



ISLAND WATERS FLY FISHERS

IN MEMORY OF

BILL BROWN



Bill and Lenie Brown

This special edition is to honor Bill, one of the founders of the Island Waters Fly Fishers Club



The Island Waters Fly Fishers
Box 323, Lantzville, BC
V0R 2H0

The Purpose of our club is as follows:

- To practice, further and promote the art of fly fishing
- To practice and promote fish conservation and enhancement
- To encourage fellowship and sportsmanship amongst anglers

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The British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers (BCFFF) is a registered, non-profit society whose main objective is to promote the conservation of the fishing environment in British Columbia. By networking with similarly minded clubs, organizations, businesses and individuals, the BCFFF provides a voice that reflects its member's and the public's concern for the future of B.C.'s natural resources. Our organization believes that concern for the future of our province's environment is not just the exclusive domain of fly fishers or other recreation groups, but should be the concern of all citizens. Consequently, it is with this broader population in mind that we strive to protect and promote our natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations to respect and enjoy.

Visit the BCFFF on their webpage at <http://www.bcfff.bc.ca/>

Meetings on 4th Tuesday of the Month at the Ukrainian Hall at 4017 Victoria Ave. off Norwell Dr. Visitors and Guests welcome. Phone 758-2138.

Email us at iwff@shaw.ca Ph 758-2138

Visit at www.members.shaw.ca/iwff



Bill Brown at one of the Island Waters Fly Fishers' fly tying sessions at the Tinling's home.

The following is the news release issued to the news media and appeared in the December 10 issue of the Nanaimo Daily News.

The following is Ken McLaughlin's response to an email sent to all the Island Waters Fly Fishers members. His entire message is printed because he wrote some very touching and appropriate remarks - especially the last statement.

Brown, "Sir William" (Bill) W.G.F.F.



Born February 16, 1918 in Nanaimo, passed away December 7, 2003. Predeceased by his daughter, Julie, and his brother George. He will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Lenie, of 56 years; his grandsons Kim (Susan), Chad (Suzenna), brother Kenny, sister Margaret as well as other family and many dear friends. A service to celebrate Bill's life will be held at 1:00 P.M., Saturday December 13 in the Bowen Chapel, 1720 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, B.C. In lieu of flowers, donations in Bill's memory to a charity of choice would be appreciated. Many "Thanks" to the staff and friends at the Nanaimo Senior Village.

Memorial Society of British Columbia
First Memorial Funeral Services 754-8333

Thanks for the email regarding Bill.. He was a good friend to so many of us, we're all going to miss him. I'm writing the note on the calendar as we speak. I'm glad we held that dinner for him when we did. It would have been a shame to have missed the chance. I'm sending along the toast we offered him that evening, not so very long ago.

Toast and Presentation:

This is not the first time Bill has been honored. Others have named him things before. (I won't repeat them all,) but he has been awarded at least two honorary titles that I know of: Piscator Honoratus et Veridicus, (Latin for: Fisherman who is both Honorable and Truthful), and Piscator Emeritus (also Latin for: Old Fisherman who smells like it.)

But we're here tonight because of another title: one that he seems to have awarded himself. "The World's Greatest Fly Fisherman" How do you qualify? Is it about catching the most fish? The biggest? The wariest? Maybe, but I'm not so sure. Maybe it's about the love of bright waters, and the creatures that live in them. If it is, then maybe Bill qualifies. If it's about the love of the art and science of the angle, then I'm sure Bill qualifies. If it's about the myths, and yarns, and stories we tell, then Bill most definitely qualifies.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me. Raise your glass and join me in honoring the man who is "by his own admission" the World's Greatest Fly Fisherman: Bill Brown.

My deepest sympathies to Lenie and her grandsons. We remember him with affection and with a smile.

**Regards,
Ken**

BILL BROWN'S INTERVIEW



Bill poses in front of a painting he did of his favourite fish - the Sea Run Cutthroat.

This interview was done July, 2003 in Bill's home. He was a little hard of hearing but this was OK because he was doing all of the talking anyway. The purpose of the interview was to use it in the Island Waters Fly Fishing Newsletter - but there was not enough space in the Fall issues. Publishing it in this special issue may be more appropriate anyway. The only downside was that, although a copy was left with him about two weeks before he passed on, he was unable to proof read it.

How long have you been fishing?

I started at the age of 10 which was 75 years ago.

How did you get started?

