

Caught in the Act - A Fishing Adventure

By Darren Gallagher

In the never ending pursuit of a great story, I found myself up at RAAF Base Amberley a short time ago, and got chatting to Corporal Darren Bradford, Treasurer of the RAAF Amberley Fishing Club. Luckily enough for me, he had time to spin a couple of tall tales about the one that got away, and cast a little more light on something that some of us may not know about.

So Darren, great name by the way, what is it that you do here at Amberley?

G'day, I'm currently employed as a NDT (Non-Destructive Testing) Technician at 6 SQN. I have only been back at Amberley for about two years now. At the moment I am also the current Treasurer of the RAAF Amberley Fishing Club (RAFC).

Look I'll be honest, I wasn't really interested in that answer, I just felt like I needed to ask it before we got down to that 'hunter/gatherer' experience that is fishing! How long have you been throwing lines in the water?

I have been involved in some form of fishing for as long as I can remember .

My earliest memories are of catching freshwater yabbies as kids in the dams back home on our property. These days, my three year old son Ben, also enjoys fishing and is using the same rod and reel that I originally started out with over 30 years ago.



Corporal Ray Foster from 6 SQN holding up a nice Grunter Bream caught earlier at a comp up near Caboolture

That's great. I think I started with my dad's old reel too. Being part of a club must make that more fun too. Tell us a bit about your club.

The RAFC is open to membership from both civilian and Defence personnel. The club's aim is to promote the sport of fishing amongst the Defence Force and the wider community. We normally hold about 8 to 10 competitions a year at various locations throughout South-East Queensland. We usually include a couple of beach comps as well, so you won't need a boat to attend these.

Although they are called 'Competitions', each trip is more of just a social gathering. They are not overly competitive at all. Membership is \$25.00 a year for singles or \$35.00 for a family. This normally also covers your attendance at the Club's end of year function. You definitely do not need to be an experienced angler or own a boat to come and join the Club.



Imre Kolcze holding up a pair of bass caught out at our Somerset Dam competition

The hire boats are available to club members to use at the comps at no cost on each competition weekend. The Club has three boats available for hire ranging from a 4.8 metre centre console for open water fishing, down to a 3.8 metre tinny which is more suited to fishing the local estuaries and dams. We also have several canoes available for hire if you're feeling fit enough. If you just prefer camping, we have two camper trailers available at very competitive rates. (See pictured Boats)

Anyone interested in joining the Club is welcome to come down to the Clubhouse on a Tuesday afternoon from about 3:30PM to further discuss the matter over a cool beverage. The Clubhouse is located next to the Aussie Rules oval at the Front Gate of RAAF Amberley. Alternatively, further

information on the RAFC is available on our RAAF Intranet Website (Amberley Fishing Club). The site contains our committee member contact details, hiring costs, an event calendar and other information regarding the Club.



Corporal David Barnett from 38 SQN proving that a fish doesn't need to be real big to put a smile on your face.

Now this may be a stupid question, but in your experience as, well heck, the most experienced angler in this conversation, have you ever seen anyone catch an old tyre or boot as they do in the movies?

No, I've never seen anything like that caught before but I have

been involved in my share of misadventures. In fact I actually christened my boat, 'Miss Adventures' several years ago. One adventure that always comes to mind occurred while fishing a crocodile infested river just out of Darwin with mates from 6 SQN. We had spotted numerous crocs throughout the morning including one which was 'the size of a freight train', as one lad put it.

Shortly afterwards, one of the boys entangled a lure up in the fork of an old dead tree high above the boat. Being relatively inexperienced at all things aquatic, the angler quickly stood up on the edge of the boat to retrieve the lure, reaching precariously upwards. The inevitable happened and he was soon frantically thrashing the water to foam in an attempt to get back into the safety of the boat ASAP. Thankfully the 'freight train' wasn't hungry that day and we are all still around to laugh about it now.

I guess that's part of the reason why I enjoy belonging to the club. It gives you a chance to get out and do something that the other people around you also

DOWN TIME

defence

family matters

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enjoy and you get the chance to have a drink and a laugh with them afterwards at the end of the day. See you down there.

Great stuff, Thanks Darren - good hunting.

Downtime update: *Some may remember Darren's Charity Bowls match from the Spring 2007 edition. Well his competitors on the day, the Wombats Lawn Bowls Collective, have just celebrated their first birthday on 28 February. So to all the boys 'Happy Birthday and good rolling'.*



Imre and David cruising down the Caboolture River in his Quintrex