

Issue 188

TROUT FISHER

Fly-focussed

Autumn 2024

WORKS!

Long Tippet Flies
Beards & Snow Trout

The King Cometh!

KENZIE The Wild Goose-Man
Camping In Snow – No Better Time
Getting Hooked In The Brindabellas
Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler

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Beards & Snow Trout

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I worked the rifle in small increments when the line came tight right in front of a large submerged boulder. The weight came on and the fish slipped beside the boulder and ran hard downstream.

Simon Hoole fishes in Sichuan Province, China



Confessions of an Addicted Salmon Angler

8

That fish weighed 35lb, just under 16kg. The men were standing around admiring the large fish, when the lady spoke, "If that all there is to salmon fishing then I am not interested". And next day she brought a chair and sat and read the rest of the week. A few male anglers' heads went down after that comment. We had a quite laugh about it.

Part 5 of Larry Burke's 40 year experiences

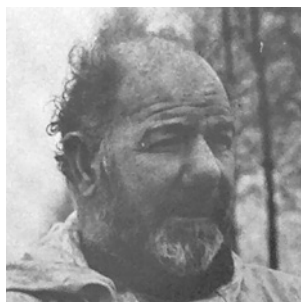


WORKS!

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By my time in 1 Glosters, a primrose back-badge on a black background was intrinsic to regimental identity – similar to a corporate logo. This colour combination is also very attractive to trout and so, over the years, as much for nostalgic reasons as practical, I've created numerous flies and lures that combine them.

Talking Plenty/At The Bench with Peter Storey



KENZIE The Wild Goose-Man

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In addition to being among the best huntsmen, he was also the middle-weight boxing champion of Lincolnshire. Willock was quite fond of Kenzie, and so was I, as I also came to visit him. He was a very adventurous individual; independent, born of gypsy blood, with negligible school attendance – and a target of the local police due to his unfriendly habit of poaching.

By Garrett Evans



Long Tippet Flies

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What is needed is a fly that it light in mass, but also provides slight "shuttlecock" wind resistance or pull back. An obvious choice of material for this is CDC. Fine synthetics such as Tiemco Aero-Dry Wing also work.

Around Ruapehu with Nick Taransky

Camping In Snow – No Better Time 26

I found a campsite just as it starting snowing again – securing shelter became top priority. With the tent up my next task was a fire. I've learnt to always search for driftwood if it's available. It tends to be drier and burns hotter than fallen beech. Soon a hot fire was warming my hands and drying my feet as my billy boiled in prep for a feast of Moroccan Couscous a La Backcountry.

By Ainsley Haslett



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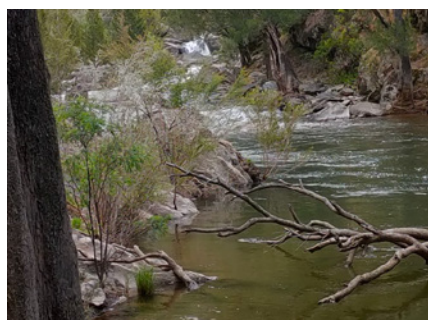
From I Love Fly Fishing, Kilwell and Manic

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Getting Hooked In The Brindabellas 36

I stumbled upon this river several years ago when camping at Micalong Creek at Wee Jasper, in the NSW countryside. Its tumbling heads, spilling into deep emerald green pools had me hooked early.

Matt Hoole profiles the Goodradigbee River, NSW



The King Cometh 40

I "guesstimated" its length and girth by placing the rod in the water and using it as a measure, resulting in an estimated length of 39 inches and girth of 32 inches. Although tempting, after much deliberation I chose against casting to it as I had my Sage Vt2 - 9-foot 9- weight single handed rod, aka "Tinkerbell"

Chasing quinnat on the Kitimat River, British Columbia, with Garry Scrimgeour and Pat Fargey



Trout or Salmon Pâté 52

This is a recipe we used as part of a platter in catering a wedding in the New Year. Special Thanks to friend, colleague and wonderful chef Rex Morgan for the recipe idea and in fact making it for the occasion . . .

Wild to the Table with Tony Smith



Cover

Another willow grub down the hatch (Nick Taransky)

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A large rainbow trout is being held by a person's hand, lying on a rocky riverbed. The fish is silver with dark spots and a pinkish-red belly. The background shows a river with rocks and water.

A 15 pounder . . .

The King Cometh

Chasing quinnat on the fly with Garry Scrimgeour and Pat Fargey



We, chasers of salmon on the fly, are a rare breed. Always misunderstood, typically tormented, seldom successful; stewards of books by Louis L'Amour. Pat and I had unfinished business chasing King salmon on the fly - we sought resolution. In July 2018, Pat and I had our first experience chasing King salmon in British Columbia, Canada. We naively hypothesised that we could land three species of Pacific salmon including King salmon, on the fly, during a single fishing trip to the mighty Kitimat River. After a week of determined spey fishing our hypothesis was soundly rejected. In fact, we barely managed to land two species: pink salmon [*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*] and chum salmon [*Oncorhynchus keta*]. The third species, the mighty King salmon, evaded us entirely. In hindsight, Pat likely hooked at least one King salmon but unfortunately wasn't able to land it. Without rubbing salt into the wound, that King salmon took liberties with my mate Pat and to say that he was spanked by it, although harsh, would not be too far off the mark (sorry Pat). And yes, I can hear Pat saying, "Well, at least I hooked one" to which I would offer, "a merciless yet fair comment". In addition to the disappointing number of species landed, our collective tally of four landed fish over those five days in 2018 was modest at best - pitiful at worst. Leaving the Kitimat, with our tails (and fly rods) firmly between our legs, we knew that we had unfinished business. So, in June 2020 we took a second crack at big Kitimat River salmon. Thirteen July marked our departure from Edmonton, Alberta, as we yet again headed west as part of 2736 km round trip. We are not addicted to fishing, it's just a dedicated relationship that would require 32 hours of driving. Here, we recount our trip. It's a tale of fishing chums, rods and tackle, majestic early mornings, craft beer and battles with the prodigious King salmon.

