

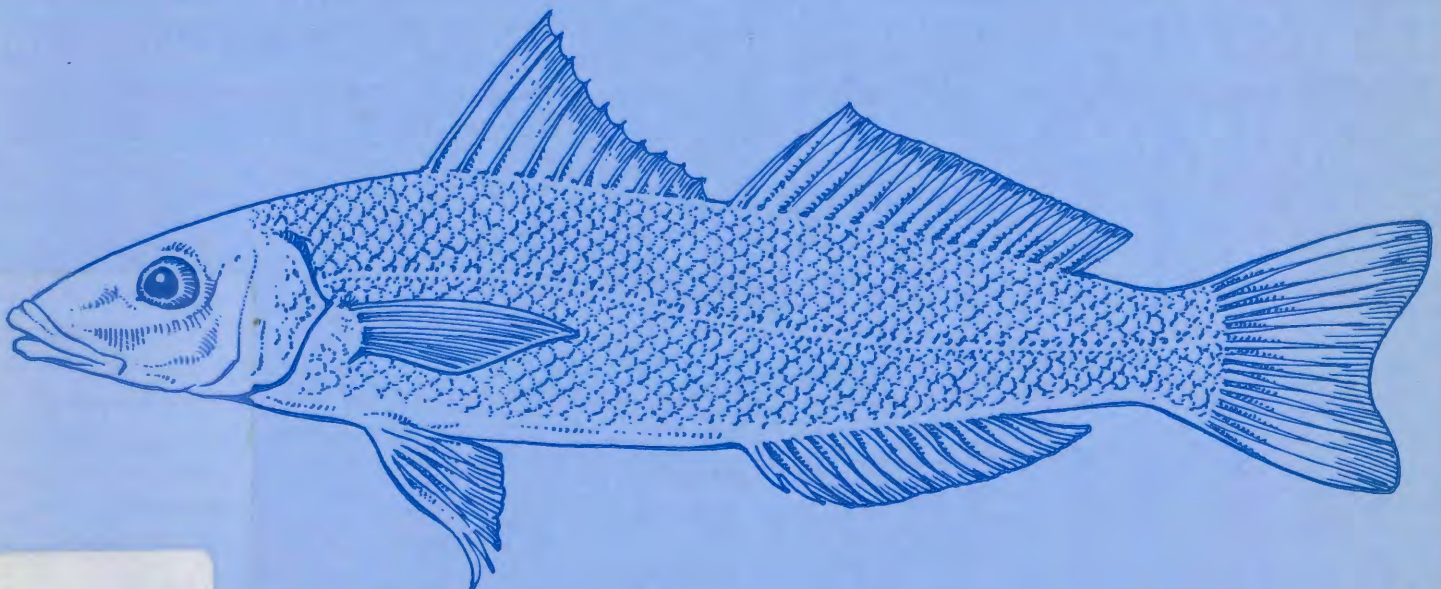
Whiting

An anecdotal history of the recreational whiting fishery in south-east Queensland



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Wally Claydon



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recreational whiting fishery
in south-east Queensland**



Wally Claydon

Department of Primary Industries
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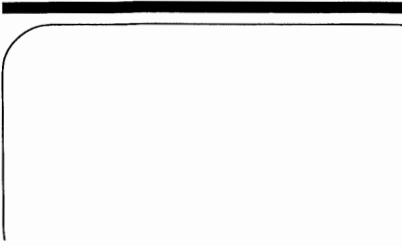
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Preface

This historical angling publication is not, in the main, for the benefit of the experienced 'old salt' angling fraternity. It is, primarily, for those young people of this century who, like their forefathers, will set out on angling expeditions with hearts full of hope and great expectations. They will read of the experiences of truly talented anglers of times past, and of the angling events in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales during the past 20th century.

The enormous quantity and quality catches of whiting recorded during the 20th century are unlikely to be repeated in the 21st century. This is due partly to the unrelenting settlement along the eastern seaboard, the rapid increase in runabout power craft, more leisure time, easier access to fishing grounds, improved technologies, increased angling education and professional netting. All these factors would appear to have caused whiting stocks to decline in recent years, with an associated decline in the recreational return from this sporting activity.

The catches recorded in times past may, by today's standards, seem excessive or even obscene but should be taken in the context of the times. With the then smaller population, there was a belief that whiting stocks were infinite and would never be depleted. We know much better now.

For historical purposes it has been necessary to refer to angling clubs whose precise records provide us with well-documented results, which eliminate the 'hearsay' factor.

Like the previous two publications featuring tailor and bream, this document's purpose is threefold:

- to provide modern-day anglers with some historical insight into whiting fishing experiences of the 20th century;
- to make anglers aware of the fact that whiting breeding grounds and whiting stocks are under threat;
- to promote whiting fishing and angling in general as a healthy outdoor activity.



Acknowledgments

This historical fishing publication is the third in a series supported by the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries Group.

Regardless of volume, historical publications require considerable research, support and cooperation from interested parties. Two outstanding anglers and administrators, David Bateman AM and Barry Pollock, are the visionaries responsible for recording angling history in some form. We also extend our appreciation to Geoff Orr and Lyn Wilcock (Queensland Newspapers), *The Australian* broadsheet newspaper, Elizabeth Hibbart (John Oxley Reference Library), the Redcliffe Library and *Queensland Fishing News*.

I used a number of reference works in writing this book:

Steele, J. G. (1984) *Aboriginal Pathways in South East Queensland and the Richmond River*, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press.

Welsby, Thomas (1977) *Early Moreton Bay*, Adelaide, Rigby.

Tutt, Stan (1974) *'Pioneer Days', Pine and Noosa Rivers*, Caboolture Historical Society.

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Horton, Helen (1983) *Islands of Moreton Bay*, Boolarong Publications.

Burke, Michael (1999) *Aquaculture Research Centre, Bribie Island*, Department of Primary Industries, Queensland.

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Introduction

Whiting: every angler's darling?

The fish species whiting and whiting fishing is the backbone of competitive angling and the major recreational fishery in Queensland.

Very few, if any, light-gear anglers who have accumulated many years of angling experiences in the waters of south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales would disagree with the above statement. This observation was made by a true doyen of angling in south-east Queensland, the late Alister (Al) Sanders during the whiting season of 1960–61. Forty years on, 'Big Al's' somewhat off-the-cuff, matter-of-fact statement made during the hey day period of angling in south-east Queensland is just as, if not more, relevant in the year 2000 than was the case when 'young blades' (such as the writer!), were experiencing a true angling education learning curve.

The collapse of our whiting fishery would be an unmitigated disaster for all concerned, be it the recreational or professional sectors, the general public, not to mention our ever-increasing tourist industry.

This bleak scenario is not as far-fetched as it may seem, when we reflect that the once prolific whiting banks of Moreton and Bribie Islands are just a shadow of what they were in times past.

Fortunately, individual and group catches of whiting by skilled anglers are not yet an extinct experience. Unfortunately, big catches of whiting for the average recreational fisher and family are not as frequent as in times past.

11.6 million whiting

The popularity of whiting fishing and its importance as a healthy fishery in Queensland waters were emphasised during the calendar year of 1997.

During this period, thousands of (Queensland) resident anglers participated in the Queensland Fisheries Management Authority

(QFMA) Recreational Fishing Diary Program. The following are extracts from the *RFISH* newsletter, Series 2, Issue 4, September 1999.

'Experimental estimates of recreational catch from the 1997 Diary Program suggested that Queensland residents aged 15 years and older caught just over 46 million fish (fish, crabs, freshwater crayfish and their like, excluding prawns) in 1997. Over half the catch was released, with 21.7 million fish harvested.'

'Whiting species were the most significant component of the total catch with an estimated 11.6 million whiting caught, 7.4 million harvested and 4.2 million released by Queensland residents.'

When I first focused on the above figure of 11.6 million whiting of all species, my initial reaction was, 'That's a lot of whiting!' This initial reaction was soon tempered by the fact that I have not been able to find any fisher or anyone interested in the future of angling in this State, who would dispute the opinion that there are at least 882 000 active anglers in the State of Queensland in any given year. Therefore if we are conservative and estimate 100 000 of the 882 000 fishers target whiting regularly, even the writer's poor knowledge of mathematics tells me that the individual catch of 74 per person per year over a 12-month period is not huge. Or as the late legendary angler Len Thompson would no doubt propose, 'It ain't anything to write home about'.

The 10/80 factor

'Ten per cent of anglers catch 80 per cent of the fish in any given year', said Thompson, many years past.

Once again over the years since Thommo expressed his opinion of the 10/80 factor no experienced angler has been keen to dispute the Thompson philosophy.

The Thompsons and Sanders of past eras were great thinkers as well as great anglers. I suspect that if they were with us today they would be more concerned about the 90 per cent of fishers rather than the truly talented 10 per cent. It has been confirmed in scientific studies that around 11 per cent of fishers are either club anglers or have been so in the past.

Obviously whiting fishing is not every angler's 'cup of tea', however the writer is somewhat bemused at himself and others, who in their prime of life spent many hours fishing in waist deep surf targeting other species. With the passing of time these once 'young guns' are these days targeting more than ever, not a fish called Wanda, but the ever popular fish species called whiting.

Pushing further up, or out

Len Thompson once stated when contemplating the future of recreational angling along the corridor encompassing the area from Fraser Island to Yamba that, with good management and the Pacific Ocean, there will always be some fish to be caught, with the proviso that anglers of the future may have to push further up or out to achieve results and may also need to explore new grounds and techniques.

During the 1980–81 whiting season the Scarborough Amateur Fishing Club (AFC) decided to push further up and commenced yearly whiting trips to Inskip Point.

This club's meticulously recorded outings reveal that their outings to Inskip numbered 1 to 5 trips per year out of a total of 21 yearly outings to numerous locations. During this 19-year period, Inskip Point yielded the club on numerous occasions, 25 to 50 per cent of their yearly total catch numbers. Obviously if the Scarborough outfit had not been prepared to travel, in total approximately 320 kilometres to fish Inskip, their overall results during this period would have been much poorer than was the case.

If the whiting fishery at Inskip falls into a heap, what then for the Scarborough and other clubs and the non-competitive anglers?

Albert Einstein once commented, 'Hindsight, and the benefit of hindsight, is a marvellous thing.' Perhaps this applies to the large whiting catches recorded during the 20th century.

Before Einstein's time a person or persons once advocated the following, 'God never deducted from a man's lifespan the time he spent fishing.'



Maximum effort

It would be a major project for a professional historian to detail the efforts of the many outstanding Australians who have come forth to 'strut their stuff' on the international stage of human endeavour during the past 100 years.

Medicine, sport, the arts, the motion picture industry, science and exploration. There seem to be very few areas where an Australian has not left their mark in the world of human endeavour.

The long-standing tag that Australia is the land of the long weekend seems a curious one when one contemplates the 200 per cent growth in our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the period 1950–2000.

Indeed keen anglers (old salts) have observed tremendous changes along the eastern seaboard during the past 50 years. These have come about through increasing wealth and through the outstanding efforts applied by people in their fields of endeavour.

The challenge for the recreational angling fraternity, during the 21st century, will be to ensure that there are ample fish stocks available to satisfy the needs of the average angler. If this challenge is overcome, the billions (not millions) of dollars generated by recreational anglers per annum will obviously grow, just as our GDP will grow throughout the 21st century.

I suspect the reason we have produced such outstanding anglers and outstanding people in general is, by and large, because Aussies from all walks of life, enjoy a challenge and when taking up a challenge they will apply the maximum effort.

La crème de la crème

Fifty years of angling experiences and research tell the writer that recreational anglers both past and present, who were spawned in Queensland and northern New South Wales waters have proven over the years to be the 'crème de la crème' of angling, nationwide.

Whiting

Extracts from information series, *Whiting in South-east Queensland*, by B. M. Kerby and I. W. Brown, Fisheries Division, DPI.

Several inshore species of whiting family (Sillaginidae) are found along the east coast of Queensland and New South Wales. The most important of these in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales are the sand whiting (*Sillago ciliata*), the golden-lined whiting (*Sillago analis*) and the trumpeter whiting (*Sillago maculata*).

Sand whiting and golden-lined whiting are commonly known as summer whiting because they are caught in greatest numbers during summer when entering estuaries to spawn. Similarly the high seasonal abundance of trumpeter whiting in the cooler months has led to this species being generally referred to as winter whiting.

Sand and golden-lined whiting are very similar in appearance. It was not until the 1940s that they were recognised as separate species. To quote well-known angler, Phil James:

'Golden-lined whiting can be distinguished from sand whiting by the absence of a dark spot at the base of the pectoral fin. Golden-lined whiting also have golden fins in contrast to the pale yellow fins of the sand whiting.'

