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There's a great club raffle in progress for a rather spiffing Miller rod.

Tickets can be purchased by club members at **AGM**, club meetings,
electronic money transfer and at the Bass Catch.

<http://www.millerods.com.au/>

Presidents Message – Alan izzard.

I blinked and the year was gone..... that's the trouble with getting old I guess.

It's been a quiet year for me fishing-wise, very little time to get out and when I did have some time the rain did not let up.

On a more positive note Bass Sydney's club membership is slowly increasing, we had four new members join up just before the most recent Bass Catch (Feb 2016).

The Club has been asked to consider becoming a chapter of the newly formed 'OzFish' organisation, something the new committee will consider. Personally I think it is a great opportunity to join in in what I hope will become an Australia wide organisation working to improve fish habitat. Just think, all recreational fishers singing the same tune and lobbying state and federal governments as a single group, a bit like the NRA in America, numbers count when talking to politicians.

The current committee has worked hard to implement a much wider scope of fishing for the new 2016/17 calendar, which, hopefully will be printed and available for the AGM.

Lastly, I ask that all members consider joining the committee, we look like being short for the coming year. Hope to see many of you at the AGM. I want to thank all those members that contributed to the running of the club this past year, whether as a committee person or those that jumped in and did some cooking and cleaning up at the Bass Catch barbecues.

Alan Izzard

The Editors Message

AGM's on Tuesday, be sure to attend & meet with new members, greet the old members and renew your memberships. I've offered my apologies already as I'm overseas, trying for Trout & Grayling in Scotland. So far I've seen none and caught nothing but a cold. Temperature has ranged between 5 & 11'C and in two weeks we've had one non-rain day. It's supposed to be a family holiday, but it feels more like a survival exercise.

As the AGM is about planning ahead, it's also a time for reflection and as such I'd like to reiterate my gratitude and appreciation to all who've contributed towards the Bronze Battler this last season. We've enjoyed you sharing your thoughts and experiences and hope for more. Your pictures and text are always welcome and much needed. I look forward to all submissions and remember they are bribe free, I work for free, relying only on your angling tips, location hints and any let slip secrets. The Bronze Battler continues to NEED YOU. Damian Balfour

19-21 Feb 2016 - BASS CATCH

Despite the trials and tribulations of life getting in my way and them consorting so much so that I had to capitulate and miss the Friday evening start of our Bass Catch in February; I dug deep, endured and got on the water by Saturday morning and fished. First cast was around seven thirty and fished through, before getting driven off the water by a drenching thunderous deluge twelve hours later. Within my first few casts I'd hooked up and landed a 140mm bass, who was quite tenacious and certainly ambitious, as it took a hard body Dreamfish surface cicada. As the day progressed and my derriere grew numb I landed plenty of little bass. The Bass sizes steadily increased and I was also fairly sure I'd get twenty Bass that day. The twentieth bass was only 120mm, but the twenty-first broke the 300mm mark and gave a good account of itself. Three things occurred to me during and after the day's fishing:

1). I used only two lures all day – a *Dreamfish surface cicada* and a hard body *diving crank-bait*. It's the only time I've fished entirely without my trusted and dependable jig-spin. I often state that jig-spins are the 'gold standard' bass lure and should be the lure that all others are measured against. My faith and belief in the simple jigspin has led me to fish with them exclusively in my first bass season and nearly on every outing since. It wasn't my choice to abandon the jigspin, it just so happened that with all the previous day's upheaval, I couldn't find

them to fish with, thus had no choice but to branch out and try something different. Initially I had only a little faith in the diving crankbait but throughout the day I was increasingly confident that if I didn't get any surface activity from the cicada at any likely bass hideouts, I was quietly confident the crankbait would prove irresistible – and often it was.

2). As I was fishing alone, there were little distractions beyond the active blue kingfishers feeding. As I texted and updated Tham around midday, I stated that I'd get twenty Bass today. I realized that such a prediction wouldn't have been possible before and that my confidence in the lures, location, casting and fishing must've taken a leap of sorts. Equally, I felt little worry about not landing a bass, instead feeling strongly that they'd be there and when they refused the cicada, well, they'll have a go at the diving lure, which the Bass often did.

3). Bass don't like 'talking', my longest spell without a hook up came at the time I spent an hour fishing alongside Capt. Baldy as we slowly passed each other while heading in opposite directions. Despite the usual loss of concentration when talking and fishing on the water, the hits, hook-ups, surface misses, runs seemed to disappear when there was a lot of surface talk, I've felt this before but I must state quietly that I'm still working on the theory, although the anecdotal evidence seems to support it.

