



Kid Stuff . . In Another Era

I was discussing the other day with my fishing mate John, some of the things that we used to get up to when we were kids whilst following our penchant for all things to do with fishing.

We both had a good laugh about some of the things and John suggested that I should write some of them down as others might get a bit of a laugh, too.

Going back more years than I care to admit, I used to live in Victoria in a place called Morwell. This area had terrible weather especially during the winter and it was known locally as Pluracy Plains. One thing it had going for it though, was the good

Ebb & Flow

with Neil Dunstan

fishing in many of the local creeks.

As a school kid I used to pedal my bike out to the Morwell River and spend the day catching freshwater crayfish which we used to catch in much the same way as catching freshwater yabbies, ie a piece of meat on string and a landing net. Often we would catch twenty or so of these delicious crustaceans and some would be as big as a decent sized crayfish, so the ride home with a sugar bag filled with fifteen kilos of the best tucker around, was a bit of a struggle. I believe it is against the law to catch them now, but this was over fifty years ago, and there were plenty around then.

Another fun time was when we used to ride the bikes out about ten miles to the foothills of the Strezlecki Ranges to a small creek called Billies Creek. We used to fish for the trout and blackfish which were plentiful then.

I owned a beautiful split cane trout rod with a small, cheap spinning reel which was my pride and joy, as it took many months of

saving from my paper round to buy it. Our method to catch trout was to chase down grasshoppers and put them on a small hook alive without any sinker and whilst walking upstream, cast up to the head of each pool and let the grasshopper drift down with the current. We caught heaps of trout but for a bit of a change we would drift worms down in the current and catch the local blackfish which were very good eating, even better than the trout.

It is very interesting how things have changed since then, as catching both freshwater crayfish and blackfish is now illegal, I believe.

Also, although we were only fourteen years old, we all had a single shot .22 rifle which we carried over our shoulder on a sling and even rode through town with them without raising an eyebrow.

As we walked slowly up the creek fishing for trout, into ever more rugged hills and ravines following the creek, we would come across plenty of rabbits which we would despatch

regularly using only low powered .22 short bullets which was all we could afford. At the end of the day we usually had quite a good haul of fish and rabbits which were very welcome at home - for a family of eight kids, buying meat was really only a luxury and this was our main supply of such goodies.

All this country was also over run with blackberries, and apart from eating heaps of them, we also picked a couple of kilos to take home, and in the early part of spring, we found heaps of huge mushrooms which were also welcome.

I firmly believe that we grew up with a much more responsible attitude even though most parents today would be horrified if their kids got up to the same things we did.

Significantly, I can say that we never vandalised public structures or slashed train seats as we were too damn busy having a great time in the outdoors fishing and hunting.

Neil Dunstan, Sarina

F&B