Distribution

Sand whiting is found along the east coast of Australia from Cape York, Queensland, south to eastern Victoria and Ulverstone, northern Tasmania. The species distribution includes Lord Howe Island, New Caledonia, Woodlark Island, south-eastern Papua New Guinea and possibly the east coast of Tasmania.

The population abundance of sand whiting is greatest in southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. Juveniles are found in shallow waters of rivers and creeks, over sea grass beds and in mangroves, and are present in much greater abundance in the warmer summer months.

Precise spawning locations in southern Queensland are not known, although the bars at Jumpinpin, Caloundra, Southport Broadwater and the semi-surf bars at the northern end of Moreton Island and the southern end of Bribie Island are all believed to be important spawning grounds (Dredge 1976, Morton 1982).

Golden-lined whiting is primarily restricted to northern Australian waters and northern Queensland waters and southwards along the east coast of Queensland to Moreton Bay. It is also found on the southern end of New Guinea and is most abundant in the Northern Territory and Western Australia (Shark Bay).

Golden-lined whiting are shallow water dwellers (from the shoreline to 10 metres in depth) which on reaching maturity prefers muddy substrates. This species is the most abundant of any sillaginid in the mangrove habitats of Moreton Bay (Morton 1990).

Reproduction

Golden-lined and sand whiting display a lack of spawning synchrony and spawn more than once during the reproductive season (Gunn 1978).

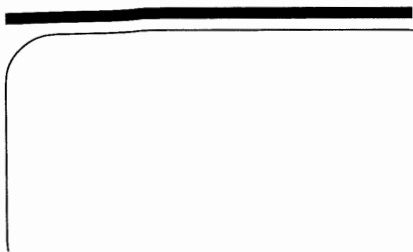
The current legal length of summer whiting in Queensland waters is 23 centimetres.

Winter whiting is found on the east coast of Australia from Lizard Island (north Queensland) to Narooma (southern New South Wales) and on the coast of Western Australia. It occurs in off-shore environments off Tasmania, but is generally found in estuaries on the mainland coast. Its preferred habitat is silty and muddy substrates in the deep water of bays, and it is especially common in turbid areas including estuaries and mangrove creeks. Its habitat ranges in depth from the intertidal to 50 metres. Like sand and yellowfin whiting, winter whiting buries itself in soft sand or mud when alarmed. There is no minimum legal length in Queensland waters for winter whiting.

Juvenile winter whiting are most abundant in estuaries and shallow water especially amongst seagrass beds during the summer months. They move into deeper water as they mature (McKay 1992).

David Bateman suggests the best time to introduce the pre-teenage kids to the sport and recreation that is called angling is during the winter months when the winter whiting are prevalent. This species of whiting can be caught with little effort and the minimum of tackle.

With respect to whiting migration habits, Barry Pollock summed up this situation nicely for the lay person, 'They don't move great distances.'



What's that mate?

'What's that contraption, mate?' asked the Western Australian fishing inspector.

'That's called a yabbie pump', replied David Bateman.

'How does it operate?' inquired the good inspector.

'I'll show you', replied David.

This event did not take place in the dark ages. It occurred during the 1970s and is one of numerous pieces of evidence demonstrating why Queensland and northern New South Wales' anglers were regarded from the early 1930s to be at the forefront when fishing with rod and reel.



Part and parcel

The first angling article compiled by the late Merv McDonald appeared in an edition of *The Courier-Mail* in 1950. Merv 'Yabbie' McDonald, a keen angler, realised that the fledgling Queensland Amateur Fishing Club (AFC) association (QAFCA) required a regular outlet to promote amateur fishing. With his ability to present facts and figures, mixed with the correct amount of dry humour, Merv's Friday 'Info' angling column became part and parcel of the recreational angling scene during the ensuing 23 years.

On 'Yabbie's' retirement in 1973, the then President of QAFCA, the late Bill Kerr (M.B.E.), was generous in his praise for Merv's long-time contribution to recreational angling. The number of press articles compiled by Merv totalled 1284.



Moreton Bay

1770

Lieutenant (later Captain) James Cook names Cape Morton (Moreton). From a point at least eighteen miles north-east of Cape Moreton, he named the present northern entrance to Moreton Island, the 'Glass House Bay' and of course the Glass House Mountains, originally just Glass Houses.

Morton: After James Douglas (1702–68) who was president of the Royal Society.

At the time of Cook there was a theory the South Passage separating Moreton and Stradbroke Islands did not exist. This theory was supported by Aboriginal legend. The erosion of this area observed at Amity Point and the occurrence of a break-through of the type suggested at Jumpinpin (1898) caused the passage.

1799

Lieutenant (later Captain) Mathew Flinders, the first to explore Glass House Bay (Moreton Bay) and the Pumice-stone (Pumicestone Passage).

1822

Commander James Bingle observed a large break between Stradbroke Island and the mainland 'with hardly any water upon it', and a large lagoon on the western side (Southport Broadwater).

1822

Commander Edwardson explores Pumicestone Passage and south to the area of Jumpinpin then north to Hervey Bay and proves Fraser Island is an island.

Neither Flinders nor Edwardson travelled the entire length of the Pumicestone Passage. There was a school of thought at this point in time that the Caloundra Bar did not exist.

1824

John Oxley and party discover fresh water in the area of North Quay, Brisbane.

1840s

During the period of early settlement, convicts and soldiers filled their baskets with fish by hand, wading out onto the rock pools towards the bottom of the ebb tide in an area where the William Jolly Bridge now stands.

Bribie's Island (Bribie)

Bribie was a convict sent to the settlement of Moreton Bay during the 1840s. Very adept at catching mud crabs, he supplied the officers' mess with quantities of this delicacy and in doing so, was allowed considerable freedom. Eventually with the aid of an Aboriginal girl, he escaped to a wild place, which the early locals referred to as Bribie's Island. Obviously Mr Bribie was no dill.

The invasion of Bribie Island and that love affair

During the early period of the 20th century, the population of Queensland was about 500 000 people. At this point in time such benefits as holiday pay and sick pay did not exist, therefore the workers of the day and their families made the most of weekends, gazetted holidays and school holidays.

Even at this early stage in the history of Brisbane and Moreton Bay, people clamoured to flee the perceived unhealthy city life at every opportunity.

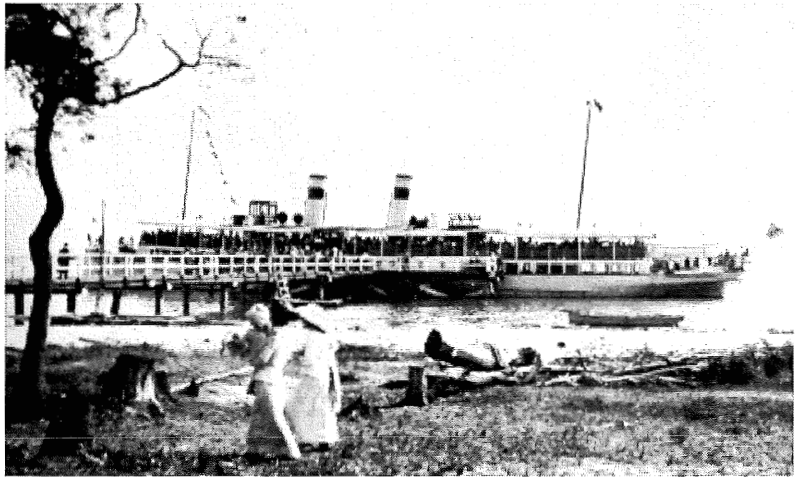
With the arrival of the Bay cruiser *SS Koopa* (koopa, Aboriginal for flying fish) from Britain in 1911, the residents of Brisbane immediately fell in love with this well appointed, luxurious Queen of Moreton Bay.

She would depart from the Brisbane River with up to 1 100 people on board and all the fanfare of a modern-day, luxury holiday cruiser. Calling in at Woody Point and Redcliffe, the journey took three hours, clipping along at the rate of 16 knots.

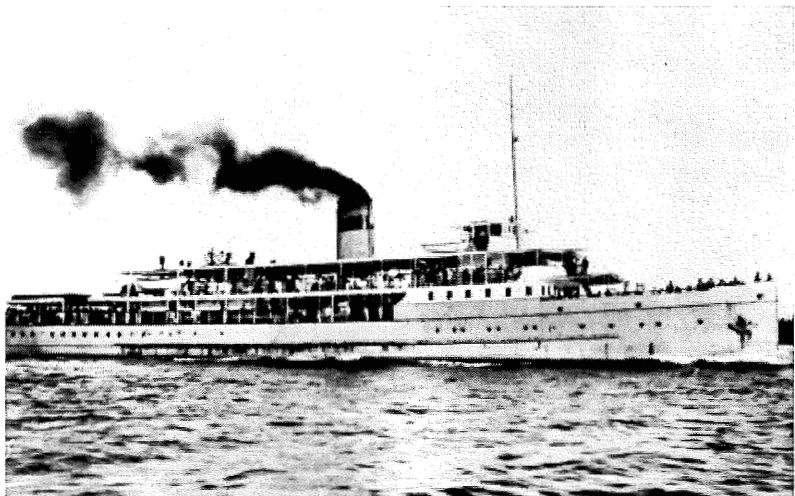
A good percentage of people aboard the *Koopa* would have anticipated a spot of fishing on Bribie Island.

In due course, the management introduced a second vessel to transport holiday-makers. A World War I (WWI) minesweeper was converted and named the *SS Doomba*.

These sister ships transported up to 2 500 people to Bribie Island on a single outing. On a return trip it was quite a sight to see angler's fish strung up all around the vessels decks drying out.



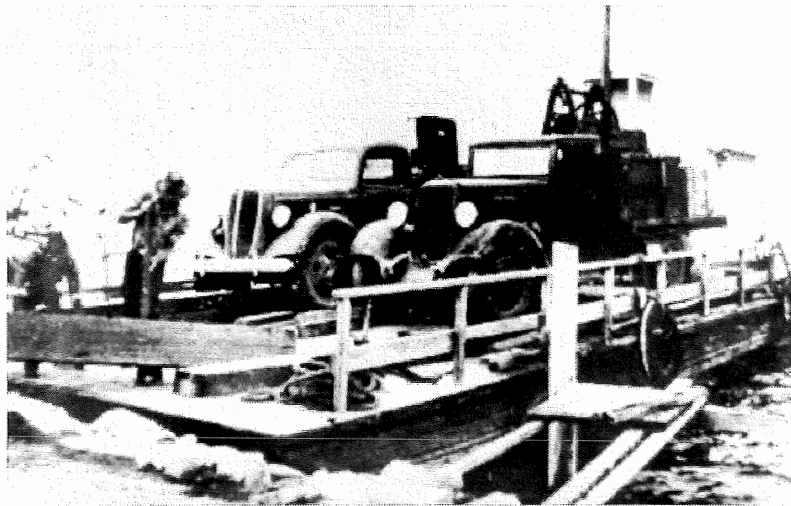
S S Koopa moored at Bribie Island Jetty, September 1913 (John Oxley State Library)



S S Doomba on the Brisbane River, 1924 (John Oxley State Library)



Bribie Island jetty and kiosk, 1923 (John Oxley State Library)



Bribie Island transportation, 1939. Roy Tilney barring planks for loading on Col Barnett's barge taking supplies to Bribie Island from Caloundra (John Oxley State Library)



Hughie Gibson, Tweed Heads Amateur Fishing Club, hooks a whiting, Bribie Island 1950s. 'On his day a very good angler.' Source: the late Len Thompson

The first sea road

At this point in time there was no road to Bribie Island. The only road was the sea road along and across the waters of Moreton Bay. Both vessels saw service with the Royal Australian Navy during World War II. The *Doomba* was lost but the *Koopa* returned to the delight of the people of Moreton Bay during the 1950s.

A puzzle

Fishing Wellington Point on the 30th August 1925, 36 members of the Paddington AFC presented 1 837 fish dominated by whiting, to the weigh-in scales, for a weight of 559 lbs, 11 oz (old scale).

J. Zahner led the way on this occasion with a catch totalling 150 for 43 lbs, 13 oz. Five other members broke the ton barrier. This result is the most productive whiting outing recorded for 17 years leading up to World War II.

The outings to Bribie Island were successful but most irregular. This irregularity during this time may have been due to transport problems.

Most likely, the three club members, J. Zahner, C. Adamson and C. Jones, would have proved better than average in any era.

Wellington Point was never revisited.