Saturday night's camping at the Bass Catch was a welcome tonic from the week's unmanageable mayhem and I really enjoyed the prepared food, full bar of drinks, welcome company from guests and club members & their positive inclusive chat. A bounty of raffle prizes from Al Phyllis gave me some quality 'odds & ends' I didn't know I needed plus some much need reel oil and grease. With the Bass Catch being a twice a year event, it's definitely worth putting the weekends aside for our Bass Catch, negotiating with the family and getting a 'passout' to camp, Bass-fish and spend time with members we sometimes miss on the water. It was a thoroughly good weekend, the weather stayed good mostly and we got to fish both days, I'm looking forward to the next.

Damian Balfour

Bush Safety

We've all done a walk-in somewhere, off the beaten track and into the bush to try and get to those fishing spots that the faint hearted just won't go to the effort to reach. How many times have you thought to yourself, hey...what if something happens to me while I'm out there? Am I prepared? What is the plan if there is only 2 of us? I was involved in a recent incident that really opened my eyes to how things can very quickly go wrong, and how you should be prepared to act. Had a little bit of luck not been on our side, things could have been a hell of a lot worse.

I'm taking this opportunity to talk about bush safety. So what sort of things can go wrong?

- Weather changes (extreme wind, fire, flooding etc.)

- Snake, spider and anything else venomous bites
- Dehydration/heat exhaustion
- Injury
- Other various mishaps

What you should always ensure you have with you:

- Plenty of water
- Food such as museli bars and other high glycaemic foods
- Pain medication
- **FIRST AID KIT****
- Satellite phone if possible/GPS
- First aid knowledge including CPR
- Warm clothing
- Matches or a lighter
- A torch or headlamp

Now, all this might seem to be over the top right? But it's not until something unexpected happens that you will have wished you were better prepared. Be proactive, not reactive and it could save your life!

The Easter long weekend marked a chance for me to head on another one of my favourite fishing adventures up north to the New England Region. My father and his mate have always been keen to do one of these trips with me, after seeing the pictures and hearing the stories of secluded rivers, picturesque scenery and Murray Cod! Neither of them having caught a Murray Cod before, were eager to do the trip. I gave them 3 months' notice, and told them that the trip was not for the faint hearted, and although it was going to be late March and not as hot as December/Jan, the heat is still very much around during the day. I told them it was imperative to build up some level of fitness and conditioning of the legs before the trip. My Dad of course, had no intentions of doing so, adopting the age old mentality of "she'll be right", despite my very strong and repetitive advice.

The first spot, saw the river lined with large boulders and the distance between pools meant that some trekking through these boulders and thick scrub was required.

About an hour and a half into the session, I hopped from one rock to another rather than climbing down slightly and walking around, this sort of thing was common practice for me, as I have some experience now and quite a decent level of fitness and good balance. I did not realise that my dad was following closely behind and mimicked my path, upon attempting to hop from one rock to another, he lost his footing and jumped off the rock and onto the ground below. Although the rock was less than a metre high, he did not bend his knees on landing and his legs did not have the strength to take the brunt of impact...his ankle snapped. Screaming in pain and letting out expletives he knew he was in trouble. "It's broken, it's broken", I looked down and saw my father's ankle flopping out to the side like only a foot being held on by skin and ligaments would do. Dad had broken both his tibia and fibula which was later confirmed. Instantly, my mind began to fluctuate between what I could do to help ease his pain but also what on earth we were going to do in terms of getting in touch with an ambulance. We had no phone service, and no, not even 000 works in the bush...yes...we tried.

My local contact Joe was fishing about 100m downstream, he heard the swearing but thought dad had broken his rod or something, it wasn't until he heard me yell out to him that we needed his help that he came running over to find that someone was injured badly. Without hesitation, he took off, saying he was going to try and get phone reception, luckily we had someone with us who was familiar with the area. It took Joe running for 5km before he got phone service.

In the meantime, we got Dad into a more comfortable position and calmed him down. Shock can play a major part in someone who has suffered major trauma, and although dad remained fairly calm, not everyone is the same, if someone is wet or sweaty or it is within the colder month's body temperature can rapidly drop and that opens up all sorts of additional problems.



Hunter Valley Weekend

I needed a break, had not been able to get out to fish for Bass for some time due to many different circumstances. I decided that I wanted to re-visit one of my favourite camp spots on a very special river. I invited some of the new members to the club for a weekend's fishing but unfortunately only two of them were able to break the shackles and make the trip. My good mate Milton had taken a fall only a couple of weeks prior and so he also was unable to make the trip either. I decided to add a couple of extra days to the front and back end of the weekend and headed up on the Wednesday prior and came home on the Tuesday after.

