

The Fly Fishers' Club of Tasmania Inc.'



PO Box 460, Launceston 7250

www.flyfisherscluboftasmania.org.au

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Email Editor : burgessmichael@y7mail.com

Your Committee:

Peter Berne (Snr Vice President), Martin Hingston (Vice President), Graeme Frankcombe,
Lyndon Haines, Jack Barker, John Quarry, Sean Pridmore.

FFCT Newsletter: June 2020

June Meetings Cancelled:

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak there will be no General Meeting. The Committee will be trialing a SKYPE meeting to continue running the Club business.

Presidents Report May 2020

This months report sees us in a much more positive and hopefully safer environment right across the state. It has certainly raised some big challenges for everyone along the way however and the FFCT is certainly no exception.

Our plans to hold Aprils committee meeting via a Skype group call were successful which was a great relief. It took quite a bit of preparation and testing to get everything in place but in the end it was well worth the effort. The meeting had that distinct Covid-2020 look and feel to it which many of us have recently become familiar with. I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all the committee members for their big efforts. Many of them had to step right out of their comfort zones and come to terms with some pretty daunting computer challenges to make this at all possible. The meeting itself was pretty odd to chair, but once we got rolling it soon settled down into a conventional format where we could openly discuss all of the agenda items. I believe that our next committee meeting in June will probably be slightly delayed in the month, so that we can actually meet at the clubrooms if some more restrictions are eased.

Our planning for the next financial year is progressing well with a provisional budget and cash flow almost settled and ready to put into place. While there are still some areas of discussion to consider regarding these plans, I think it fair to make the comment that our intent is to keep any increases down to the absolute minimum with due concern for the challenging circumstances being faced by our membership.

I also hope sincerely that our good fortune regarding infection rates within Tasmania will make it possible to hold our Annual General Meeting in our normal manner. It is likely we will either occupy both of the cojoined halls at the clubrooms or else utilise the larger hall with the permission of our landlord in order to make this possible, and for us to meet in safety with the appropriate social distancing. There's another one of those classic Covid-2020 terms for us all to remember...

One of the topics for discussion at the committee meeting was the status of the building project at Penstock and the time scale regarding our building permit. I personally made contact with the Central Highlands Council's building inspector in April and he was both understanding and helpful about our need to extend the building permit period without penalty or any additional expense to the FFCT.

Once we are able to travel more freely and meet as a group we will soon complete this project at long last. I also took a trip up to visit both of our properties two weeks ago, and I can report that everything is secure, dry and winter-proofed in the normal fashion. An additional reason for my visit was the discovery of a clause buried deeply in the insurance policies about the length of time a building can remain unoccupied before coverage becomes void. A bit of investigation through some other fishing clubs around the nation revealed that this clause seems to be standard issue. So now we are still covered and our logbooks and camera photos can prove the point. I also took the opportunity to fit some flashings and enjoy a very beautiful late autumn day in the highlands.

I hope everyone is in good health and making the most of our changed circumstances. My apologies to our Editor Michael Burgess for my late entry with this report. I am currently working on the restoration of a vintage bamboo fly rod and my concentration has been on the 63 individual wraps required for the restoration. Consequently I have been slow in getting this report even started... but the 54 completed wraps do look rather nice.

Kind Regards... Jimmy Ellenberger President- Fly Fishers Club of Tasmania

Important Notice

As all members are aware, we are currently living in difficult and unprecedented times. So, to keep all members notified on what is happening within the Club, either by our monthly newsletters or important notice issues.

It is therefore extremely vital that we have your current contact details.

If you have recently changed your postal address, or email address, or phone number, or are uncertain that we have your correct details, then please tell us.