Paddington Amateur Fishing Club

Competition Held At Wellington Point

30 August 1925

Competitor	Total Fish	Total Weight		Fares		
		lbs	ozs	£	s	p
T Ludlow	77	22	7		2	3
R Jacobsen	115	34	1		5	3
W Shay	75	21	12	Sole 10oz	5	3
E Power	30	10	10		5	3
C Adamson	112	33	14		5	3
D Taylor	53	15	6		5	3
J Zahner	150	43	13		5	3
H Dark	24	7	6		5	3
R Barnes	57	18	-		5	3
P Wiseman	49	14	4		5	3
B Sigston	39	11	4		5	3
E Albrecht	18	7	2		5	3
E Jones	143	40	8		5	3
J Jacobsen	107	33	12		5	3
J Rigby	51	15	10		5	3
F Forth	22	5	15		5	3
S Connell	30	9	5		5	3
F Bentley	68	19	6		5	3
W Wassell	56	16	12		5	3
G Hornsby	7	7	8	Morwong 4lb 10oz	5	3
H Adamson	58	17	9		5	3
G Ware	97	29	14		5	3
F Wallet	51	15	9		5	3
E Fester	13	6	-	Sole 15l/2oz	5	3
H Reynolds	38	12	3		5	3
W Rosenberg	109	32	2		5	3
T Askwith	35	9	10		5	3
A Massey	27	8	8		5	3
J DeBoard	37	11	8		5	3
JRC Smith	45	13	8		5	3
G Muir	44	12	9		5	3
W Griffiths	-	-	-		5	3
M Croben	-	-	-		5	3
A Kerr	-	-	-		5	3
W Bryant	-	-	-		5	3
W Yates	-	-	-		5	3
Total	1,837	559	11			
Cash Collected						
Expenses	2 Buses			4	13	0
	12 Boats @ 5/-			3	0	0
Balance				£1	9	3

Fifty years on

Almost to the month, 50 years on in 1975, 314 anglers competing in the first round of the South Queensland Light Gear Championship held on Bribie Island weighed in 9 283 whiting for a total weight of 1 501.2 kg.

The then Chairman of the SQAFCFA competition committee, Tom Ludlow OAM, described this result as the best recorded for 25 years.

Barry Pollock, Moreton Mixed AFC, led the way on this occasion with a haul of 115 fish, total weight 17.5 kg.

Short cut

Some 13 years prior to the commencement of the same competition on Bribie Island, some character informed the Mirimar Club Captain, Al Sanders, that he knew of a short cut around the back and through the scrub. When the official responsible said, 'Go', everyone excluding a small band that went around the back and through the scrub, took off down the beach. One hour and 10 minutes later, the small band was still in the scrub around the back somewhere, hopelessly lost.

The whiting man - Fraser Somers

When anglers mention the whiting, the name Fraser Somers immediately comes to mind. This has been the case for many years. Whiting fishing and Fraser are synonymous with recreational light-gear angling.

Originally from the Brisbane suburb of Wavell Heights, Fraser and his wife Jean have lived in the bayside suburb of Scarborough for the past 45 years.

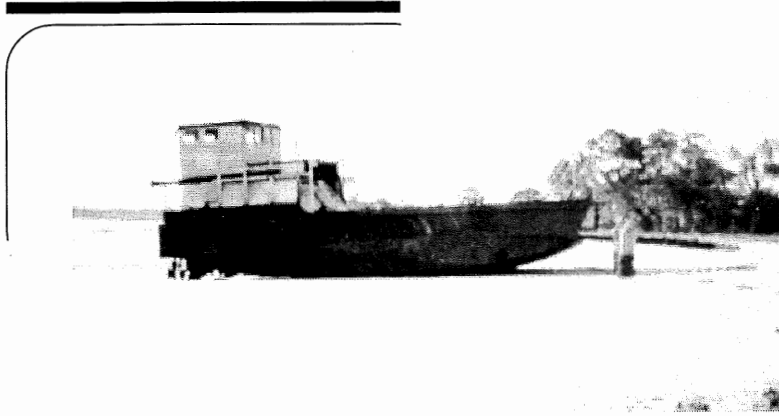
A builder by trade, Fraser was encouraged by family friend Trevor George to change occupations and try his hand at professional crabbing. During this period a number of crabbers were in the process of switching to prawn trawling, which meant there were numerous crab boats on the market. However, Fraser decided to build a crab boat to his own liking (specifications). Being a keen angler from an early age, he soon realised he could combine professional crabbing and indulge his passion for angling. Fraser duly became a member of the Scarborough AFC in the season of 1950-51.



*Fraser Somers, the whiting guru,
Bribie Island*



Fraser Somers' red jeep



Car ferry, Toorbul Point, Bribie Island, 1952 (John Oxley State Library)

Student

From this point on, he became a student of golden-lined and sand whiting, spending many hours studying their behaviour habits, spawning cycles in relation to tide variations and prevailing winds.

Fraser was successful enough as a professional crabber to educate his four children, Heather, Ian, Robert and Leslie, to a tertiary education level.

Prior to the construction of the Bribie Island Bridge, the Scarborough AFC travelled from the Scarborough jetty to the island by launch and across the island to the southern end by utility. A polite way to describe the trip across the island would be rough.

By trial and error, Fraser realised early in his angling adventures, that the surf and southern end of Bribie Island fished best during a south-easterly blow coinciding with a high tide around dawn.

In due course he purchased a red-coloured 4x4 vehicle (jeep) and from this point on, Fraser and his whiting fishing made great strides forward.

Bush telegraph

The local success he enjoyed chasing these great little fighting fish became common knowledge to the local fishing fraternity by way of the bush telegraph. It was not long before Fraser realised he would have to contend with a following convoy whenever the word spread that the red jeep was on the island.

At this time, vehicles were ferried across the passage with the aid of an ex-army barge. On private outings, Fraser fished seven days on and seven days off, coinciding with the tide cycle.

Press publicity

The Whiting Man's success may have been common knowledge to the local anglers, but not to the public at large until well-known angling columnists, Tom Ludlow OAM and the late Merv McDonald, highlighted Fraser's success in the daily metropolitan press, *The Courier-Mail* and *The Telegraph*.

Fraser and others tried night angling on the southern end of Bribie Island with little success. His best individual effort in a single day's angling was 180 fish, concentrating in the Woody Bay area. On one occasion, Jean chipped in and landed 108 fish and, as they grew, the Somers kids proved adept at hauling in the whiting.

During this period, whiting in the pound weight range were fairly common.

Ale

Not the Hops variety, Fraser describes successful light gear angling as:

A - ability

L - luck

E - experience.

Not surprisingly, Fraser's angling success once highlighted in the press media drew crowds to Bribie Island and eventually, the area was inundated with hopeful anglers and professional net fishers. During the working week, the number of recreational anglers fishing the Bald Point area ranged from around 200–250 at the height of the whiting season (never mind the weekends).

Inskip Point

With the increasing pressure of people on Bribie Island, Fraser changed tactics and began whiting angling sorties to Inskip Point where he once again enjoyed success, the word 'success' being the understatement of the angling calendar.

'If the whiting were not thick on the Point itself, they were thick along the surf beach', said Fraser. By the year of 1974, the Somers kids really kicked in, on one occasion spanning a two-night angling sortie. Three members of the Somers family creeled in excess of 1 000 whiting.

The number of legal-sized whiting landed by Fraser during the past 45–50 years is anybody's guess. Of course Fraser's office every other week during the whiting season was either Bribie Island or Inskip Point.

At times he was forced to give it away — the wear and tear on his hands from catching and removing the hook or hooks from the fish jaws took its toll.

Two wading bags

When the whiting were thick he fished with two wading bags. When one was full he hung it on a hook attached to the rear of his 4x4. When both bags were full he then iced the fish down and repeated this routine continuously for many hours.

A long club haul

Fraser has fished competitively with the Scarborough AFC for 47 years, attending a total of 781 trips. Whiting made up the bulk of his club aggregate of 18 267.

Average catch per trip:

Thirty-one fish — weight 5.5 kg.

He was also Club Captain for a record 40 years (1955–95).

It is estimated Fraser has dug in excess of 97 000 wriggler worms.

He has also been a member of successful south Queensland and Queensland angling teams (of 6) competing in State and national titles and, on occasions, captained the above mentioned teams.

Bootmaker's thread

At the commencement of this 'long fishing haul' Fraser fished with a Rangoon cane rod and side cast reel, and the line consisted of 'Barber' or 'Burbur' thread. This material was the strong thread used to stitch the soles of boots which, in turn, meant boot thread used as a fishing line required regular care and maintenance.

Fraser first dug wriggler worm bait in the Shorncliffe area using a small garden fork. It soon became apparent this tool was inefficient and Fraser is credited as being the first to introduce the 10-prong coke/coal fork when digging the wriggler worm.

Evergreen

At 79 years of age, 'the Whiting Man' is still an active member of the Scarborough Club and still competing successfully. To describe Fraser as 'remarkable' seems a somewhat inadequate description. Fraser Somers — professional fisher, recreational/competitive angler — a whiting fishing 'guru'.

People, people and more people

Question: 'Fraser, why have whiting catches tapered off in comparison to times past?'

Answer: 'In a word, "people". Lots more of them in comparison to the times when I was fishing in my prime of life. More people, more affluence, more leisure time and, not surprisingly, many of them enjoy a spot of angling.'

Question: 'What area was the most prolific whiting ground you fished on a regular basis?'

Answer: 'Undoubtedly Inskip Point. If the fish weren't prolific on the Point itself, quite often they were 'thick' around the corner along the surf beach on the ebb tide.'

To Inskip Point on board the steam 'rattler'

Prior to the development of Rainbow Beach and the necessary road works, some keen young anglers fished Inskip Point by way of boarding the train at Roma Street on Saturday, staying overnight in Gympie and then travelling down to the point early Sunday morning, as a visitor with the Gympie AFC by bus to Tin Can Bay and then by launch to Inskip Point.



Just a l-o-n-g stick, and a small angling miracle

One would assume that, with the extensive range of one-piece, hollow (tubular) glass fishing rods available in the ever-increasing numbers of fishing tackle outlets in the year of 1999, it would be difficult for the younger brigade of anglers to understand and appreciate how effective and how many fish were landed using the one-piece Rangoon cane whiting rod.

During the 15-odd years after WWII, the Rangoon cane fishing rod ruled supreme. Imported in bundles of 50 or 100 units, approximately 20 per cent were suitable for use as fishing rods. On reflection, the transformation of a dirty, 'brownish-coloured stick' into a varnished, clean, very effective whiting rod, was a small angling miracle.

The lifespan of the cane rod was limited to approximately 2 years and with the ever-increasing popularity of angling, good canes became increasingly more difficult to obtain.

Indeed the writer can recall making numerous phone calls to a then limited number of tackle outlets, inquiring when the next shipment of canes was likely to be received and on this occasion there was a drought of suitable canes for a period of 4 months. No doubt numerous other keen young anglers of this period experienced the same frustration.

The history of Rangoon cane rods is one of ingenuity. Who first recognised the value of Rangoon canes in the world of angling appears lost with the passing of time.

Revolution

Solid fibreglass rods were on the scene before hollow (tubular) ones, however the vast majority of our leading anglers do not warm to solid glass. With the introduction of the Queensland manufactured hollow (tubular) one-piece fibreglass rod, 'Sportex 541', recreational angling advanced into a new era and anglers were quick to take advantage of this technology, particularly keen whiting anglers. However, there was considerable debate whether the tip action of the '541' would be suitable for whiting fishing. Many expressed the opinion the tip action was 'too fast' for whiting.

The cane whiting rod was lighter than the cane bream rod and possessed a slower (lazier) tip action. When retrieving a fish, the rod bent gradually from the butt area, forming a gradual continuous arc, unlike the cane bream rod that possessed a nice soft tip but considerable strength in the middle section.

It should be noted that the late champion angler, Ron Medill, used the 'Sportex 541' when whiting fishing and did so successfully. In more recent times, Barry Pollock expressed the opinion he was more concerned with a whiting rod's ability to cast the very light '000' or '00' sinkers as far as possible than the actual hooking of a fish.

The enormous impact

I doubt if the writer of this historical fishing document would receive much of an argument if he advocated that the introductions of the American nylon fishing line, in quantity and length, the redesigned side cast reel and the hollow (tubular) fibreglass rod during the second half of the 20th century were the most significant tackle changes in the history of angling, particularly in Queensland and northern New South Wales waters. We must not forget Queensland anglers developed the yabbie pump and, in doing so, made this very versatile bait available to all.

'Necessity is the mother of invention'

No doubt the above saying was foremost in the minds of keen anglers of times past when they first dug salt water yabbies (nippers) with nothing more than their bare hands and a long handle garden spade. The evolution of the yabbie pump is credited to anglers from the Tweed Heads area.

Stage 1: bare hands and long handle garden spade

Stage 2: back-breaker or 'gut buster' pumps constructed from down piping, which were vulnerable to rust

Stage 3: stainless steel back-breakers

Stage 4: brass squirters

Stage 5: stainless steel squirters

Colour red

The advantages of red-coloured tubular plastic or red-coloured beads, placed directly above the whiting hook or hooks, has long been recognised by whiting anglers as being beneficial in attracting whiting to the bait or baits.

