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# ◆ The Mountain Trout ◆

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The Official Journal Of The Haenertsburg Trout Association

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## EDITORIAL

Dear Members. I hope that in these difficult times you are still able to catch the odd trout?

Please note the following:

***We will be holding the AGM of the HTA on 21 August 2021 at the Iron Crown Club House at 14:00 followed by a bring and braai at 17:00 (see the AGM Notice that accompanies this newsletter).***

What needs to be done for the AGM:

1. We need to elect a new Committee and Office Bearers. Our Constitution makes provision for the following Committee structure. The Committee of the HTA shall consist of a maximum of ten and a minimum five executive members, which shall include the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.
2. Any proposed changes to the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Secretary to be presented at the AGM for consideration and voting. No alteration, addition or amendment to, or rescission of any clause or paragraph of the Constitution may be made except with the consent of at least 2/3rds of those present and entitled to vote at a General Meeting.
3. Finances — to receive and consider the Auditors Report and Accounts of the HTA for the preceding financial year.
4. To appoint an auditor and to confirm his remuneration for the past year.
5. To transact any business arising out of the report accounts.
6. Any other business raised shall be called “general” and may be transacted at the Annual General Meeting.

At a recent Committee meeting, the following issues were raised and discussed:

Finances: Our Treasurer, Harold Butler reported that the HTA had 257 active and paid up members. That income had been slow because of COVID and that we had a shortfall of R35K which is cause for concern. What is causing this shortfall? There are members who have not paid their subs and should be encouraged to make every effort to do so before they are removed from the membership lists. Secondly, income from the Iron Crown Club has been slow because of the effects of COVID. Hopefully, this trend will be reversed when restrictions are lifted. Thirdly, we have always had some income from donations in the past and these have dried up. If anyone would like to donate to the HTA, please contact Harold Butler.

Harold believes that, if we are careful, we should be able to come through the year without having to draw from reserves. Harold will arrange for the books to be reviewed by the auditors for the AGM.

Concern has been raised about the condition of the buildings at the club. There are repairs, painting and maintenance that need to be done. After much discussion it was decided that Andre Gouws and Quintin Anderson would call for quotes to do this work. The Committee had reservations about spending money at this time because of

the financial constraints brought about by COVID. Zamps believes that we should ask for donations of paint and hardware from members and thus save ourselves a great deal of money. So, if you, as a member would like to donate paint and materials to the club, please contact Andre Gouws or Quintin Anderson to talk further.

The perennial issue of boats and jetskis raised its head at the meeting. The following needs to be conveyed to members: Boats can be launched from the slipway after paying a launch fee to Johannes. The boats must be registered with the authorities and skippers need to be licensed. No skiing from the shoreline of the club, please move off into the dam before towing a skier. No boats allowed behind the cable into the gully. Boats cannot be stored on the premises of the club. Jetskis are not allowed onto the clubs premises or shoreline and may not be launched from the slipway.

Andre Gouws reported that the trout breeding program had gone well and the hatchery was full of baby browns and rainbows. He said that he had stocked 20 000 small fish into the streams and still-waters. He believes that we should be stocking smaller fish in the future and allow the strongest of these to survive. HTA could save a lot of money on fish food if we did this.

Two new waters are available to members; Bloemtuin and Windmill. To enquire about booking and access to these, please phone Poppie Froneman.

For all waters available to members, please go to [www.htatroun.co.za](http://www.htatroun.co.za) for information.

Of interest, it was reported that there are two Hippo's in Ebenezer, one is a calf so beware when boating or fishing from the bank!

It was reported that gill nets have been removed from Ebenezer Dam. The fact that this practice has arrived in our waters is cause for concern. We don't want people netting our fish so please remove any nets that you may come across.

Our Association is as strong as the membership and the Committee thanks those members who are committed and involved in the well-being of fly fishing on the mountain. Please show your strength by supporting the AGM.

Until next time. Mike Biccard



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“But sunshine produces shadows, the riverbed lights up, fish get easier to spot, even if the mild contradiction in all of this is that, as fish get easier to spot, they also get a whole lot more difficult to catch.” Tom Sutcliffe, Shadows on the Stream Bed

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SOME CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Chairman—Peter Bradfield	peter.bradfield@za.sabmiller.com
Vice Chairman—Quintin Anderson	andersQ@eskom.co.za
Financial and membership matters—Harold Butler	calypso@axxess.co.za 0153073370
Secretary—Mike Biccard	mbiccard@gmail.com
Bookings and enquiries - Poppie Froneman	0832901962
Website	www.htatrout.co.za



New “old” hatchery



One of our breeding Browns ready for stripping, please be assured that this fish was not harmed in any way and very quickly recovered from anaesthetic.