I was self taught. When I was 10 we lived in Burnett Washington and my dad worked for Pacific Coast Coal Company on Mt. Rainer. There was a little creek that ran through the town locally called the Burnett Creek but later

on I found out that it was actually the South Prairie River. My friends and I fished for trout in the creek using bush willow for rods and gut for string. Flies were tied to the gut. My dad won a three piece steel fly rod, nickel plated fly reel, enamel fly line, (cracked every half inch - by the way), and a willow creel. We bought seven foot gut leaders (had to be wet) with two loops. One was a tail loop and the other one was a dropper loop. The snelled flies were put onto the loops. I did not see anything but snelled hooks until many, many years later. The flies were purchased in six packs - three one way and three the other way in cellophane envelopes. You just ripped them open. They had names such as Cow Dung, Parmachine Bill, Black Man etc. I could not cast so I just flipped the fly into fast water



Bill Brown, 1968 - note the creased trousers and dapper hat. Fly fishing for Bill was more than an event. It was a momentous occasion - duly recorded by a professional photographer.

and allowed the fly to drift into the pool below. We were catching 7 to 9 inch trout. One day I saw a much older fellow (he was about 16) come down to the river with a similar fishing outfit as mine. When I asked him how he was doing, he showed me two trout nestled in grass in his creel. They were at least 12 inches long – the first real game trout that I had ever seen. I exclaimed “holy smoke! What flies did you use?” He replied “Worms”. The irony of it all is that I thought that I could hardly wait until I was old enough to use worms and get rid of this fly stuff.

We moved to Vancouver when I was about 12. It was 1929 at the start of the depression but I continued to fish. I frequented the North Shore streams: Lynn Creek, Seymore Creek, Capalino River etc. We could also take the tram out to Burnaby and the Lower Frazer Valley, jump off and start fishing the Nicameckle, the Serpentine and others. As I got older and got transportation we would head up country to Kamloops where there were several hundred lakes all within driving distance. We would go in the spring then later in the fall. Never in the hot summer. Later I would use flies to go after Steelhead with club members up the Squamish River. That was a big thing in our life – going after Steelhead. This continued until about 20 years ago when I got turned onto Sea Run Cutthroat. - which could be caught locally.

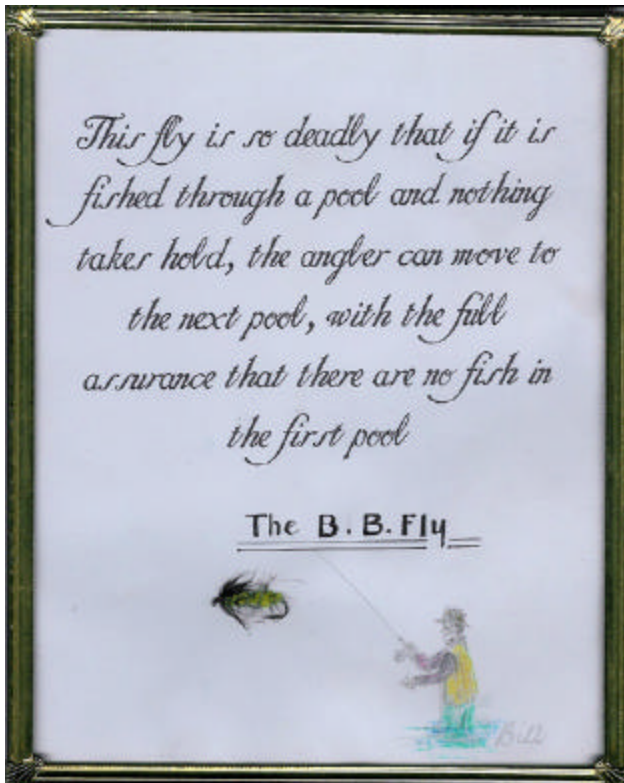
You mentioned club members. How did you get into a fly fishing club?

We started the Totem Fly Fishers in 1967- Jim Kilburn, Jim Stewart, Martin Tolly and I. We wanted to get “Fly Fishing Only” water from the government. Dr. Jimmy Hatter was the director of the Fish and Game Branch and he did get us Salmon Lake among others to be designated for fly fishing only. I worked with Jim Kilburn at the Electrical Department, City of Vancouver and met Jim Stewart on the Lac Lejuene sometime in the 1950’s. The idea of starting a club was spawned while fishing on the Squamish River and we held our first meeting in my rod room.



Tolly was the first president and I was the vice along with treasurer duties. We got a lot of help from the Everett Fly Fishing Club, Washington State. Their constitution was incorporated but was modified slightly to suit our needs. It was the Americans who taught us trout release – all trout. They also taught us about outdoor cleanliness. Upon arrival at a campsite, they would pick up all the loose cans, bottles, garbage etc. into plastic bags. All this without uttering a word. At that time the locals were the dirtiest people on the face of this earth!