The obvious question is 'why'?

The writer set out with pen and paper, and collared some of our 'gun' anglers and asked 'why?'

The general overall reply was, 'We can theorise about this red-coloured business for hours, but at the end of the day, it is quite simple. It works. We know it works, and all the fancy theories won't change these facts.' So there!

Wading bags

Purchasing a sturdy wading bag is an elementary procedure at one's local tackle outlet. This elementary procedure developed during the writer's angling lifetime.

There are a number of photographs around the traps of leading anglers of their period, fishing with creels on their backs, prior to wading bags becoming commonplace.

The late Keith Peele sewed a piece of wire which was shaped in an oblong configuration, around the opening of a sugar bag and then strung it over his shoulder with a suitable length of rope.

Keith also constructed a small, neat oblong-shaped worm box using plywood and a length of dowel as a handle, similar in appearance to the larger carpenters tool box.

The 'wash up'

From the early 1960s onwards, manufacturers continued to improve fibreglass rods and side cast reels, and nylon lines seem to be ever increasingly finer in diameter. The fishing nets used by the professional sector are much finer and lighter than in times past (believe me), so all things considered, as we 'dip over' into the 21st century, all those who are interested in gathering some quantities of fish, and in this case, whiting, have never had things better. That is except for the main player, the whiting.

Notes and quotes

After a successful outing, Redcliffe AFC members donated a portion of their catch to a local orphanage on the basis:

'A' graders – 3 whiting

'B' graders – 2 whiting

'C' graders – 1 whiting.

This amounted to a considerable consignment of fish.

Victory AFC members and their partners entertained young people from the Enoggera Boys Home. It was a day of fishing and consuming fresh food, etc.



The big whiting ground

The Moreton Bay Cruisers, *MV Mirimar*, *Mirabel*, and the *Maxam* and *Mirimar* AFCs, North Quay, Brisbane, Hamilton game wharf, Moreton Bay, Moreton Island, Tangalooma, Cowan Cowan, Reeders Point, Comboyuro Point, Yellow Patch, the Tangalooma jetty, blue deep water, shallow water, clean golden sand, and tens of thousands of summer whiting.

Mention some or all of the above to a veteran whiting angler, and most likely they would sigh of nostalgia and contemplate some marvellous fishing experiences that have passed into history.

Mini forests of Rangoon cane rods, side cast reels, buckets of yabbies, small containers of worms, fishing tackle, torches, cane creels. The humorous comments coming forth as the vessel is moored to the wharf at Tangalooma, the army of anglers disembarking and swiftly walking along the jetty with rods held upright, and which from the rear, resemble a portable mini forest of Rangoon cane. Off the jetty, onto the beach and away they went.

From the not-so-skilled to the very skilled, small catches, big catches, camaraderie and friendships did last a lifetime. This scene on Moreton Island was one of those few genuine examples of a level playing field. Many a teenager in their early teen years learnt the important basic skills, techniques and ethics along the inside beach of Moreton Island, which later in life propelled them to success in their preferred branch of the sport.

The decades of the 1950s, '60s and '70s rate as a truly historic period in the history of whiting fishing in Queensland waters.

There would not be many, if any capital cities which could facilitate the angling experiences available to the citizens of Brisbane during the above mentioned decades. Just recently a retired merchant seaman expressed the following sentiments, 'I have sailed around the world numerous times during the past 30-odd years and have never observed anything to equal Brisbane, Moreton Bay and its numerous islands.'



Rangoon cane whiting rods and top class light gear anglers heading to Bribie Island, 1950s



*Moreton Island Lighthouse, Cowan Cowan Lighthouse, 1899
(John Oxley State Library)*



*Tangalooma, Moreton Island, 1908
(John Oxley State Library)*



MV Mirimar, 1950s (John Oxley State Library)

Big club – huge attendance

During the 1950s the *Mirimar* and *Maxam* AFC success in fishing Moreton Island was detailed in the metropolitan press media. Consequently, the above clubs were inundated by people keen to fish Moreton during the summer months. Departing from North Quay and the Hamilton game wharf, in excess of 200 travelled to Moreton every other weekend.

The second sea road

The only road to Moreton Island is the sea road across the waters of Moreton Bay and of course this has always been the case. This fact could well be one of the saviours of recreational angling on Moreton Island in the 21st century. The other saving factor is the very limited number of permanent residences allowed on the Island.

We have lost the first sea road to Bribie Island. Let us hope we never lose the sea road to Moreton Island.

Heaps of whiting

Alfie Cannon, a multiple winner of club, district and state light gear angling titles and stalwart of the Virginia-Nundah AFC, has fished Moreton Island for many years. He recently stated, 'Walking 5 to 10 kilometres a night to load up with whiting was not necessary when I first fished the inside beach of Moreton Island. In the walking department, generally 500 metres did suffice.'

The number of anglers fishing this area was minimal. The number of privately owned vessels sparse, professional net fishers had not at this point in time, set up permanent residence on the island. The regular barge service to Moreton was something for the future. The Tangalooma whaling station with its small fleet of vessels and deadly armament has come and gone, replaced by a tourist (holiday) complex. At night, the lights shine bright on the Tangalooma beach and holiday-makers feed or observe the feeding of dolphins. The lights of tourism may be bright but recreational whiting catches have faded.

A Moreton Island 'wizard'

Many moons past, Geoff Orr of *The Courier-Mail* described Jim Mackenroth, a long time member of the Virginia-Nundah AFC as a Moreton Island Whiting 'Wizard'. Possibly the following explains why:

The year is 1974:

9 February	74 whiting
23 February	168 whiting
March	171 whiting
August	113 whiting
14 September	237 whiting
28 September	202 whiting

It is considered the average weight of legal-sized whiting, sand and golden-lined, is 3 to the pound weight (0.454 kg).

Obviously there is nothing average about Jim Mackenroth when it comes to the art of light gear angling. He commenced fishing when a junior, and his fishing career was interrupted by national service and a stint in Vietnam. On returning to Australia he enjoyed remarkable success for many years.

This Moreton Island whiting 'wizard's' catch of 237 whiting, landed on the northern end of the island during September 1974 ranked second only numerically to the magical 241 whiting, caught by Barry Pollock at Fraser Island in 1972, but in terms of quality, Jim's was the better catch.

Jim has quite rightly been regarded as one of the best light-gear anglers in the state of Queensland for many years and in 1973 he won the Queensland Light Gear Championship, and has been runner up no less than 5 times when competing in the South Queensland Light Gear Championship.

Like all genuine champions, Jim has been a consistent supporter of junior angling and has passed on his knowledge to numerous young people.



Jim Mackenroth - Moreton Island Whiting Wizard

Contributing to society

Jim's interest in promoting junior angling carried on the good work by anglers of the generation preceding this whiting wizard by leading members of the Mirimar AFC who each acted as mentor to the junior members of the club for a period of 2 years. Other clubs did likewise and no doubt old salts would vouch for the long-term benefits young people derived from learning to fish well.

Both sides of the black stump

The mythical 'black stump' is no mystery to Alfie Cannon who informed the writer that the black stump is situated between Cowan and 'Comby' Point, Moreton Island.

The Waterside Club dropped part of their contingent of members and visitors at the 'black stump' before proceeding to 'Comby' Point. Therefore we can say legitimately when the now 63-year-old Alf was a junior, he was one of the best junior anglers ever to fish both sides of the black stump.

To reach the black stump area of Moreton Island, this youngster travelled across Brisbane from Chermside to Hayle's Wharf, North Quay, or the Hamilton game wharf by tram, complete with his long one-piece cane rod, creel and bucket of yabbies and returned the following day in the same manner — minus the yabbies, which were replaced by a bag of whiting.

This youngster's initiative paid dividends when he won the Mirimar Junior Club Championship and, of course, this was a forerunner to higher angling honours in his senior years.

Berley

The Aboriginal word for bait is 'berley'. One night near Tangalooma, the night was bright but the whiting wouldn't bite. The late Len Thompson spent half the night shovelling sand into the water near the shoreline. His catch of 20-odd whiting was enough on this night to win the competition.

Strict

Historically, angling clubs affiliated with the two governing bodies SQAFCFA and QAFCA were/are strict in respect to members who present under-sized fish to the weigh-in station and I'm informed none stricter than the Virginia-Nundah outfit.

Ron Staib

When Ron Staib resigned as President of the Virginia-Nundah AFC after 15 years service, he felt he did so in the knowledge his club was in a strong position. This strong position was a result of the club's continuing efforts to promote junior angling for a long period of time. Therefore the club was very prominent in the whiting angling division for many years. Two of the most outstanding young anglers to move up through the ranks of Virginia-Nundah AFC were Kevin Saddler and Martin Cowling. With the services of such outstanding mentors as Jimmy Mackenroth and Alfie Cannon, it is not surprising this policy in nurturing the 'younger brigade' payed handsome dividends.

Teaching 'the kids'



Learning in the 1960s

As long as the writer can remember, the senior members, who supervised the administration of club angling have been conscious of the importance of promoting and teaching kids the very important finer points of angling.

The talented angler, schoolteacher and angling columnist, Phil James comes to mind readily. When stationed at the Redcliffe High School, Phil had a 'fishing school' up and running in no time.

Afternoons, weekends and school holidays, they're common — that is, kids on pushbikes with rod and reel and a plastic bucket hanging off their bikes' handlebars, darting here and there, on the Redcliffe Peninsula. One wonders if these young people are receiving sufficient interest and encouragement to continue angling in their mature years.



The late Keith Peele teaching the kids in the 1950s



Learning in the 1970s



Jody and Dave Reberger supervising junior anglers, Moreton Island 1998



Learning in the 1980s



Sunfish Fishing School, Moreton Island, 1999



Learning in the year 2010?

Prolific talent

The strength of talent within the ranks of the Virginia-Nundah Club was illustrated on the night of 21 February 1971, when fishing the inside beach of Moreton Island.

Jim Mackenroth caught 147 fish, Jim Hirn caught 131 fish and Ron Staib secured third placing with 116 fish.

'B' grade winner was N Smith with 76 whiting.

'C' grade winner was F Dunbar with 46 fish.

Other results were George Burns – 98, Alf Cannon – 85, D. Nash – 79 and C. Laurie – 75. The best visitor, K. Saddler, caught 88 whiting.

Gentleman Jim

Ten times South Queensland Light Gear Champion, Martin Cowling now 45 years of age, commenced his very successful foray into club angling when still a junior and provides us with an excellent example of a junior angler who possessed natural angling talent that was nurtured by the senior members of the Virginia-Nundah AFC some 30 years past.

Martin is of the opinion that his club mate for many years, Jimmy Mackenroth, is an unparalleled sportsman in the world of club angling.

To quote Martin, 'Down through the years, Jimmy 'Mac' has consistently displayed a willingness to go out of his way to assist novice anglers before, during and after a light gear competition.'

Ron Medill and a dose of the 'trots'

He travelled light and he travelled far. The late Ron Medill when a youngster was a talented and fit young man. He wasn't wrong when he said he travelled light.

One large creel slung across his back, empty except for a torch, rod and reel, bucket of yabbies, a handful of light sinkers, swivels and hooks and a few whiting rigs. As soon as he had stepped off the Tangalooma jetty onto the beach he 'took off' up the beach at a pace best described as a 'good, steady trot'.

'What about fresh water', I asked.

'No problem', replied Ron, 'plenty of fresh water in the Craven Creek area.'

Finally we rounded Cowan Point and eventually stopped in an area I presumed was Craven Creek. By the time the writer had his fill of fresh water, Ron was a fading figure travelling north at 'a nice, steady trot' and I assumed he was making for 'Comby' Point, or further.



*'Crack-a-jack' estuary angler
Martin Cowling (10 times South
Queensland Light Gear
Champion) fishing the Tweed*



Allan Gynther (left) and the late Ron Medill, members of the South (Qld) light gear team heading north to compete in the (Qld) light gear championship 1950s



The late Ron Medill in action – 1950s

It is an ill wind . . . and the great flood of '74

It may be anecdotal evidence but it is difficult not to associate the great, tragic flood of 1974 with the huge catches of fish, whiting and other species, recorded throughout the years of 1974–75.

Possibly the good back-up rain during the summer of '74–'75 complemented the great flood of '74 in respect to the phenomenal catches recorded by anglers during this two-year period.

Angling club log books and personal log books 'throw up' some compelling facts and figures which in turn make a case that this two-year period was one of the best all round periods for recreational anglers since the decades of the 1950s.

Wriggle, wriggle

The use of wriggler worms 'on mass' by recreational anglers is not in historical terms, as old as the saltwater yabbie (nipper).

The late champion angler Dave Schultz won a major title on Moreton Island using wrigglers and there was considerable debate and recognition during the ensuing week that Dave and his wrigglers had 'slayed' the other competitors who fished with yabbies and Cribb Island worms. It has been 'mission impossible' to pinpoint the exact period when wriggler worms were first used by recreational anglers.