KING SALMON AND THE MIGHTY KITIMAT RIVER, BC

In North America, King salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) are also known as Spring salmon, Tyee, or Chinook salmon. In New Zealand they are more often known as Quinnt or Chinook salmon. The common name "Chinook" originates from the North American indigenous Chinookan peoples. The origins of its scientific name, "*Oncorhynchus*" translates into round or lumpy snout, and the species name of "*tshawytscha*" is based on the Russian common name of "chavycha" reflecting that the specimen first identified came from Russia.

Kings are the largest salmon on the planet, with the heaviest on record 126 lb (57.2 kg). However, the majority of anglers in Western Canada and Alaska encounter King salmon in the 10 to 25 lb range, with lengths between 24 and 36 inches. King salmon that weigh north of 40 lb are not uncommon and are the stuff of photographs. The largest King that I (Garry) have landed (and released) is 32 lb. I caught it in the upper reaches of the Vedder River, British Columbia. It was a well coloured fish with deep spawning colours and perhaps not the best-looking fish that I have landed. The largest King salmon that I have seen was in the Harrison River, British Columbia. It was probably 50 lb. The fish hadn't spawned and was swimming in crystal clear water just a few feet from the rivers' edge where I was standing. I "guesstimated" its length and girth by placing the rod in the water and using it as a measure, resulting in an estimated length of 39 inches and girth of 32 inches. Although tempting, after much deliberation I chose against casting to it as I had my Sage Vt2 - 9-foot 9- weight single handed rod, aka "Tinkerbell". That was probably a good decision.



Big water of the Kitimat River

The Kitimat River is located in coastal British Columbia and has a run of King salmon that peaks between May and mid-June. Fly fishers' angle for them between the mouth of the river to a bridge located about 25 km upstream of the ocean. Consequently, the majority of



fish that are caught are fresh run fish and those encountered in the lower reaches, where we fished in June 2020, are stunningly silver in colour. They are also immensely strong and feisty. Kings are a formidable fish and not to be engaged without careful consideration of rod type and length, line and leader weights.

As is our normal custom, we adopt a do-it-yourself approach to chasing King salmon. We camp at the [Radley Campground](#) on the outskirts of the small township of Kitimat where we set up Pat's 10 by 15-foot canvas wall tent. We access fishing sites along the river by driving and walking. However, there are lots of clean and comfortable hotels and motels in the region, several of which specifically cater to anglers, including offering guided float trips. If you are new to the area and don't have time to complete a reconnaissance, then staying in hotels and using local guides can be a viable and effective approach, worthy of a modest financial investment.

CHASING CHINOOKS ON THE FLY

Chasing Chinooks on the fly is typically done with 13 to 15-foot double-handed spey rods. There is a powerful elegance to fishing with them. Pat and I have mostly mastered the double spey, circle or snap-T, and roll casts (Pat more than I). We are efficient, but certainly not expert casters. On a daily basis, there are times when our casting goes "all to heck". When this occurs our spey lines resemble spaghetti noodles. They become wrapped around our bodies and Pats' hand-crafted flies transition to self-guided missiles that become lodged in waders, vests, and body parts. A note of caution, the mechanics of spey casting are governed by the physics of levers and resistance forces. When mastered, casting generates all sorts of loading to the rod that results in casting velocities exceeding 100 km hour. If you do choose to chase salmon in big rivers in British Columbia, you will encounter casters of true magnificence who are able to effortlessly cast 120 feet or more covering the water with incredible precision and ease. Pat and I encountered two incredible casters on the Kitimat River and we simply sat back and admired their talents. One point to note, fly fishing for King salmon requires knowing and applying fishing etiquette, much like fishing the Tongariro River. For instance, if there is another angler(s) swinging flies, you always enter the run upstream of them so that they get to fish all the way down through the run. Don't be accused of being a "low pooler". When in doubt ask other anglers about local etiquette. Most anglers are more than happy to share knowledge, flies and stories that contain dubious levels of accuracy.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Beer and anglers are a match made in heaven akin to fish and chips, pavlova and cream, farming and gumboots. Pat is an amateur, yet master brewer, and generously shares his knowledge of brewing and delightful flavour creations with me – he is currently a big fan of sours. We both trend towards impressively flavoured craft beers, irrespective of style. There is, of course, a place for mass-produced light crisp beers which we often title "lawn mower" or "swilling beers". I digress. Pat had put together a splendidly eclectic medley of craft beers for our trip to the Kitimat. While the quality, variety and availability of craft beer has blossomed over the last 10 to 15 years in Canada, finding a suitable bevy of craft beers in somewhat remote Canadian towns is typically problematic. With this in mind, after a 12-hour drive from Edmonton to Smithers, British Columbia, our expectations were low for finding a great pint of craft beer in the small town of Smithers. The hotel where we stayed had a pub adjacent to it, so the location was going to work well for us. After sitting down at a table, we cautiously asked the server if they had any craft beers



The beer turned out to be a delicious, full-bodied hazy ale . . .