By contacting the Secretary by email at:

secretary@flyfisherscluboftasmania.org.au

FFCTas Season Events 2020

Contact the Secretary: **Richard Hawley** secretary@flyfisherscluboftasmania.org.au
for all details and confirmations

Members please check your accounts with **Treasurer Peter Hazelwood** at:

peter@oceanpower.com.au

Payments and club banking: New Account Details

Account: The Fly-Fishers Club of Tasmania

BSB: 633-000

ACC: 169922044

Information Only

Correspondence (since last meeting):

Outwards:

1. Committee – (email) Response to the committee actions due to COVID-19.
2. John Dekkers – Sympathy card on the passing of his wife.
3. Graham Rogers (via President) – (email) Current building update and extension due to COVID-19.
4. Gary Long – Sympathy card on the passing of his wife.
5. Corey Harris – (email) Response to budget forecast.

Inwards:

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4. Gary Long – Sympathy card on the passing of his wife.
5. Corey Harris – (email) Response to budget forecast.
6. BODSAC – (email) Club newsletters.
7. SAFFA – (email) Club newsletter.
8. VFFA – (email) Club newsletter.
9. President – (email) Future committee actions due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
10. Jen Cramer IFS – (email) Closure of waters due to COVID-19.
11. Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Last statements in closing the account.
12. Corey Harris – (email) Budget forecast spreadsheet.
13. Peter Rumney – Membership payment for the next 3 years.
14. Mike Stevens – (email) Prepaid shack rental suggestion.
15. Central Highlands Council – Receipt for final Rates payment for Noonamena.

Treasurer's Report for April:

Expenses: \$ 50.11

Income: \$ 1,235.80

Bendigo Bank: \$ 1,882.15

Would you like to nominate for Committee?

Prior to each Annual General Meeting, volunteers are called upon to nominate for committee. If you are considering standing for committee and feel slightly daunted, have a chat to an existing committee member. You may even attend, as a guest, at one of our committee meetings to see first-hand how the running of our great club actually works. It's great fun, you learn lots and get to see the results of our collective efforts - right from the outset.

There are plenty of diverse club projects each year and each requires a dedicated, close knit group to see them through to completion. The club survives on volunteers from all walks of life, sharing their various talents and experiences to reach a common goal - benefitting our members.

So if you believe that you can contribute a little time and offer your experience – please complete the nomination form below or contact a committee member to discuss your interest.

Great fly reels don't just 'magically happen', they are carefully crafted from various different parts and materials, assembled together purely to function as the angler intended.

No one part is more or less important than the other and the value to the angler of the whole unit, far exceeds the value of all the parts individually. That's how an effective committee functions.



Committee nomination form 2020/2021

I hereby nominate (please print)

as (position)

of The Fly Fishers' Club of Tasmania Inc, for the year 2020/2021

Nominator (signature) Date/...../2020

Seconder (signature) Date/...../2020

I hereby accept nomination

Call for nominations for the 2019 - 20 Club Awards



Max Christensen Award & Tanglefoot Trophy

In recognition of a member/s who have provided, over the last twelve months, a substantial and continued service to the club via many forms of contribution.

Past recipients of our highest accolade have been recognised for their valuable contributions in a wide range of areas / fields, including (but not limited to):

- outstanding service on committee
- undertaking additional duties on behalf of the club (sub-committee)
- significant contributions on working bees, projects, etc...
- representing the club on external activities (Adult Ed, AAT, IFS, etc...)



Snorkel Award

Members who have witnessed some unusual activities over the last twelve months and are prepared to 'volunteer' information, leading to the successful prosecution of any member guilty of going the 'full dunk' as part of their fishing / boating activities.

Annual Subscriptions are due on the 1st July 2020

Subs are due soon, please get yours settled at your earliest opportunity.

Annual Subscriptions for 2020 / 2021 are:	Amount
Ordinary Member	\$72
Junior Member (Under 18) & Full time Student	\$36
Eligible Pensioner (as defined by Rule 2 of the Constitution)	\$36

Members who have not paid their annual subscription by 31st August 2020 will be deemed un-financial, requiring payment of the \$30 joining fee as well as their overdue subs for membership.