The late Laurie Hayter, a foundation member of the Scarborough AFC was fishing with wrigglers when Fraser Somers joined the Club in the season of 1950-51.

There seems to be a consensus among the 'old salt' whiting fraternity that the use of wrigglers 'on mass' or in any quantity is credited to anglers on the Redcliffe Peninsula.

Ban 'em

Such was the impact of the wriggler worm, anglers from the Tweed Heads area proposed they should be banned when competing in the south Queensland and Queensland light gear titles.

The result of this proposal? NOT LIKELY!

The advice to the younger brigade during this period was simply, 'If you do not have wrigglers, fish a distance from those who do, for most times, you will not be in the hunt.'

Dig 'em

Al Sanders placed a note in the teenager's hand and at the same time explained, 'That's how you dig 'em and that's where to dig 'em and that's when you dig 'em. I'll loan you my coke fork, now go dig 'em.'

So he did, at 7 p.m. that very night.

After a considerable amount of digging and a short burst of kerosene language, the teenager realised the pieces of seaweed dangling on the prongs of the fork were in fact, the prized wriggler worms. On returning the fork to big Al, the teenager explained what had eventuated during his first dig.

Big Al shook his head in disbelief and muttered something about some mothers do have 'em.

Cribbie, cribbie

While praising the advantages of the wriggler worm we must not lose sight of the less exotic but easier to obtain, Cribb Island worms. Untold numbers of whiting, 'sand', 'golden-lined' and winter (diver) whiting have succumbed to this tougher, thicker variety and of course, they can be purchased from numerous bait outlets throughout the Moreton region.

Indeed, pre 1966, the late Al Sanders won a major light gear title using Cribb Island worms. Al soon realised the whiting were 'thick' and switched to 'Cribbies' because they are of tougher texture. He would grab the caught fish and hold it firmly around the mid-upper region, forcing the whiting to open its mouth, which made the removal of the hook or hooks, easier. This in turn meant the piece of worm bait was less mutilated and the same bait was reused a number of times before Al was forced to rebait.



A keen angler digging wriggler worms, Redcliffe Peninsula

The result, a first class exhibition of speed fishing. Al was handicapped to a considerable degree when walking long distances along a fishing beach. A big man with large legs and thick thighs, he suffered from chronic chaffing and tried many and varied remedies with only moderate success.



Digging the commercial and popular Cribb Island (blood) worms

Champagne worms

At one stage some (not all) bait suppliers' asking price increased to such a margin, keen fishers referred to 'Cribbies' as 'Champagne Worms'.

Jack Thwaites rated Al (on a good night) one of the best he had fished with when average-class whiting were on 'the chew'. He often used a '000' or '00' pea-sized sinker directly on the hook, maintaining that when whiting nose into the sand to feed, one may nose onto his bait.

Worm varieties

- 1) Cribb Island (bloodworm)
- 2) Wigglers (sand)
- 3) Wiggler (mangrove)
- 4) Rockworms
- 5) Mangrove bloodworms
- 6) Beachworms
- 7) Canal wigglers



*David Bateman with a bunch of beach worms,
Inskip Point, 1970s*

The 'Holy Grail's' slip from grace?

One hundred whiting was the 'Holy Grail' which club anglers set their sights on for many years.

With the rapid development that has taken place along the south-east coast of Queensland during recent years, numerous 'top rods' have been reassessing the angling situation and ponder the thought, whether they should be 'pondering' catching fewer and better quality fish.

During the first seventy-odd years of the 20th century, a suggestion by an experienced angler that bag limits should be contemplated would have been rebuffed and the suggester advised they should consult a medical practitioner as soon as possible. This attitude is not necessarily the case in the 1990s.

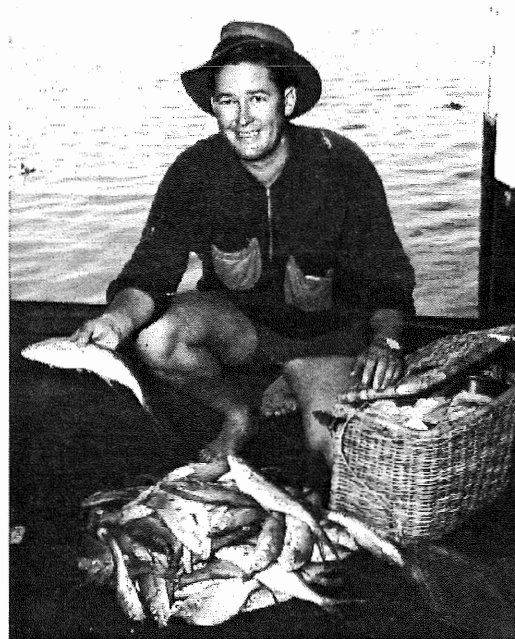
Notes and quotes

- 1) Geoff Orr refers to his beloved 'blood worms' as 'grubs'.
- 2) Did you know that one in three resident Queenslanders participate in the recreation called angling.
- 3) In February 1978, eight angling clubs fished Reeder's point and all on the same weekend.
- 4) Jim Mackenroth fishes close to the bank on Moreton Island and prefers to fish with no sinkers when conditions permit. His sinkers ranged from '000' – '00' and No. 1 ball. He maintains too many anglers use too heavy a sinker and cast too far out from the shoreline, and his favourite whiting bait is wriggler worms.
- 5) Ensure your wriggler worms are stored in a cool area, and in an 'ant-free' zone – Al Sanders.
- 6) In recent times, tens of thousands of estuary fish died in the Maroochy River due to water pollution.

Al Sanders memorial trophy (Moreton Island)

The inaugural Al Sanders Memorial Trophy was first awarded in the year of 1967 and the successful angler was Merv Bauman from the Unity AFC with a catch of 99 fish. During the weigh-in this talented angler tried valiantly to produce one more whiting from his sugar bag to make the even 'tonne', but to no avail. However, Merv was 'chuffed' to be the first winner of this trophy.

The late Al Sanders was a well-liked, respected member of the angling fraternity and a genuine 'fisher of kids' in respect to promoting angling, as a healthy outdoor activity. Al was also a close friend of the late legendary Tweed Heads angler, Len Thompson.



Merv Bauman, inaugural winner, Al Sanders Memorial Trophy, 1967

Well done, Mirimar AFC

One of those tireless workers supporting angling and other social organisations, Fraser Allom OAM informed the writer that the Mirimar Club members have ensured the Al Sanders Memorial Trophy has remained current since 1967. Well done, boys and, most likely, girls. Club angling has changed since the days of 'Big Al'.

Fascinating stuff

The 'goings on' at the DPI Bribie Island Aquaculture Research Centre (BIARC) in respect to summer whiting during the past few years makes fascinating reading for those, who like the writer, could never claim to be a 'boffin'.

The breeding of summer whiting (*Sillago ciliata*) fingerlings which commenced in 1995 proved to be successful. This project utilised staff and infrastructure from the BIARC, Southern Fisheries Centre, Animal Research Institute (Biometry) and the Queensland University of Technology (applied mathematics department).

Won't say much more about this successful project, for the applied mathematics is enough to frighten the non-academic up to Pancake Creek, Gladstone. Suffice to say these very clever people, with the aid of the local Maroochy Restocking Group, released into the Maroochy River approximately 250 000 whiting fry during April 1997 and a further 77 000 in April-May 1998.



Quality whiting

Rock'n'rolling up north

Our 'crack-a-jack' whiting anglers in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales did not have things all their own way in respect to huge catches of whiting, particularly in the hotter months of summer, for example, December and January.

1974

Rockhampton Apex AFC

John Crawford 119 weight 24.48 kg

Keppel AFC

Clem Magee 121 weight 16.24 kg

Gladstone Wanderers AFC

Brian Duncan 140 weight 20.1 kg

Brian Duncan 211 weight 30.42 kg

Peter Russell 219 weight 31.47 kg

Golden-lined? Spot on

A recent 'Captain Cook' at a fresh fish outlet revealed the asking price for whiting fillets was \$23.99 per kilogram. Whoever named the whiting species 'golden-lined' was apparently 'spot on'.

Nonchalant?

Possibly the above is just a 'sign of the times' as we near the 21st century. During the decades of the 1940s and 1950s, 'kids' fishing on the Noosa River landed any amount of legal-sized whiting using nothing more than a handline and a few live beach worms, and the 'whole affair' was rather nonchalant.

Pass the 'baton' Aaron

Aaron Fogarty, Redcliffe City AFC, is one of a number of talented young anglers who have learned their trade extremely well. Aaron at the age of 22 years has already left his mark in the world of recreational/competitive angling.

It will be up to Aaron and other talented young anglers such as Steven Hunter to pass on their expertise, knowledge and ethics to the kids during the first half of the 21st century.

One million

One million in four and a half years – no, not fish, people. The Australian population, August 1999, 19 million. They said so 'on the box'.

The estimated population of Australia in the year 2041 will range from 24 to 27 million. Queensland and Western Australia will be the big winners in the populate-or-perish stakes. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.)

Beaten by a feral pig

A lot of work is required to win a light gear competition. On one occasion Barry Pollock emptied the contents of his wading bag onto the beach above the high-water mark and continued fishing along the beach. On returning he was confronted with the



Aaron Fogarty with quality whiting, Maroochy River

situation of missing and mutilated fish and the obvious signs that feral pigs had enjoyed a free supper.

Bob Hayden experienced a similar fate when fishing Bribie Island. On this occasion, Bob suspected it was the two-legged variety, compounded by the fact the culprit did not leave a thankyou note nor a bottle of beer.

Proliferation

With the conclusion of WWII, many thousands of service men and women were repatriated back into civilian life. Existing clubs and associations, servicing a variety of people's interests and needs, were heavily patronised by the population seeking some normality in their daily lives.

This hunger for normality flowed through to the recreational angling sector and subsequently numerous new angling clubs came into being, for example, Repatriation, Victory, and Scarborough AFC.

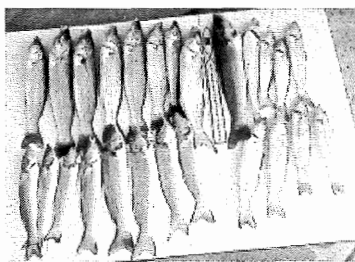
Interested anglers became members of existing angling clubs or formed new outfits to keep expenses to a minimum and 'pooling' funds enabled many to fish productive fishing grounds which otherwise would have been prohibitive had they gone 'solo'. Hence the increase in the number of angling clubs during the late 1940s, '50s and '60s.

As the nation became more wealthy post-1945, the number of privately owned powerboats increased rather rapidly. Early post-1945 clubs hired dinghies (timber) and eventually purchased their own fleets of 'tinnies' and/or club members purchased privately owned 'fishing tinnies' and used them when fishing on club outings.

Fishing and strawberries

The following is an extract by the late Merv McDonald, taken from a press clipping published in *The Courier-Mail*, 1968, in reference to proposed development in the Raby Bay area:

'There's an old saying, the first faults are theirs that commit them and the second theirs that permit them. In the current battle to destroy Raby Bay or preserve it in its natural state, one side must finish up in the wrong. Some of the contestants are talking through their pockets, some through their bait tins and some through their strawberry boxes. In most arguments like this the central figure or figures have no say. In this case the fish and the strawberries, neither of which can read nor write.'



Jumpinpin whiting

No show without punch

That evergreen, large, mangrove island-dotted estuary, Jumpinpin ('The Pin'), famous Australia-wide for its very productive catches of 'yellow fin' bream during the winter months, produced its share of whiting and at times the quality of the blue-nose whiting hauls were as good as, if not superior, to the excellent specimens creel'd in the Southport Broadwater. As I understand it, the angling techniques applied at 'The Pin', to

land some of these monster whiting specimens is markedly different to those well proven methods used at other whiting grounds such as Inskip Point and Moreton Island.

Out the window

The also evergreen, golden rule, 'always attempt to fish as light as possible' seems to a large degree to be 'out the window' when fishing the swift flowing channels at 'The Pin'.

Numbers three, four and five ball sinkers and a trace of approximately 1.5 metres in length were cast up-stream, allowing the terminal gear to drift around with the tidal flow. These big whiting are timid biters at times and Geoff Orr suggests this is not the time nor place to be 'trigger happy'. Allow the fish ample time to mouth and swallow the worm bait, before attempting to hook the fish.

The ebb tide seems the most popular time to fish and such spots or areas as Pandanus Island, Crusoe Island and the Canaipa Passage, yield fish. Catches in the 40 to 50 range were not uncommon for a morning of fishing.

Paddington AFC, 12 December 1926, Crusoe Island, C Adamson: 40 whiting, weight 19 lbs and 1 oz (9.25 kg).