I arrived about two in the afternoon and the first thing I did was check out the river, it was low but nice and clean, I could not help myself, I took a snap on my phone and sent it to Rico, just to egg him on a bit. Once I had set up camp it was time to see if the fish wanted to play. As the pool where the camp site is, is quite large I decided that I would fish down one side and then back to camp on the other. I even took two rods, most unusual for me. I put on my favourite lure, a chatterbait in 1/16th oz. With a slider grub and on the other rod a new Fish Candy Cicada. I used the surface lure first and was soon getting hits but no hook-ups, so decided to put that away and try the chatterbait. Had my first fish after about three casts, reasonable size around the high 200's. I kept alternating rods and started to pick up the odd fish on the surface as well; the fish were playing. Before I knew it, it was time to head back to camp. Where did that hour go? I had landed nine bass, most in the high 200's and a couple in the low 300's. As the new guys were coming in on Friday, I decided not to fish the other side of the river when heading back to camp, but to leave it undisturbed for their arrival on Friday evening.

Next morning, Thursday, it was overcast and looked like it might rain so I made sure I had all my wet weather gear on board. Today I was going to fish downstream of the pool I had fished the day before, just pop down over the few rapids, piece of cake thinks I. As the river was low there were more rocks to dodge and some larger rocks below the surface were pushing up some nice sized pressure waves, no problem, the Aspire can

handle that. As much as I like the Aspire, it is so comfortable, I was soon to learn that it is a wet 'yak, first rapid, large pressure wave came over the side, a lap full of water, oh well at least I was still upright. I started catching fish pretty soon after the first rapid, same system as the day before, but there seemed to be so many more rapids, I had not been down this far for some time, the river had certainly changed since I was here last and the lack of water did not help. The fishing was good, twenty-three fish for the day with the biggest in the high 300's and was the last fish of the day as well. The only downside was that I seemed to be dropping many fish late in the day, ???, could not figure it out why. I felt that I had traversed as many rapids as the number of fish I had caught going back, portage after portage and when I got back into the yak past one of them I discovered that the rod tip had broken on one of the rods, BUGGER! And then the rain started, sigh, just what I needed - more water in the 'yak.

Friday, again I did not want to fish anywhere I was going to take the other guys so headed upstream to a small pool, that I had been to once before. Using the same system, but with my 4-piece travel rod as a substitute for the one I had broken the afternoon before, I started getting hits pretty soon after I was on the water, but again could not land a fish: big hits, runs and then nothing. It was then I decided that a new lure was required, so I put on a bigger brand-new chatterbait 1/8th oz. and on my second cast landed a nice fish at 365mm, that felt so much better. It is a very small section of river and only two pools worth working in such low water conditions so I headed back pretty soon. One last cast to a snag I had tried on the way up and I had a mighty hit and then a very hard run, this was a good fish, soon enough I got it close enough to have a look at, bloody hell it was a good fish, trying not to panic as it was pulling me about the pool, under the 'yak several times before it tired enough for me to slip the net under, 402mm, my PB for this river had just gone up, and no one to brag to. Oh well back to camp. Rico and Doug were due after lunch so I headed back to camp to meet them. They arrived not long after lunch and Doug was 'keen as' to get his 'yak into the water straight away, but we talked him into setting up camp first. Not sure how many fish these guys ended up with by the time they pulled out on Sunday, but each had managed to improve their respective PB's as well.

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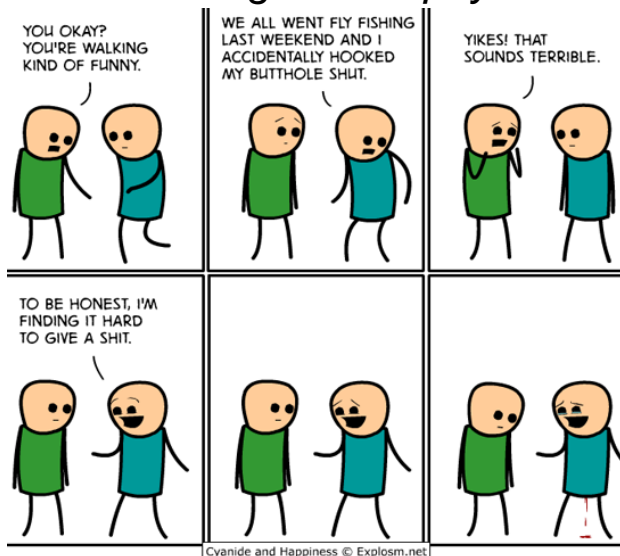
**Next Meeting is our AGM
Tuesday 12th April - 7:00pm for 7:30pm start.**

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