The Old Tamar River Fishermen.

Bass Strait and its estuaries are not easy places to fish due to a great rise and fall of the tides, strong currents and extremely strong gale force winds. These have the effect of stirring up the shallow waters and retarding the growth of marine organisms which are part of the fishes food chain. The effects of human settlement have also taken their toll on the many endemic fish species.

Indiscriminate land clearing inland from the coast, artificial fertilisers, pesticides, introduced flora, sewerage emissions and all sorts of industrial waste have collectively taken their toll on the fish habitats. The dredging of the river to improve navigation has also effected the old ecology of the river beds and the tidal movements.

Hydro schemes have introduced even more artificial factors such as the introduction of fresh water at times that are unseasonable thus effecting the breeding habits of the fish. Ever increasing human population along the river banks, land clearing right to the waters edge upsetting the insect life which once was part of the fishes food chain in the form of insect life has all been changed.

The natural patterns of winter rainfall and long lasting snowfields which once fed the rivers has also been effected by long periods of drought and flooding. All these things do not make it any easier for the fish to survive. The tremendous turbulence caused by modern sea going catamarans and the discharging of bilge water from foreign ships is also a detrimental factor.

I am going to try and project you all back in time to an era when the Tamar River fishermen were in their heyday; they seemed to have appeared from nowhere at a certain time in our recent history and formed a tight little community along our river system. Perhaps they were the remnants of the old goldminers and early settlers that had found themselves thrown upon hard times, who knows? They were just there when I came into the district.

They lived in a state of perfect harmony with their surroundings , the phases of the moon and the state of the weather and tides governed their lives. They were mostly illiterate but not stupid, they were clever and resourceful, and plied their trade along the river quietly and without seeming to be there at all. It was from these remnants of a fast disappearing group of people that I became aware of when I first came to George Town to live in the early fifties.

When I first came to George Town to live in 1950, I soon became aware of the river fishermen who earned their living on the lower reaches of the Tamar estuary. These men each had a boat, which became known in the late nineties as cod boats because cod was one of the best known species of fish in this river system.

These vessels were about eighteen feet in length, around six feet on the beam and generally with about eighteen inches of freeboard. They had a wet well fitted amidships, were decked in over at the front for about five feet, about two feet at the stern, and had side decking of about ten inches. They were clinker built mainly of hardwood with pine wood ribs.

The level floor was supported on cross beams in lift out sections to allow for cleaning and stowage. From the rear of the foredeck there was a canvas tent like shelter called a tilt which could be lowered when rowing against the wind. The foredeck carried the anchor and rope, and there was also a bowsprit fitted. This was used as a means of climbing into the boat from the shallow water at the shoreline.

The rear deck carried the layed up net or nets, always ready to be let out when required. The space between the rear deck and the well was the working area and usually had a fire pot made from an old petrol drum, partly filled with sand and sitting on bricks. The boat's woodwork was protected from the heat by a sheet metal screen between the fire pot and the side deck.

Under the side decks was where the small fishing tackle was stowed consisting of trolling and cod lines.

The tucker box was in front of the well out of the way, and provided a seat under the tilt's shelter when waiting at a net set. Some of these boats had a small two stroke engine fitted to enable trolling to be done when out after the couta and blackback. The pots and pans for cooking were under the side decks in front of the well.

The old method of propulsion was by sweeps, which were operated from a standing position just behind the well. The fishermen relied on the tidal currents to take them to their fishing grounds. The shape and size of these little boats had evolved over many generations of trial and error and working experience. The boats were usually built by the older men at some quiet spot at the river's edge close to home during the off season. The planking and ribs, copper nails and roves would be selected very carefully by the older fishermen whilst on one of their infrequent trips to town and shipped down river on one of the family boats.