February 1975

Geoff Orr and Bill Turner creeled a fine catch of whiting on this outing, fishing Pandanus Island. The heaviest whiting weighed 1 lb and 8 oz (0.67 kg). The 3 heaviest whiting weighed 3 lbs and 12 oz (1.70 kg).

Ray Ford commented recently that some of the 'Pin' whiting more resembled small jewfish than blue nose whiting.

Yamba-on-Clarence and two genuine champions

When he was still in his teens, champion light-gear angler Ian Uhlmann travelled down to Yamba, New South Wales, on one occasion with big whiting in his sights.

Ian knew he was on the right track when he ran into Ron Cronk who was a Tweed Heads-based angler and a member of the then legendary Tweed Heads AFC.

'Cronky' was forthcoming and gladly offered Ian some local fishing advice. Fishing with yabbie bait during the night, these two former Australian light-gear champions 'loaded up' with big Yamba whiting.

Ian recently reflected on this true angling experience and commented the angling techniques applied that evening were similar to those techniques applied when bream fishing.

Some years past, Ron informed the writer it was not uncommon to land 100 big whiting during a night of angling, when fishing the Tweed or the Clarence.



Steven Hunter (left) and Fraser Allom OAM official weigh-in second round, South Queensland Light Gear Championship, Comby Point, early 1990s

With the passing of time, anglers of this calibre found it difficult to scrape together catches in excess of 25 to 30 good class fish on the Tweed and on the Clarence. We who contemplate declining fish habitats and fish stocks find the above most sobering.

Ian began his very successful angling life at age 14 years. He and his elder brother 'Bonny' Uhlmann became members of the Scarborough AFC during the 1950s. On several occasions older brother 'Bonny' won the club championship and passed on advice and encouragement to his younger sibling.

Obviously angling talent runs in the Uhlmann family genes.

Ian recently contemplated the fact he never 'weighed in' a whiting tonne when fishing Bribie Island.

'I did catch 106 whiting on one occasion on Bribie Island, however transport problems arose when attempting to return to base (this period was prior to the construction of the Bribie Island bridge) and the club on this occasion cancelled the competition.'

However, he did on one occasion accumulate a catch of 101 fish when participating in a club competition held at Donnybrook (Bribie Passage).

The present club champion of the Scarborough AFC, Dave Reberger is no 'slouch' when it comes to wielding a whiting 'stick', evident by his angling results in recent years.



The late, legendary Tweed Heads angler Len Thompson (left), and his eldest son, Bill, Yamba, NSW 1957. 154 whiting weighing 125 lbs (56.75 kg). Heaviest whiting 1 lb 10 oz (0.74 kg)

From oar power to horse power

The explosion in powerboat registration between 1968 and 1978 is mirrored in the fact that, during 1978, the SQAFCFA granted permission to its members to use powerboats during a competition for the first time.

With the benefit of hindsight did we, at this point in time, contemplate this very significant switch in angling mobility?

1968-78: Powerboat registration increased 293.7 per cent from 14 981 to 58 973.

(Source: *The Courier-Mail*, 1978; Department of Harbours and Marine.)

Notes and Quotes

Southport Broadwater:
Bob Hayden:
102 whiting for 20.1 kg.



Cleaning the catch, Inskip Point, 1970s



(l to r) Fraser Somers, Ian Uhlmann, 'Bonny' Uhlmann, Scarborough AFC, 50th Anniversary Dinner

Elbow slappers?

Well that is how one Geoff Orr describes big fat silver whiting and who am I to 'argue the toss'.

When discussing 'elbow slappers' with Geoff it became apparent he is quite passionate about his whiting fishing experiences on the Southport Broadwater–Nerang River and his knowledge of this area and what was required is extensive.

Some of Geoff Orr's 'elbow slapper' class whiting 'weighed in' during these 'comps' as follows:

Some examples:

1. David Bateman 0.775 kg
2. G. Shaw 0.700 kg
3. M. Lapps 0.725 kg
4. K. Kwaitkowski 0.675 kg
5. Bob Hayden 0.675 kg
6. R. Miller 0.650 kg
7. J. Denny 0.650 kg
8. J. Berrt 0.650 kg
9. J. Gudzinski 0.625 kg
10. P. Miller 0.625 kg

Metric Conversion Table

(For the old salts and possibly some young ones!)

½ lb = 0226.8 g

1 lb = 0 453.6 g

2 lb = 0907.2 g



(l to r) Geoff Orr (Victory AFC) — 100 whiting, Alan Lynne (Main Roads AFC) — 150 whiting, Bill Donald (Victory AFC) — 120 whiting, Southport Broadwater

Smart move

Geoff became a member of the Victory AFC during the late 1970s and, in doing so, immediately began rubbing shoulders with some truly experienced 'rods' such as the late Ron Linning and Bill Donald. Obviously, Victory Club members' knowledge of this area was second to none, which is evident in the club records.

November 1974

Bill Donald, 90 whiting, weight 20.75 kg

6 December 1975

1) John Gudzinski, 122 whiting, weight 24.92 kg

2) Bill Donald, 119 whiting, weight 24.9 kg

3) Murray Donald, 91 whiting, weight 19.37 kg

* Note that during this period, Murray was a junior — great effort!

24 January 1976

Bill Donald, 100 whiting, weight 20.87 kg

The Victory members would not spend a nights fishing without a quantity of blood worms and spent many hours digging their bait in mud and slush along the mud banks on the Brisbane River.

15 March 1975

Bill Donald, 117 whiting and 50 bream, weight 48 kg

'Do not move from one spot to another until you have fished the particular spot selected hard and cast well away from the boat. Far too many anglers move about far too much during a nights fishing at the Broadwater', advised Bill in 1975.

Down through the years our top anglers have always been prepared to spend many hours digging worms, both the blood and wriggler variety. During the week preceding a night or days fishing and when land-based, anglers would walk many kilometres and it would be fair comment to say, they earned every whiting landed.

Four down and no up

Since the 1980s we have witnessed the catches decline at four very productive fishing grounds — the Caloundra area, Southport Broadwater, the southern end of Bribie Island and Inskip Point.

Apprenticeship

It is an interesting exercise to follow Geoff Orr's gradually increasing success fishing the Broadwater as a member of the Victory Club.

Over a period of years, Geoff progressed from a learner to be twice runner up in the early club championship, and eventually club champion. Geoff's catches (officially recorded) during this period ranged from the mid-twenties and thirties, gradually building up to the mid-150s.

'Your first catch of 50 is the most difficult', advised the champ, Bill Donald. 'Once you have cracked a single catch of 50 whiting, your results will gather momentum.'

Would not bother

These days Geoff would not bother fishing the Broadwater. Instead he concentrates his whiting fishing efforts in the Nerang River.

'There are still fish to be caught in the Broadwater and some good ones, however overall the whiting fishing has declined in comparison to times past', he said somewhat despondently.

The proposed and eventual stabilising of the bar area of the Broadwater by way of erecting rock walls and 'Wave Break Island' was strongly opposed by the recreational fishing sector both officially and unofficially. Quite rightly they emphasised that the erection of these structures would be detrimental to the ecology of the Broadwater and destroy to a large degree the sea grass matting and consequently also destroy whiting habitats and breeding grounds.

The development that took place in the Broadwater proved to be beneficial for other species such as bream and trevally. However, it was the prodigious catches of quality whiting that made the Broadwater a famous and popular angling area.

Nerang River

With catches of whiting declining in the Broadwater, 'anglers in the know' began concentrating their efforts on the Nerang River.

The Miller brothers, Rob and Peter, members of the Southport AFC recorded some excellent catches of whiting spanning a period of approximately five years.

Wally Cook, Maxam AFC was another who landed numerous 'elbow slappers'. Fishing the ebb tide only, Wally consistently produced catches in the 40 to 60 range, for example, 61 whiting, weight 20.5 kg.



Ian Williams (Victory AFC) working hard digging bloodworms



Anthony Wishey — 127 whiting, 29.85 kg



Sufficient blood worms for two anglers, one outing



James Berry with two fine examples of elbow slapper whiting weighing 625 g and 600 g, Nerang River 1999

Sibling rivalry

The Miller, Cashman and Deviator brothers would in total form a very formidable team (of six) in the world of light gear angling.

Forty centimetres or better

Members of the Victory Club competed for a yearly trophy, which was awarded to the member who could produce a whiting 40 centimetres in length or better. In one season, members weighed in no less than 54 whiting of 40 centimetres or better.

Some of the attractions of angling are its 'not always conformist element' and its unpredictability.

For example:

12 March 1976

Peter West, a member of the Southport AFC fishing the Nerang River during a big fresh water run off, landed 19 whiting, weight 9.5 kg and the bait was yabbies.

This catch was the best in terms of quality whiting (as far as the club could ascertain) recorded by a member of the Southport outfit which is a 'big wrap' for Peter, when one considers the number of successful anglers who came through the ranks of the Southport AFC.

Small soldier crabs

Retired Great Barrier Reef professional line fisher, 'Snowy' Maltman quite often had his fellow anglers around the Southport area shaking their heads in disbelief when he regularly landed whiting up to one kilogram in weight, fishing with small pea-sized soldier crabs.

The heaviest whiting weighed in by a Victory Club member in the season of 1973-74 tipped the scales at 1lb and 10oz (0.733 kg); in the season of 1974-75, 0.750 kg.

8 January 1977

Bill Donald: 153 whiting, 2 bream, weight 31.77 kg

Bill, the Southport King

Extract from press clipping by Rory Gibson, 1970s

The Southport Broadwater is one of the hottest fishing grounds in Queensland at the moment, and none would know better how to fish it than Bill Donald.

Bill is regarded as the Broadwater specialist and with twelve years of Broadwater experience tucked into his tackle box, it is easy to see why. Bill, 53 years of age, trundles his family to the Broadwater whenever he gets the chance where they are all experts at filling their creels with the excellent whiting for which the place is renowned.

Bill has been a Victory Club member for 12 years and Club champion for duration.

Another of his achievements was taking out the 1969 South Queensland light gear championship. However, he probably is best noted for his Broadwater feats. Last year Bill landed an incredible 1200 fish in 13 trips, an average of 90 a trip to the Broadwater.

His most memorable bag of whiting is a 153 haul and he says he could not have been bothered to count those weighing around 1 lb. His heaviest whiting was 1 lb 10 oz.

Bill uses worms only.

The Victory AFC 1977-78 season proved a family tussle for club championship honours.

- 1) Bill Donald 2 089.85 points
- 2) Son-in-law John Gudzinski 2 067.75 points
- 3) Nephew Murray Donald 2 004.75 points

Total whiting catch for this season by all club members numbered 10 479.



The late Esme and Bill Donald

Mini Broadwater dynasty

The truly talented angling couple, Esme and Bill Donald (deceased), contributed to something akin to a Broadwater whiting fishing dynasty, be it a dynasty in mini proportions. Son Jim, nephew Murray and son-in-law John Gudzinski made up a team of five which on a good night, would have proven very difficult to toss in the competitive side of whiting fishing.

Who's an expert? Who's a champion?

With the proliferation of fishing tackle, accessories and fishing publications during the latter part of the 20th century, there seems to be a proliferation of people of all ages seeking angling advice.

The writer humbly advocates there is not and never has been a proliferation of genuine angling experts, and there is not, and never has been, a proliferation of angling champions.

Sunfish fishing schools are run Statewide every year and cater for junior and seniors seeking 'the good oil'.

New Farm-on-Brisbane

Definitely not 'London-on-Thames' but New Farm-on-Brisbane was the place to be some weekends during the 1950s. The Mirimar AFC held educational field days at New Farm Park for the general public and the field days drew big attendances.

Lights on, lights off

The bulk of the whiting caught at the 'hot spot' whiting grounds, Southport Broadwater, Moreton Island, Maroochy River, Inskip Point and Moon Point, Fraser Island and south at Yamba, New South Wales have been recorded during the hours of darkness.

Once again, the obvious question is why? The feeding habits of whiting on Moreton Island and Bribie Island are opposite and the stretch of water separating Moreton and Bribie Islands is not massive in comparison to the distance between Bribie Island and Inskip Point.

Too easy?

'The most productive fishing spots are those which are the most difficult to access.'

How many times have we old salts overheard, or read, the above statement during the past fifty-odd years?

'About as many as there are fleas on a dog's back', may the writer boldly suggest.

Fraser Somers many whiting 'sorties' to Inskip Point during the 1970s were achieved without his vehicle leaving the bitumen until he arrived at the township of Rainbow Beach, which was somewhat less adventurous compared to his first excursion to this once very prolific whiting ground.

Fraser was invited to accompany David Bateman and party to 'go bush' and travel by 4x4 vehicle to Inskip Point back in the early 1960s.