Our thanks go to Andre, Quintin, Johannes, Lena, Piet and others who have done such a sterling job to ensure that we have a new crop of trout in the hatchery. They have worked tirelessly to fulfil our breeding program and we are very grateful for their efforts. We must also thank them and everyone else who was involved one way or another in the revamping of our hatchery. The old dilapidated structures have been replaced and the hatchery looks spic and span. Thanks to you folk who work so hard behind the scenes.



Fish ova 2021



**BLAST FROM THE PAST!**

The piece that follows is from a newsletter published in January 1998.

**GROWING PAINS.**

By RED SETTER.

Tom Sutcliffe in his book "Reflections on Flyfishing" writes about the 'Five ages of a fisherman' based on the ideas of an American fishing journo call Zahner who once said that all fishermen go through five distinct phases of development in their progression from novice to so called expert.

*Stage one* - the stage of so called "ignorance" during which the aspirant flyfisher is consumed by a deep longing to catch ANY trout.

*Stage two* - the stage of "excesses", the time when the now fairly successful flyfisher attempts to catch the ENTIRE trout population.

*Stage three* - the fisher is overcome by a burning desire to catch BIG FISH, not just any fish, only trophy sized specimens.

*Stage four* - size and numbers lose significance, the fisher is now concerned about EXTREMES, the lightest rod, the smallest fly, state of the art terminal tackle - anything to verify new found expert status.

*Stage five*- that sublime point that we will all unwittingly reach if we stick around long enough, the stage of TRUTH. It is here that a great light dawns on the fisher and he suddenly realises that all the airs and graces, the self fulfilling glow that goes with expert status, the smugness that accompanies "there walks the fundi that catches all the fish", all this is no more than diddly squat, it means nothing, niks! THE TRUE MASTER OF THE GAME, THE LEVELLER OF ALL OPINIONS, THE "EXPERT" OF OUR SPORT IS THE TROUT WHICH WE SO ARDENTLY PURSUE.

Sutcliffe is one of my favourite fishing authors, he has a way of beefing up a theme with much down to earth humour and perceptive observation. Speaking of themes, I came across another version of the stages of a fisherman. This was written by a chap called H.G.Tapply many years ago. He suggested that fishermen (and hunters) pass through three phases in their pursuit of quarry. They begin as LEARNERS, gradually develop into efficient HARVESTERS and eventually end up as PHILOSOPHERS. The question one needs to ask, expounds Tapply, is "at what stage does the fisher have the most fun?"

*Stage one - LEARNER*, we learn how to tie knots, select the right fly, understand a leader and we begin to master the jargon that goes with our sport. Catching a fish is a truly exciting experience and many legends are born.

*Stage two - HARVESTER* - we start earning a reputation for our ability to catch fish all the time, even under the most difficult circumstances.

*Stage three - A PHILOSOPHER* is born. Eventually, after fishing for a considerable time, you realise that the act of catching a fish is not as important as you thought it was. You have caught hundreds of fish and a few more will make no difference. Your intent now shifts from the fish to the fishing. More time is spent enjoying those aspects of the sport that you missed out on while relentlessly pursuing your quarry. Your focus shifts to the pleasure evoked by the beauty of the trout environs, the little details that evaded you before like; how a kingfisher flying from one vantage point to another always flies as straight as an arrow or how the "oke" poaching in the bushes walks with the same limp, as he hurries into the trees, as the Water Bailiff. If at this stage, a few fish are caught, so what. One can't rest on ones laurels for too long and you will probably let the 'critters' go anyway. I am starting to suspect that Tapply was absolutely spot on when he spoke of the FUN aspect of our sport. We tend to get so involved with the esoteric that we neglect to notice the truth - we don't see the wood for the trees. To illustrate my point: there is a fabulous story of an elderly gentleman who spent the better part of his active life pursuing the BIG one and having no success. One day, in his twilight years, he hit the jackpot and hooked the fish of his dreams, a veritable leviathan. First, he ran upstream and then he ran downstream in pursuit of his fish. He fell over rocks, tripped over stumps and still he would not give in. Eventually, he collapsed in a mangled heap still attached to a very live fish, at the feet of the local Padre who was out for his evening stroll. The Padre gently reminded him that before he killed himself, he should remember that the "thing" out there at the end of his line was only a fish.

(With apologies to Tom Sutcliffe and H.G.Tapply.)



Gill netting has arrived in Ebenezer



A Hippo in Ebenezer, who would have believed it?





