Things went a bit quiet for all but Ash who was pulling fish regularly, his next notable one was a great EP, an awesome looking fish that I haven't seen close up before and taken on a betts with grub.



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We headed up a small offshoot after this fish and I kept getting hit after hit on my spinnerbait with none taking it, was getting very frustrating so I bit the bullet and changed over to the betts spin and got fish soon after, they were much more aggressive towards the betts and I ended up pulling 3 from a small nondescript corner ranging from 15cm FL to 24cm FL, only photo's of a couple.



Healthy little fish with nice colours. On the way back down I stopped at the same spot again, pulling another 6 fish with a couple of better ones amongst them, 28cmFL for 2 of them 25cm the other 2 and a couple of rats around 15cm.



Released a couple more yak side before following the boys back downstream, they ended up being my last fish for the day and we had a pretty tough paddle against the wind to get back to the launch spot. Ended up with 11 fish for the day with a couple dropped yak side. Who said bass only bite in warm weather!!

Cattai Creek Outing

It was a very chilly last outing of the season for the 5 Bass Sydney members that made it along to Cattai Creek. Arriving just before 8am I was met by thick fog and freezing temperatures, I shuddered to think just how cold it would have been when Josh and Andre had arrived 3 hours prior!

After a bit of back and forth from John we were heading off upstream. Visibility in the creek was still very poor and water temps were low, so it was no surprise that by 10am nobody had had a touch.

We met up with Daniel at Mitchell Park where John and Daniel had plans to meet their families for a picnic lunch. He turned out to be the good luck charm for the day and within minutes of launching he had some interest. It was at this time that the only fish for the day somehow managed to hook up to my Betts spin after a half-hearted hit.

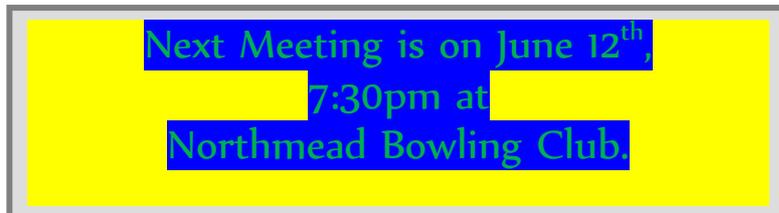
Unfortunately with numb fingers it was time for amateur hour and the Bass did not make it into the yak.

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We met up with Josh and Dre just as Daniel and John were off to their picnic so the remaining 3 of us headed upstream for another hour or so without interest.

So not the most spectacular end to the season, but it was a great day out on the water (once the sun came out).

A.Thamm



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