The journey from Brisbane to Tewantin was considerably slower than is the case today, with the now almost double lane highway up and back. Nevertheless, it was drama free, the 'hairy bits' began when crossing the Noosa River and travelling along the Double Island beach. Exposed rock formations (coffee rock) forced the party to detour inland on several occasions and they negotiated some short but deep ravines, with the aid of several sturdy tree logs. Fraser summed up this first whiting 'sortie' to Inskip as, 'quite an experience'.

Perusing the Highway Bait and Tackle outlet situated on the Redcliffe Peninsula, the young proprietors have ensured that a customer can purchase everything that 'opens and shuts'. Possibly, obtaining all the necessities to catch some whiting has become a 'touch' too easy.

Aboriginal translations

(Source: John Oxley Library, and *Aboriginal Pathways in South East Queensland and the Richmond River* by J. G. Steele.)

Barameda:	Fish trap
Bongaree:	Aborigine who accompanied Flinders to Moreton Bay
Bonnonee:	A large river
Caloundra:	A beautiful headland
Coobyaaagar:	Mullet
Coombah:	A pocket of land
Coomera:	From Kumera, the name of a fern
Kulkulook:	Fishing net
Nangarie:	A large fishing net
Nerang:	Little
Nunggi, Perlka	Fishing line



Heading north, to Moon Point

During the 1950s four members of the Repatriation AFC led by the talented angler Ron Miscambell spent their annual holidays in the Tewantin–Noosa area and boy did these four ex-members of the New Guinea Kokoda Trail ‘killing fields’ know what was required to really have a good time. They would organise a lift up to the ‘Teewah Beach’ area by way of an ex-army blitz and land big catches of whiting during late summer, early autumn.

Further north the Rainbow Beach stretch produced whiting around the half a kilogram mark and of course Inskip Point was a whiting ‘mecca’. Opposite Inskip the very southern end of Fraser Island also produced large catches of whiting.

In more recent times one Barry Pollock led a whiting fishing ‘safari’ along the entire length of the ocean beach of Fraser Island and not surprisingly, this ‘fishing safari’ was very successful. The writer’s late brother Garry observed a huge professional net haul of whiting on the very tip of Sandy Cape. And if we do a ‘lefty’ at Sandy Cape, to the inside beach of Fraser Island and the waters of Hervey Bay, we find a very prolific whiting area and none more prolific than Moon Point, Fraser Island.

The third sea road

We are all well aware the stretch of water separating the southern end of Fraser Island and the mainland is not in volume equal to the stretch of water protecting Moreton Island from the mainland and the metropolitan area of Brisbane. Nevertheless, to visit this unique, magnificent sand island ‘in people volume’ requires the services of a reliable, safe vessel or vehicle barge.

This fact could well be ‘another saviour of recreational angling’ in the 21st century.

Here, there and everywhere

When Phil James, Barry Pollock and their spouses commenced their whiting fishing expeditions to Waddy Point, Fraser Island during the early 1960s, the sand whiting were very prolific. These were his summaries:

The whiting seemed to be in abundance anywhere one chose to cast. Once our self-imposed daily quota of whiting was achieved we continued to fish on, implementing 'catch and release'. The 'catch and release' was most beneficial in honing our speed fishing techniques. It isn't that way any more but there are still enough if you are prepared to chase them. In the ocean beach gutters south of Indian Head, top quality whiting are still a frequent catch but I am sure that they are not too keen on the constant beach traffic. The western beach from Moon Point north is a prolific whiting ground but the quality is more like that of the Comboyuro beach on Moreton Island. Over the years, but not so frequently in the last decade, fishing clubs would make the journey from Brisbane to fish the Moon Point area. Blue Fin Club was one of the regulars. The local Hervey Bay Club and several from the Burnett Valley and Bundaberg areas also fished here regularly. The beach hosted a number of Queensland light gear titles in senior, ladies and junior divisions. Century catches were common place.

There are still some club outings held there but these days a number of people take the morning barge from Urangan and return in the afternoon, giving them at least six hours whiting fishing. Others travel by four-wheel-drive across the island to escape strong south-easterly weather.

One thing I really became aware of at Hervey Bay was the unfortunate use of the name 'summer whiting'. Since moving to the Bay, I have made my best catches of the best quality fish during the winter and spring, usually at night on the big tides. If there is a slack time for 'summer whiting' in Hervey Bay, it is summer.

It is also unfortunate that the two species of sand whiting (*Sillago ciliata*) and golden-lined lined or yellow-finned whiting (*Sillago analis*) have been lumped together as 'summer whiting'. Even the upholders of the law get confused with these two varieties. In a report of some charges laid for the possession of undersized fish at Burrum Heads, a fishing inspector was reported to have said that, 'If a whiting had a black spot at the base of the pectoral fin it had to be 23 centimetres, but if there was no black spot, it could be taken at any length!'

Phil resided on the Redcliffe Peninsula during the period of 1962-74. He was a member of the Scarborough AFC, Moreton Mixed AFC and was South Queensland Light Gear Champion in 1971. During this period he acted as mentor to some talented youngsters – Ian Somers, Peter Howarth, Graham Stevenson, Trevor Macdonald and Frank Lamaree to mention just a few. Not surprisingly, Barry Pollock proved to be Phil's star pupil.

It was most gratifying to observe Barry take on leadership of the Junior Anglers Association which conducts annual competitions for school children, both boys and girls, on Moreton Island. It was Junior Angling that gave Barry some of his first competition experiences.

Notes and quotes

There are still big whiting available but one has to search harder these days to find them.

Fraser Somers

Fish stocks

Wally, your question about fish stocks . . .

I don't think there is any doubt that stocks have declined overall. However, this is highly variable over different locations and over different whiting species. Numbers of legal-sized sand whiting along Fraser Island's eastern and western beaches are well down on what they were two and three decades ago, while I haven't noticed any decline in the golden-lined catches over the past 25 years at Hervey Bay. There is pressure on the resource, no one can deny that, but one has to be realistic about the combination of factors that can bring about declining numbers—amateur and commercial pressure, pollution, beach and boat traffic, etc, etc. We must continually encourage research and responsible management.

Over the years the majority of whiting landed by Phil have been 'sand' whiting and some of the best quality were caught on the Caloundra Bar using Redcliffe wriggler worms or small soldier crabs.

Sand whiting are more widespread than golden-lined lined as we are all well aware, but the golden-lined lined variety seem to be much more particular about where it hangs out, or at least where it feeds prior to spawning.

Phil's first encounter with the golden-lined whiting, occurred on the Redcliffe Peninsula in the year of 1962 where he landed some excellent specimens and also at Tripcony's Bight in the Bribie passage during the months of July and August. When he moved to Hervey Bay he explored the local areas and found similar country to Tripcony's Bight in an area between Walsh and Turkey Islands.

I haven't spent too many hours chasing diver whiting but they have a huge following here in Hervey Bay as I know they do in Moreton Bay. A couple of observations that I find interesting: there are a few areas where divers can be caught with reliability pretty well every winter. These include Gataker's Bay, The Gables at Point Vernon and off the western shores of Woody Island.

A talented and fair man

We of the angling world are well aware of Phil James' angling talents and his extensive knowledge of fish and fishing. Phil's contribution to this document has been considerable.

The sand whiting fishing during the spring of '99 in Hervey Bay has been first class; however, Phil advocates there are too many net fishers netting too often.

Fraser Island and Hervey Bay are still among the best whiting grounds along our coastline and as Phil emphasised, it is an easy exercise to point the finger in one direction only in respect to the overall decline in whiting stocks.



Try it before you 'buy' it!

For the life of me I cannot recall his name, possibly the reason being it was some 30 years past, and possibly the writer's grey matter is waning. However, I readily recall the fine catches of whiting this chap creeled in the Pumicestone Passage and when I asked, 'What bait, mate?' invariably the reply was 'hermit crabs'. A matter of 'try it before you buy it'.

Notes and quotes

Don't know if it's still the case, but there was a time when winter whiting were in plague proportions in Moreton Bay, particularly on the Pelican Banks and along Deception Bay, feeding over the weed banks.

When fishing the Broadwater, use bloodworms for bait, fish light, experiment and try various spots, until you find fish and most likely you will find fish in a ripple or current.

Neil Carstens

A champion team and a team of champions

'A champion team will beat a team of champions.'

Sporting scribes' have promoted the above philosophy since 'Noah' was a kid in short pants. With the establishment of the Unity AFC, competitive/recreational anglers representing the numerous other clubs realised 'this lot' would prove a real handful and to quote the all-round angling 'guru' David Bateman, 'Boy, they were a hard nut to crack.'

According to Jack Thwaites and the late Ron Medill, the original concept in forming Unity was strictly to fish on a social level. With the number of 'top rods' coming together to form Unity, one can assume after years of competing with their original clubs the competitive instincts proved too strong to resist.

The Club in the year of 1969 boasted such talented people as: Ian Uhlmann, Mike Elliott, Merv Bauman, Leigh Duncan, Doug Pope, B. Ferguson, C. Pollock, I. Johnson, D. Shanks, G. Smith, H. Haynard and Ron Medill (deceased).

The man who talks to yabbies

Ken Grobe, winner of numerous beach-fishing titles is not a whiting angler in the same vein as the likes of Jim Mackenroth. Some years past, Ken required a quantity of fish on the last club outing of the season to become the first-ever member of the Waterside AFC to record 1000 fish in a season and achieved this goal with a cricket score catch of whiting which illustrated this angler's versatility.

A friend of Ken's suggested his angling success over the years was due in part to his ability to talk to his bucket full of yabbies and threaten to do all sorts of things to the yabbies if they did not produce fish! Joking of course.

Ken Grobe is one of a number of anglers whom the writer has admired for many years.

Notes and quotes

The winter whiting season in the Hervey Bay area, 1999, has not been the greatest on record.

The year 2000 has been one of the best in recent decades. Many are attributing this to the trawling restrictions imposed on diver whiting during the spawning season in parts of Hervey Bay.

Phil James

More innovation

At the height of his angling career, Jack Thwaites 'humped' 120 whiting which averaged approximately half a pound each, back to Tangalooma from Craven Creek and was utterly exhausted. His back and lower back region suggested there must be an easier way other than a creel and strap and its uneven weight distribution.

After some discussion with a number of his peers regarding this self-inflicted torture, a person or persons procured a used corn sack. They stitched up the open end, cut a hole in the centre region and placed the bag over their head to rest on the shoulders and soon realised if pockets were fitted on both sides of the bag, any weight to be carried could then be distributed evenly. Strains on the back were eliminated to a large degree.

It was not long before the 'carry sack' was a common sight along the Moreton Island beach.

Big fish, big prizes

The heading of this chapter could well be 'a possible changing of the guard', well maybe to some degree.

The popularity of such fishing competitions as the Orchid Beach Toyota Fishing Expo, the Stradbroke Classic and the Cabarita Green Back Classic, illustrates angling competitions are as popular as ever. Possibly the overall format in respect to competitive angling may continue to change during the 21st century.

The expensive prizes 'up for grabs' in the above-mentioned yearly competitions encourages quality fish and quality fishing.

Place names (Source: John Oxley Library and *Aboriginal Pathways in South East Queensland and the Richmond River* by J. G. Steele.)

Moon Point	Named by Queensland Place Names Board, 1 June 1981. Formerly known as Sandy Point.
Inskip Point	Probably named by admiralty hydrographer, 1849? After Lieutenant George Inskip, RN, who served in HMS <i>Rattlesnake</i> , October 1846 – May 1848.
Rainbow Beach	Named after HMS <i>Rainbow</i> , which anchored in this area 1827.
Comboyuro Point	Was known to the Aborigines as Gnahmoonbilla, which according to Meston means 'the place where the woman died'.
Cowan Cowan Point	Probably derived from either 'daun daun' or 'Kaun Kaun', Yugumbir language indicating black (from rutile deposits in beach sand) or alternately from Kabi word 'Kauin Kauin' indicating blood.
Bulwer	Is said to be derived from boolwerr, meaning a parrotfish.
Tangalooma	Some say Tangalooma means 'bottlebrush tree by the sea', but others opt for 'resting place' or 'meeting place of fishes'. The Aborigines called the desert 'Tangumluma', the place where lightning strikes.
Reeders Point	Originally, most likely, unofficially as Clohertys: Cloherty being the first lighthouse keeper. Now the name, like the point, has disappeared and that of the second lighthouse keeper, Reeder' has taken over.
Southport	Surveyed in 1874 and named by Thomas Blacket Stephens after his birthplace in Lancashire, England. Earlier known as Nerang Heads, South Port established as a township in 1902. The Aboriginal name was Goo-en.
Nerang River	Nerang is a Banjalang Aboriginal term meaning 'little' but it may also mean 'shovel nose' shark.

Before the Europeans came to Moreton Island, a people whose name we spell variously Ngugi, Nooghie or Gnoogee lived on the island. They called it Gnoorgambin or Moorgumpin or Mulgumpin, meaning strange fish. Some of their other names live on as place names, even if only noted in parentheses on maps, such as Gebellum (Big Sandhills).