Quite a few of these old fellows were illiterate but far from stupid. They had their own system of measurements; for instance a thumb was an inch, a hand's breadth was four inches, a foot was a foot, a pace was a yard, an arm's span was a fathom, from finger tip to elbow was a cubit and so on. These measures were notched into a long piece of split wood with a knife and became their universal measure. They knew the stars and the moon's phases and the tidal behaviour at all times of the year. They had their own peculiar language which they used amongst themselves, they were extremely hardy and resourceful folk who spent long hours out of doors in all kinds of weather.

The keel which was a carefully selected piece of peppermint gum wood would be laid on level bearers and fastened down firmly. The keel was rebated by hand on each side before it was laid. The moulds made from wood and recycled from boat to boat were then fitted at predetermined spaces along the keel. At each end of the keel a vertical post was erected and braced. From this a strong overhead beam was fastened to each post and from this the moulds were braced. At this stage the stem and stern posts were fitted and also braced. The planking started from the keel and was fitted outwards towards the bilges and thence to the gunwales. The first plank was called the garboard and sometimes had to be hot water bent. It was fitted as a rule full width. At the front there was a very sharp twist from the keel to the stem. At the stern end there was also a severe twist where it joined the stern post. If the boat was to have a motor fitted then the rear end would be built down to allow room for a propeller shaft and gland. In the case of a built down shape the keel would slope downwards from the front to allow sufficient depth for a propeller.

The stem and stern posts were generally made from a local she oak natural bend which had been gathered before hand. The fishermen were always on the lookout for these natural stems and knees. There was a ready market for them at the boat yards in Launceston and it would provide them with a bit of extra cash now and again. Consequently these bends and knees were hard to find, and all the old wood cutters would be doing the same. These bends were kept wired under water in some nearby creek for the sap to be washed out and then hung in a bag in a shady spot until they were properly seasoned.

Those old fellows could build one of these boats in about three weeks and the life expectancy would be about twenty years for a hardwood boat if it was kept pickled in salt water. During this time, the owner would have recovered the cost of his boat many times over and thus the economies worked out on the right side of the ledger, if they ever had a ledgers.

The wood preferred for the decking was Baltic pine as it was light, strong and cheap. Sometimes the decks were covered with canvas which was painted on and water proofed. Sometimes these fishermen would take their boats miles outside the heads after couta, which at certain times of the year were very plentiful. Couta were the bread and butter line for them at the fish markets, but sometimes they would be smoked. If they caught too many couta, they were boiled up in a large drum and hung in the chook pen as extra protein for the chooks. Nothing was ever wasted, fish guts were used as garden fertiliser as well as seaweed.

These old fellows had their favourite campsites along the river banks away from populated areas where they kept a few chooks, perhaps a milking cow and a small garden. They were very independent of other people and had a community of their own.

I can remember one old man, well into his eighties who would go up to Launceston on the tide in his boat and visit his sister who lived at Inveresk. After a visit, during which he bought materials for his next boat, he would say his farewells and set off down river headed back to his favourite haunts where he would spend his time out fishing like he had always done ever since he could remember.

He would row out into the ebb current and be carried along by it all the way to the Devil's Elbow on the first tide, where he would anchor for the night, catch a few fish for supper and afterwards turn in on the mattress under the fore deck and wait for the next tide to carry him all the way home. It was not unusual to see him out on the water in mid winter with his little fire pot going at some spot where he would catch enough fish to keep him going.

Those were wonderful times of peace and solitude, away from the rush and bustle of city life. There were always all sorts of birds and animals along the unspoiled bush covered river banks. Here and there was a farm or an orchard with a little jetty to tie up to. He would set his rabbit traps and would never be without something to eat. He would have flour and salt, butter, tea, sugar, condensed milk, cooking fat and most things required to prepare a meal in his tucker box under the front deck.

