

**OPENING OF THE 2012 COMMONWEALTH FLY FISHING  
CHAMPIONSHIPS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER  
UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, DELORAINÉ  
WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2012**

It is a great pleasure for me to warmly welcome to our beautiful island State all the fishing teams, their families and their supporters here for the 2012 Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championship. I understand that the inaugural Championship was held at London Lakes here in Tasmania in 1988, and now it's good to see you are back again. This time there are in the order of 81 anglers here who come from no less than 11 Commonwealth Countries. We Tasmanians are very proud of our extensive lakes and rivers that provide such wonderful opportunities for fly fishing, and particularly proud that in this, Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee Year you have chosen Tasmania as the appropriate venue for the 2012 Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships.

Although this is my first, up-close brush with so many keen and skilled fly fishers one of my predecessors was a keen angler. Sir Robert Hamilton, KCB, was Governor of this State from 1887 to 1892 and he took a keen interest in inland fishing. In fact it is said that he holds the record for the largest trout caught in Tasmania - 13 kilograms or 28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lbs. This record has stood for over 100 years but the trout was not caught in these parts I am afraid.

Those of you who hail from Northern Ireland will be interested to learn that in 1888 the Chief Inspector of Fisheries for Ireland, Sir

Thomas Brady was in Tasmania to inspect and make recommendations for the establishment of fisheries and in April 1888 the Governor took Sir Thomas Brady up to visit Great Lake which I understand some of you will be visiting in the course of this competition. The local Tasmanian Newspaper published on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1888 gave a long and very detailed account of this visit, noting such matters as who slept in a bed en route and who slept in front of the fire; but bear in mind that the journey was made largely on horseback and distances that you will cover in an hour or so took the 1888-vice-regal party a day to traverse.

It would appear that the Irish inspector's primary task was to see what fish were in the lake and whether it was suitable for fishing with a net - when I first researched this information I had to resist the temptation to fill in with one of those Irish jokes - so you will not be surprised to learn that fishing with a Seine net turned out to be a disaster but the fly fishers did very well.

Well I tell you all this because the newspaper concluded its piece about this expedition with the following paragraph and I quote:<sup>1</sup>

“... Next day turned out very fine ... Altogether there were 78 trout taken by rod and net ... Sir Thomas Brady, Fisheries Inspector

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<sup>111</sup> The Mercury Friday 4 May, 1888 pages 3-4

from Ireland, stated that in no place that he knew of in the Mother Country, or that he had read of anywhere, could such sport be had in trout fishing as in the Great Lake and its tributary, the Shannon” ...

He continued, “[if the road could be improved and accommodation established] it should become one of the most famous fishing places for the followers of the gentle art.”

Well, I’ll be interested to learn from those of you who go to the Great Lake - especially the Irish competitors - whether you share that view, expressed nearly 125 years ago, about the fishing. However, regardless of whether you agree with the Inspector’s views of the fishing I’ll warrant that most of you will share his views about the need to improve the road - some things never change!!

However, this afternoon my job is to open the 2012 Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships, not to reminisce about the travels of long-gone State Governors; so I had better get on with it. I repeat my warm welcome to every one of you and wish each of you good luck in the competition - and exhort you to remember that no matter how tense the competition gets the motto of the Commonwealth Fly Fishers is “Fishing in Friendship” and the objective of these Fly Fishing Championships is to foster “a deep sense of friendly competition, fair play and fun amongst the Commonwealth family of nations.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from a circular letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 by Jill L Mandeno, Chairman, Commonwealth Fly Fishers.