At Peter Hope our club hosted a fish out. There were over 100 attendees from such places as Seattle, Everett Fly Fishers, and local clubs. It was catch and release only until the last day when you were allowed to knock one. There would be less than 30 taken during a long weekend. I passed by a local group who were complaining about how the Americans were taking all the fish. When I asked them how many they had caught, their response was nine. I told them that our group had taken zero in the last two days. When that group departed they left a filthy, dirty mess. When the Americans left, the campsites were spotless – even the rusty tin cans were removed from the water. It was all taken to a service station or somewhere far away from the campsite. Yes, the Americans taught us a lot.



In 1968 we joined the FFF (Fly Fishing Federation) and were the first foreign club to be associated with them. We attended their Annual Convention in Ocean Shores, Washington that same year. Our contingent was the largest and most prestigious in North America. Our guest speakers were Dr. Jimmy Hatter, Roderick Haig-Brown amongst others. Dr. Hatter chose this occasion to announce that three, fly fishing only sites were chosen in B.C. It was sprung on us and was a welcomed surprise. Mary Stewart, a professional fly tier with Hartley Haywood Sporting Goods, was there to demonstrate salmon fly tying. She was taught by her mother who was taught by her mother in Scotland. One of her flies used 26 dressings and done without a vise. During one of her demos she laid the fly down and one of the Americans remarked "So Mary don't you need to put on a hitch – the thread will become unravelled". Mary replied

"No, you turrrn the thread until it squeaks – it will no unrrravel". She could take three different quills and marry them like so. She was a better fly tier than I was so you can just imagine the tremendous skill she possessed. We continued our association with the FFF for years with yearly fish outs to such places as Peter Hope. There were always lots of trout. B.C. has stocked the lakes and rivers probably for over 100 years.

When did you start tying flies?

Oh I don't know maybe 40 years ago I tied a few, but did not get serious until the seventies.

So, didn't people tie their own flies?

Thirty years ago everybody was tying flies but when I was younger it was only the aristocratic Englishmen and Scotsmen who tied flies. In those countries all the streams were privately owned and only the wealthy could fish trout. They used flies and most of them tied their own. I had the smallest fly box because my flies were given away. The non-tiers had the largest fly boxes. I went professional sometime in the seventies and taught it under the Adult Education Program in the northwest Vancouver area high schools such as Maple Ridge, Burnaby etc. But when you turn professional the mystique of the sport is gone. It becomes a job. When you return to amateur status the excitement returns. I also taught fly casting for over 15 years. I was the director of the fly casting school for the Totems and we would have a couple hundred people show up at Burnaby Lake. We provided donated equipment – two piece, fibreglass rods, reels, lines etc. I had a motto "He, who teaches, learns". There were often 10 or 12 instructors who would come out. We trained thousands of people. It was easily the biggest school in the Pacific Northwest. Years later I would meet them on the rivers and would be greeted by "Hi Bill". I did not have a clue who they were but would respond as if I knew them.

When did fibreglass come onto the market?

Oh, I don't know – maybe the early 60's. I was not a fibreglass person. I missed that era. Went from cane to graphite. The school had over 100 fibreglass, "Made in Japan", \$20, fly rods and the Japanese version "Princess" reel. But we had top quality Cortland Fly Line. The hook was replaced with a piece of orange wool.

Where is your favourite fishing spot?

Sechelt Peninsula with the pebble beaches and started going there in the late 60's. I could go by ferry and start right there and work my way up the beach and never run into another fisherman. This still happens today. Most people in B.C. never heard of Sea Run Cutthroat. I have left home and have my rod assembled in Lantzville in 10 minutes, nail 2 or 3 (up to 3 pounds), release them and be back home in two and a half hours. Whereas some members would boast about getting three trout in a day and a half at some remote lake.

What time of year did you go for Sea Run Trout?

My favourite times were March – April and in the fall through November. But they are available all year along the beaches. Some are near the rivers, some go out at sea in schools like salmon and some of the best fishing is nowhere near a river or stream. I must explain that the coastal area of B.C. is not good trout habitat. There are no long, meandering rivers which run for miles and miles picking up trace minerals, zooplansms etc. to build up an ecology of insect life to support fish. They are short, fast and relatively sterile. Therefore the fish have been decreed to proceed down to the seas where the food is abundant. Then they migrate back up the river to spawn.