When the boats were not required for use they were tied up near the high tide shore line so that they were only in the water for a couple of hours between tides. This greatly reduced the tiresome necessity of antifouling every few months. Marine fouling is one of the bugbears of operating a boat in salt water. Barnacles and oysters together with a multitude of other marine pests would attach themselves to the boat's bottom in a very short time, which made for hard rowing and slow progress under power. At his little campsite he most probably had a little hut made of drift wood and old galvo. This was his base camp where he kept all his handy stuff which would be needed for the next boat and also where he slung and repaired his nets. There would be a fireplace where he boiled the wattle bark for tanning and a few tools for his boats repairs.

This spot was his home base where his Missus lived and looked after things whilst he was out fishing. He had a favourite spot near point Effingham where he liked to anchor his boat on a flood tide, here he would have his dinner, which could be stewed rabbit and vegies, followed by a mug of billy tea flavoured with condensed milk.

After a bit of a rest he would step ashore and explore the foreshore for handy stuff that would have been washed up and left by the tide at the high water level. He would gather his fire wood this way and any useful timber he would take back to the boat and stow it away for later. This timber would have been ships dunnage thrown overboard and washed up on the shore or some piece from a construction job going on up river somewhere.

That piece of wood would come in handy to make something and save them having to buy it. Recycled driftwood was often used in furniture, shed frames, chook houses and if it was suitable it would find its way into his next boat as a floor bearer or some other piece that was needed. There was never any hurry to rush off anywhere, so after a while he would slide up under the fore deck and have a little snooze to freshen up for the nights fishing ahead.

The time of the year, the moon's phase, the wind direction, the state of the tide would all be factors to consider. They knew from long experience where the best spots were and head off to them a couple of hours before dark. As most of the fish species were nocturnal, night was the best time to fish and set their nets.

During the day at low tide, they would scour the beaches for anything that would snag up in their nets at night, they each had their own pad, which was jealously guarded. These spots had been handed down through the families for generations and the unwritten laws governed who could and could not work those spots.

These men slung their own nets from materials purchased from the ship's chandlers in Launceston when they were up in town. They used three quarter inch circumference rope for the lines, slinging twine for holding the finished net together, corks for the float line, home cast leads for the lead line and commercially made bunts. The leads were cast in a little mould like a pair of pliers with a knock out pin which formed the hole in the middle. Often a man would sit at his fire pot in the boat and cast his leads whilst waiting on his set.

The ropes or lines were stretched or straightened by towing them behind the boat in the water to remove the kinks before the bunts were slung. The slinging was accomplished by hanging the ropes between two poles over a grassy field; the centre being propped up like a clothes line about four feet off the ground. The two lines were slung together by using the slinging twine wound on special needles, one for the lead line and one for the cork line. Beginning about six feet from the end of each line the twine was tied firmly to the line with a half hitch kind of knot. If slinging a four and a quarter graball for instance, the slinging needle was passed through two loops of the bunt, and allowing for a hands breadth of space, another double half hitch was made around the lines. This space was called a nussel, and was kept roughly the same distance apart all along the lines until all the bunt had been taken up. A seventy five yard bunt slung to about a fifty yard net. When all the bunt had been taken up, the slinging twine was fastened off by a more substantial knot. About another six feet of the line was allowed and then the ends were spliced together to form a loop.

The holes in the leads had to be loose enough so that the lead would roll along the bottom and not twist up the lead line. There were two kinds of nets used. One was called a graball or gillnet and had enough leads to sink the whole net to the bottom and to press down the seaweed so the fish could not swim underneath. These graballs came in several different sizes; two and three quarters of an inch for large mullet and small salmon, three and a half for school trout, four and a quarter for trevally and trumpeter, five and a quarter for flounder.

This type of net caught the fish in the gills as it tried to swim through. The sizes of these nets was regulated by law so as to allow undersized fish to escape through the messes. These nets would be set in places at certain states of the tide where the fisherman from past experience knew that he had a fair chance of a good catch. The net was usually set at low tide amongst seaweed and the tide allowed to flood for a couple of hours before it was retrieved. Seals were a constant nuisance to the poor old fisherman; a single seal could rip great holes in a net in seconds. Therefore the fisherman stayed nearby whilst fishing in this manner.