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*I received this letter from Hugh Huggett, a member of HTA for many years.*

6 July 2021

Dear Mike

Many thanks for the quite remarkable Mountain Trout edition (MTN 54). I sent it out to Alan (Alan Deverson, New Zealand) as we shared many experiences in common and Haenertsburg was especially super and changed my life. (We were both on SA Schools' Hockey Committee and he umpired matches while I was i/c Southern Transvaal hockey teams).

Alan spent time teaching our kids the rudiments of trout fishing at his pool at the block of flats at Green Briars in Parkhurst. I knew his parents and was saddened at their unexpected deaths. I never knew of the Lakeside memorial but I did know of the azalea planting of 30 plants at the entrance to HTA Club.

Our son, John, caught his first ever trout at Dap: we were out on the water when Alan caught a trout and swapped rods with John. The trout slipped his rod but amazingly John caught one on his rod and so they had to swap back again.

Thanks you for another contact in the Barkley East area – I am hoping to try the Ugie /Maclear river waters later after our lockdown. I also found the photos quite amazing: we have been in the area at drought time but have never seen the dams like that. When we were up last during such a time the dam at Tzaneen had only a trickle in that amazing stretch of water – quite amazing.

Keep well and thanks for including my two pieces – I sent the Mountain Trout off to our kids and three of my trout fishing friends.

Hugh

*Hugh mailed the Mountain Trout newsletter to Alan Deverson who retired many years ago to New Zealand. Alan was the Chairman of the HTA for many years in the previous century. He worked incredibly hard building our club up to what it is today. He was the driving force behind, amongst other things, the hatchery, the new ablution block and the azalea gardens at the club. He motored up to the club at least twice a month from Johannesburg to work on the various projects he had going. Alan had his own rondawel on the terrace above the tin huts so he never had to book accommodation. I always used to phone Johannes before going up to the club to fish to find out whether Alan was going to be there or not. Going up to the club when Alan was there was not a good idea because you would be roped in to work and not much fishing would be done. In the early 90's I recall being asked nicely by Alan to shoot an otter that had been raiding the hatchery. I sat next to a fish tank with a 12 gauge shotgun in the dead of a bitterly cold winters night waiting for the otter. When it arrived and hopped into the tank I did not have the heart to shoot it so I kicked the side of the tank and chased it out of the hatchery. I never told Alan what I did that night, he would*

*probably have shot me! Sorry Alan.*

*What follows is Alan's reply to Hugh.*

Hugh

Lovely to get your email and the HTA news. Although I joined aged 18 when Dr Jock Stewart (Vet) was secretary. Ian and Cindy Harding did most of the work once they retired to Haenertsburg and officially became secretary and treasurer when Jock died. Ian also honed my fishing skills and loved playing golf down at Tzaneen. One of his lessons taught at Dap Naude Dam was watch the water closely, more so when there was a ripple. At that time I was more inclined to chuck and chance whereas he would not cast until he had seen a flash of silver in the ripples. I applied this to good effect out-fishing Mike West and his friends from Botswana. I had been working with the trout in the tanks when they went to fish the gully about 3.30pm. When I finished, had a cup of tea and wandered up about 5.30pm and sat on the bank about 50m away from them. I ignored shouts of "aren't you fishing and after observing 2 trout swimming up and down near the bank I made one cast and caught a trout of about 4lb and promptly packed up to return to clubhouse for a much needed shower.

The pictures of Stanford's three waterfalls also brought back memories of 3 large rainbows caught there when the dam was full. I had returned from NZ with a reel loaded with lead core line and one winter's day I rowed from the Iron Crown to the one visible waterfall. I let the line out fishing the 2 hidden falls in turn and like the gully, spawning trout were lying over the ledge. When the water level is low members need to walk around the bays observing the hidden ledges and if possible take photos or draw sketches for future reference. A number of the bays have small streams and help attract fish. Although the rivers and dam has suffered a drought this has happened before and somehow the trout and other fish survive. Hopefully a number of carp have been caught by the locals.

In 1942(?) Mrs Lake also known as Mrs Harrington with one other landowner dammed the Helpmekaar Stream at the road bridge forming a dam known as Troutwaters (Lakeside). Before the fire destroyed the boat and shed she had a boat shed down at the bridge, fortunately the oars and mast were kept up at the house.

I am pleased to get news of your family and hope all well.

I have been hoping to get out fishing but although holding a licence for 2 years, commitments at the golf club have kept me busy. I hope to step down in November and regain some personal time. The rebuild of the clubhouse has still not started with a sub-committee taking over the task and they are not putting in the time required.

Best regards

Alan



Giant Kingfisher. One of the residents at the club, flew into a clubhouse window but recovered fully. What a formidable beak!

We wish all our members well this winter and hope that you stay safe and COVID free.

We look forward to some excellent fishing once the lockdown is lifted.

Kind regards. Mike Biccard. Editor