Bill's painting of the tools and supplies needed to tie the American Coachman.

How did you get turned on to Sea Run Trout?

In my later youth we would spend a couple of weeks in Ladysmith with relatives where I would go out salmon fishing with my uncles. We would use bamboo poles and strip cast off the wharves to catch coho. We would catch the odd Sea Run Cutthroat but called them Beach Trout. My cousin Alec would use live bait such as crab or sea worms.

What is your favourite fly?

The American Coachman with yellow body, silver rib, polar bear hair wing and brown hackle used for Sea Run Cutthroat.

What was your occupation before retirement?

I was an electrical worker for 30 years for the City of Vancouver until 1978.

What advice do you have for the club?

Attend the meetings – all the meetings. John O'Brien asked me about how to start a club so we started the Island Waters Fly Fishers in 1983.

Thanks Bill. Your dedication and sense of humour will always be with us.



Last January a reunion of Totem and Everett Fly Fishers gathered at the Fly Fishing Museum in Vancouver. Back, left to right: Jim Kilburn, Bill (Brownie) Brown, Gordie Swanson, Brent Lister, Jim Stewart Front row: Tim Tullis, and Dick Padoyvan.

The Timeless Fly Fisherman

Bill Brown

Bill was an inspiration for me as well as many others. His love for life, wife and the art of fly fishing were always very evident and I, like many of you here, met Bill because we were fly fishermen. My first encounter with Bill was shortly after Bill and Lenie had moved to the island. We immediately became friends and many fishing adventures followed. Without Bill's influence Island Waters Fly Fishers would never have been created and many of us may never have met. In all the years I have known Bill I have never heard or spoken any unkind words regarding Bill. He was the kindest man I have ever known. He also had a good but very unusual sense of humor, and you were constantly being fooled by his tall tales. His love for fly fishing was evident in his art which I value greatly and show people every chance I get. I watched Bill laugh, smile, and enjoy himself when catching fish even if the fish weren't as big as some of his stories. He had what I call:

"THE HEART OF A FLY FISHERMAN"

This was because of his love for the sport as well as the fish, the environment and fellow fishermen. Our world will not be the same without him but be rest assured that Bill will never be forgotten. There are plans to set up a memorial fund in his name and yes, it will have something to do with fishing.

And now my friend Bill, who is so much a part of me, is probably having the time of his life enjoying fly fishing every day and with a little luck maybe I'll join him on another fishing trip and see the twinkle in his eye when he tells me of all the fish that he has caught while we were apart.

Until we meet again, thanks Bill, thanks for being my friend.

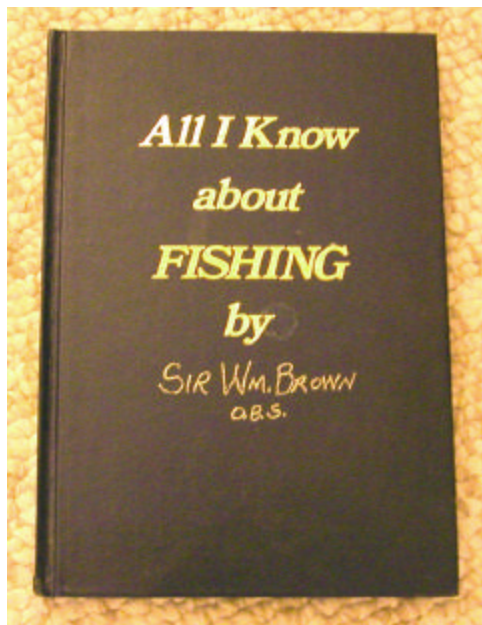
Fly Fishing Friends Forever
John R. O'Brien

1987 ISLAND WATERS FLY FISHING CLUB



Front, left to right: Paul Inscho (Vice President), Roy Sorensen (President), Ken Church (Treasurer), Don Clarke (Secretary). Back row, left to right: Doug Narver, Bob Jordon, Dave West, Phil Ross, John O'Brien, Cecile Bennard, Colin Shearer, Peter Kilgour, Randy Shaw, Lloyd Erickson, Jim Wilson, Bill Brown.

This year commemorates the twentieth year since the Island Waters Fly Fishers was formed. The above photo was the first one taken of the members at their Christmas Banquet.



“Sir Wm. Brown, O.B.S.” This book is always on prominent display and can be read very quickly.

Grandsons Chad and Kim with their ”Oma” Lenie Brown

For more articles in tribute to Bill Brown click on <http://www.members.shaw.ca/iwffnews/IwffOct02.PDF>