In 1865 the Navy deposited pigs and goats on the island as a source of food for shipwrecked sailors.

Erosion

Reeders Point: A tip that in the last 150 years has retreated northwards, with a loss of 1000 metres recorded over the forty years from 1935–1975. (Source: *Islands of Moreton Bay* by Helen Horton, Boolarong Publications.)

Femme fatale



Gloria Bateman – champion lady angler

The hairy-chested, hairy-legged blokes, who accompanied the writer on many beach fishing expeditions during a 25-year period, all seemed to be very partial to members of the opposite sex. Therefore, I was somewhat surprised when former south Queensland light gear champion, Phil James, informed me that the mooted establishment of the Moreton Mixed AFC some decades past was received with a chauvinistic attitude from some quarters in the world of recreational/competitive angling. We must emphasise the description, 'some' not all.

Once Moreton Mixed AFC became a reality, it was not long before this mixed outfit produced some outstanding light gear anglers, both male and female. In due course, a number of other established clubs followed Moreton Mixed example and consequently ladies' club, district, State and National titles became standard fixtures on the angling calendar.



Lorraine Hayden

Lorraine Hayden, Joy Rogers, Jody Reberger, Esme Donald and others are well known names in the world of recreational/competitive angling. Lorraine commenced fishing in 1983 and took to whiting fishing like – yes, you guessed it – a duck to water. She soon became hooked on competitive angling and won two Queensland ladies' light gear titles, seven south Queensland titles and was a member of the Queensland team (of six) competing at the Australian Angling Titles in 1987 and 1997. Lorraine has also been Queensland boat estuaries champion on three occasions and has been a member of Victory AFC and Arana Leagues fishing club.

Lorraine is of the opinion the Nerang River is the home of the big whiting (Geoff Orr's 'Elbow Slappers').

During the months of March, April and May this talented lady angler has landed numerous big whiting, fishing northern New South Wales beaches such as Cabarita, Hastings Point and Black Rock.

Mix 'n' match

Jody and Dave Reberger provide us with a good example of mixed club angling, fishing with and representing the Scarborough AFC. Jody won the ladies' south Queensland Light Gear Championship in the 1991-92 season and repeated this honour in 92-93. Dave won the men's Queensland Light Gear Championship in 1996. In 1995 Jody was runner up in the ladies' national estuary championships.

Both Jody and Dave have been members of numerous south Queensland and Queensland angling teams competing in State and Australian angling titles. The Reberger angling team has also been involved in the important administration side of fishing for some considerable time.

In addition, Jody and Dave organise and supervise the bi-annual weekend junior angling education camps held on Moreton Island. These angling camps are conducted under the umbrella of Sunfish North Moreton branch and the South Queensland AFC Association (SQAFCFA).

If Joy Rogers was not a foundation member of Moreton Mixed AFC, she was certainly an early member of this successful angling outfit. Indeed Joy was one of the 'trail blazers' in respect to ladies competitive light gear angling and has a host of angling titles to her credit.

Horses for courses

Long-time and still active member of the Victory Club, Eric Cuthbert can recall the times when Victory was the only club that concentrated its efforts in the Southport Broadwater. With declining catches on Moreton Island, a number of clubs 'set sail' for the Broadwater and consequently there are now six regular clubs fishing this area.

The once-regular club visitors to Moreton Island soon realised the old adage 'horses for courses' came into play when fishing the Broadwater. The all-conquering 'wiggler worm' bait so successful when fishing Moreton and Bribie Islands, plays 'second fiddle' to the mud/bloodworm when fishing the Broadwater, Nerang River area.

Eric is adamant the Broadwater whiting ground does not fish nearly as well as times past, however he advocates the Nerang is still producing numbers of top quality whiting. Eric is also very adamant that gathering numbers of whiting in this area requires a lot more hard work than in times past.

What if?

The overall decline in whiting fishing in the Moreton Bay area and the subsequent concentration of angling in the Broadwater-Nerang area begs the question – what happens to recreational whiting fishing if this area declines in time, in the same manner as Moreton Island?

Narrow gauge — standard gauge

We are, or should all be, aware of the non-uniformity of the very extensive rail system in this country, which has, over the past 100 years, cost our economy untold millions of dollars.

To the observer, the fact that 'summer whiting' in Queensland waters are not governed by a bag limit, compared to New South Wales which insists on a bag limit of 20 fish and a legal length of 27 centimetres, seems a somewhat ludicrous situation.

Possibly in 'banana-bender' land, a legal length of 25 centimetres and a daily bag limit of 30 whiting per angler would facilitate some resemblance in overall uniformity.

Whiting Provide Good Catches on a Fair Day

(Source: The Courier-Mail, writer, Tom Ludlow, 1970s)

'With ideal weather conditions prevailing and the fish cooperating, light gear anglers recorded many fine catches last weekend.

Kevin Sadler and Martin Cowling from the Virginia-Nundah Club landed 132 and 116 fish respectively at Comboyuro while at Readers Point on the other end of Moreton. Peter Cashman of City Hall caught 107 fish.

The Southport Broadwater also produced plenty of fish and Wally Cook of Maxam caught ninety-five fish with both John Gudzinski and Bill Donald of Victory, with ninety fish, had the top catches.

Most of the fish were whiting, with the Broadwater providing the better quality.'

Late Burst of Giant Whiting

(Source: *Fishing News*, writer, Jim Briggishaw, 1970s)

Monster yellow-fin summer whiting have made a late burst in southern Queensland and fish near the 1½ lb mark have been taken.

Hollywell and Jumpinpin are two of the best spots. But big whiting have been reported from almost every fishing area.

Victory Club anglers are Hollywell specialists and they have been reaping a harvest on night trips.

In the three heaviest whiting sections on a recent trip, 8 separate lots of three whiting were weighed in and they went between 3 lb 1 oz and 3 lb 9½ oz.

And many whiting over the pound mark weren't weighed-in in the section when the other fishermen saw the quality of the top fish.

Heaviest whiting went 1 lb 5 oz and was taken by J. Gudzinski, who had 45 fish for 24 lb 4 oz. He had 6 whiting over 1 lb and his heaviest three went 3 lb 9½ oz.

Gudzinski won the handicap section but was beaten for most fish by Club Champion, Bill Donald who had 64 for 36 lb.

SQAFCA Redcliffe Herald Shield

Best whiting catch by a competitive angler in the fishing year.

1955/56 - J MENZIES (MIRIMAR)
1956/57 - F RIVERS (C'WEALTH BANK CLUB)
1957/58 - L WEBB (ROYALE ASSOCIATE)
1958/59 - D SCHULTZ
1959/60 - D SCHULTZ
1960/61 - R STAIB
1961/62 - C BADCOCK
1962/63 - A CANNON
1963/64 - C BADCOCK

1964/65 - J HIRN
 1965/66 - J HIRN
 1966/67 - J HIRN
 1967/68 - A CANNON (150 FISH)
 1968/69 - C SMITH
 1969/70 - J MACKENROTH
 1970/71 - J MACKENROTH
 1971/72 - F SOMERS
 1972/73 - B POLLOCK
 1973/74 - L JEFFERY
 1974/75 - J MACKENROTH
 1975/76 - W RICHARDS
 1976/77 - J GUDZINSKI (NUNDAH VICTORY, 156 WHITING)
 1977/78 - K SADDLER (130 WHITING)
 1978/79 - G BURGESS (413)
 1979/80 - M COWLING (384)
 1980/81 - M COWLING (439)
 1981/82 - P CASHMAN (722.5)
 1982/83 - A LYNNE (422.5)
 1983/84 - G ORR (344.25)
 1984/85 - N CARSTENS (301)
 1985/86 - J MACKENROTH (342)
 1986/87 - M COWLING (271.5)
 1987/88 - G DEVANTIER (307)
 1988/89 - J DEVANTIER
 1989/90 - G DEVANTIER (340)
 1990/91 - R MILLER (491.5)
 1991/92 - T BARR (536.5)
 1992/93 - R MILLER (502.2)
 1993/94 - M LAPPS (460)
 1994/95 - T BRAUER (420.5)
 1995/96 - R MILLER (296)
 1996/97 - M LAPPS (494)
 1997/98 - M LAPPS (387.25)
 1998/99 - M LAPPS (328.75)

NOTE: This shield may be discontinued when bag limits are introduced.



Mick Lapps proudly displays the Redcliffe Herald Whiting Shield 1998-99 season



SQAFCFA Trophy Night 1999. A most successful year for the Victory ADFC. (Back row) John Gudzinski, Mick Lapps, James Berry, Peter Miller, Chris Britton, Eric Cuthbert, Rob Kwiatkowski. (Front row) Chris Georgiou, Robbie Miller, (Captain), Anthony Wishey



We ain't seen nothing yet

The Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that in the 30 years from 1968 to 1998, Queensland's population doubled from 1.7 million to 3.5 million – and that's not just from having babies. Even though the great migration north of the late 1980s to the mid '90s has slowed, the KPMG Consulting survey on population growth shows a net interstate migration of 17 967 Australians to Queensland in 1998. Its closest rival was Western Australia at 4 726.

'Queensland's (interstate migration) is still head and shoulders above everywhere else and is likely to return to those higher levels of the '90s', says the KPMG report's director, Bernard Salt.

The luring of business newcomers such as Boeing will add 500 jobs, IBM's Asia Pacific Call Centre will boost 200 jobs and the much celebrated winning of Britain's Virgin Airlines headquarters will add 750 jobs.

There'll need to be plenty more of them, because Salt says there's no sign of Queensland's magnet losing its pull. He says despite the downward slip in interstate migration from the mid-90s on, the exodus from the south will continue once big construction jobs such as Sydney Olympics and Melbourne's City Link project are complete, 'Then you will find a return to the long-term sunbelt drift factor,' says Salt. He thinks we ain't seen nothing yet.

In 10 years, a new worldwide phenomenon will be in full flight – the retirement of the baby boomers. Out of their Sydney and Melbourne offices they'll tumble, clutching their rolled-over super and eschewing the boardroom for a pair of boardies. Where will these cashed-up, demanding children of the 1950s head? The same place as thousands of retirees before them – north.'

Extracts from feature article, 'Faces of Queensland: The Newcomers' by Leisa Scott, Cathy Prior, Adrian McGregor, Dorothy Illing, Kevin Meade, *The Australian*, 9 May 2000.

Population projections in millions, Queensland

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – *The Courier-Mail*, August 2000

1999	2011	2021	2051
3.5	4.3	5.1	7.2

Whiting Season Gets Into Full Swing

Source: Tom Ludlow OAM, 22 September 1985

The whiting season has started with a vengeance as big catches have been reported from most of the recognised spots.

Century catches were recorded at both Moreton Island and Inskip Point while Bribie produced fish, but heavy seaweed concentrations limited catches.

Jim Mackenroth, a former state light-gear champion, set the main at Comboyuro with his catch of 152 fish for 19.4 kg and Terry Lever 108 fish for 14.07 kg from Virginia–Nundah. Total weigh-in of 1793 fish for 236.46 kg.

Whiting were not quite so plentiful at South Moreton but the quality was better. Laurie Evan's bag of 67 fish for 12.65 kg is worthy of mention.

Inskip Point also provided plenty of whiting over last weekend and David Reberger beached 104 for 12.35 kg from Scarborough's 1116 fish for 151.45 kg.

The Southport Broadwater is producing good quality whiting and these will increase in numbers in the next few weeks.

Haul In Local Anglers Title

Source: The Courier-Mail, press clipping, 1970s

More than 2300 fish were weighed in after the annual SQAFA fishing competition at Tangalooma last weekend.

In ideal weather conditions two boats carried the 224 angling competitors to Tangalooma.

Anglers from all south Queensland clubs bagged fish weighing a total of 938 lb.

Results were: Whatmore Shield for A Grade teams:

- 1st - Unity Club with 348 points;
- 2nd - Scarborough Club with 341 points;
- 3rd - Virginia–Nundah Club with 281 points.

Best performance in open competition:

- W Ollenbury (Scarborough) - 51 points;
- Heaviest fish in competition: Les Altoft (Mirimar).

Winners of the various weigh-in groups were:

- A Grade, L Duncan (Unity) 75 points.
- B Grade, J Hirn (Virginia–Nundah) 68 points.

Virginia–Nundah Shield for B Grade teams:

Virginia–Nundah 282 points 1st. Unity Club 161 Points 2nd.

Al Sanders Memorial Trophy for the best performance in open teams competition won by:

J. Mackenroth (Virginia–Nundah) with 84 points, D. Nash 80 points 2nd.

C Group, T. Ludlow (Maxam) 44 points.

D Group, L. Guy (Burleigh Heads) 51 points.