The other type of net was called a seine; it was so made that the corks would float the whole net above the bottom. This type was used for casting on beaches and off reefs near the channel at low tide. The professional's nets had the garfish bunt One inch mesh, at one end and the mullet bunt two inch mesh, formed the rest and about one hundred yards long. This net was laid up on the rear deck of his boat with the garfish bunt at the top.

When he arrived at his spot he would tie the garfish end to a small stake which had been driven into the sand at the edge of the now exposed reef. He would then row his boat out and around in a semicircle and return to the shore once all the net was out. Here he would anchor his boat, get out and retrieve his net by gently hauling it in slightly above the waters edge, any fish he encountered were placed in a bag which he had with him. Continuing along the net he at last came to the garfish end and here most of the fish would have congregated as they tended to swim along the net as he worked it towards the shore. Forming a small wall in the water with the net by placing a handy rock on it above the water line, he would then retrieve his boat and return and scoop up the fish with a small landing net and place them alive into the boats well.

By this time the tide would have changed and covered his patch. He most likely at this juncture reloaded the net onto the boat's stern deck and set off for his graball set nearby, which he would also retrieve and if lucky, would have a few nice fish in it as well.

These old fishermen worked in the dark, the only light was from the sky, so everything about their equipment had to be just right. Most of the fish species were nocturnal and any sort of illumination would lessen the chance of a good catch being made. The nets were tanned by soaking them in boiled wattle bark and water to both preserve and to darken them.

One day I was invited to go out with one of them who afterwards became a great friend of mine. I remember going down the river with him in his boat late in the afternoon on the tide to his favourite spot over on the west bank. The first thing he did upon arriving was to set his graballs, which he marked with a very big white float. They were anchored at both ends and placed in a channel between two reefs and amongst the kelp type seaweed.

Continuing on a short way with the tide he made his way across to the now exposed small bank where his pegs were. There is only enough time for one shot with the net at slack water, before the tide changes, so he must do it all quickly. He rowed around and cast the net as described previously and made a very good catch. I helped with the work of retrieving the net and placing the fish in the boat's well. After this he got the fire pot going and we made billy tea which we had with condensed milk from a screw topped jar. We roasted some potatoes and ate them with butter. That was pretty good tucker out there on the river at night under the stars in the boat, something I will always remember.

Presently he moved the boat over to his set nets and we hung on to the net lines. "Hold the line" he said, and I did and felt the fish striking the net and getting caught. "We won't leave it in too long in case the seals come around" and then between us we hauled the net into the boat over the side. There were many fish caught and all were put into the well.

He then set off into the incoming tidal stream, which carried us with little effort all the way back to the fisherman's jetty at George Town. Here we sorted out the night's catch and got the boxes loaded for the service car's early morning run to the fish market in Launceston where he sold his catch. Some of the fish were earmarked for the local hotels and some were kept in the well for boat sales.

I again went out with him one day after the blackback salmon up river near Middle Island, he was using his engine this time and we putted along with the trolling lines out over the stern. The lines were very thick, almost light rope; this was so that they would not cut into one's hands when handling them all day, also they were not as prone to tangle up whilst in the boat. They were also weighted about a quarter of their length from the end with dog chain. This was to carry them down into deeper water where the fish were. As it was early spring, there was a lot of fresh water in the river at this time of the year, and the fresh water being lighter floated on top and the fish being salt water fish tended to stay near the bottom, hence the weighted lines.

He guided the boat around and around in circles outside the shoal of fish, picking up very many on the lines. The birds, Skuas, Seagulls, Molly Hawks were all excited and hovering over the water indicating where the fish were below the surface. He did not make the mistake of guiding the boat through the shoal as it would send them down, but rather went around and around the outside of them and letting the lines drag through the water at the shoal edges. It is very beautiful in this part of the river on a nice clear day, the inland mountains can be seen in the distance, still with some of the winter's snow on them and often there is a ship at one of the river berths. That day we went home with a boat load and as we went we started to clean and scale the fish, which were mostly blackback salmon. Sometimes in the early part of the season there would be a sea running trout in the haul, which he immediately said was a spotted cod because he did not have a licence for a fresh water trout. This was kept for the Missus as a special gift.

The fish were boxed up and sent to Launceston to the fish market, which in those days was on the Charles street wharf.

There was a permanent order from the local hotels for flounder and trumpeter and in season large flat-head. I remember him taking me out one night around the lighthouse a short distance, here he set his gill nets and then anchored the boat nearby. The waiting time was spent cod fishing. What cod, they were monsters, about three pounds in size and three at a time. Occasionally the odd gurnard came up on the line and he told me to wrap it in a bag so as not to get my hands poisoned on it's spikes. In no time we had the well full. They will fillet very nicely and when deep fried in lard they are wonderful.

There were a lot of striped trumpeter, trevally and magpie perch in the nets when they were retrieved.

Another time he took me out coutering, it seemed that half of George Town were out in their boats that day, we went so far out that the lighthouse was just a tiny dot on the southern horizon. A most amazing sight greeted us when we arrived out there, it seemed that as if by a given signal, hundreds of fish leapt from the water at the same time, all in the same direction and flashing their silvery sides in the early morning sun. We jigged for couta for some hours, and there were hundreds of the slippery things sliding all around in the boat, there must have been at least half a ton of them. By this time the wind was starting to come up and he headed for home, but where was home? No sign of the lighthouse anywhere. Don't worry he said, if we keep the sun over our right shoulder we will soon get there with the help of the now fast flooding tide. Sure enough in about an hour the lighthouse was again visible and so were all the other boats.

The whole town ate couta that night as well as all the chooks, cats and dogs, many boxes were dispatched up to town by the carrier to the fish market. Sometimes he went out around West Head to Badgers Beach where we fished for flathead by drifting along with the wind and dragging the lines along the bottom. Very often two fish were caught at the same time on a single line. The lines were made from very heavy cod line so that one did not cut ones fingers whilst handling it.

Out here on the sea it wasn't unusual to have dolphins playing around the boat and many kinds of sea birds flying about. I look back on those happy days and my friendship with the old fisherman with very fond memories. Sad to say with the advent of heavy industries and greater population up river many forms of pollution gradually drove out the fish that were once plentiful and of course the fishermen with them. Today in the twenty first century, only a few of us can still remember back far enough on those wonderful times that were there to be had and no longer exist.

Taylor's Beach was one of the favourite spots for seine netting. This they did at certain tides. Starting at low tide at dusk they would follow the tide in up the shore and keep casting their nets until near high water. Then they would stop, the risk of stranding the boat on an ebb tide was very real and also it was easier to handle the nets if they stayed in the water. A stranded boat meant that they would lose the fish in the well and would have to wait twelve and a half hours to refloat. Garfish and mullet as well as flounder were usually caught by seine netting, especially on a good dark moon less night.

The old fishermen sometimes used a long line for catching shark which had a ready market at all the fish shops, where it was sold as flake. There are very few examples left today of the lovely little boats that evolved on the Tamar back in those now far off days. The little jetties have gone and the river banks are now smothered with housing developments where it was once beautiful unspoilt bushland.

My old friend has long since gone to the great river in the sky, and I know that he still sits in his boat up there fishing and enjoying a nice cuppa of billy tea with condensed milk, waiting for all his old friends to come and join him. Whenever I go past Taylor's Beach, I look out over the river and remember him and those now long past evenings out on the river in his boat.

Edward Windsor 2000.