

- Copy -

Datus C. Proper  
1914 N. Johnson St.  
Arlington, VA 22207  
U.S.A.

Dec. 23, 1986

Mr. Alan Bramley  
Partridge of Redditch Limited  
Mount Pleasant, Redditch  
Worcestershire B97 4JE  
England

Dear Alan,

The Code A is my favorite hook and I like it just the way the old Hardy Fly Hook used to be -- very strong and somewhat short in the shank. However, I caught this preference from an Irishman, and I've never met another American fisherman who agrees with me. My countrymen are comfortable with longish shanks and wire on the light side. One has to remember that almost every living American fly-tyer grew up with the Mustad 94840 hook, and anything that looks very different seems questionable. At the same time, Americans welcome better quality, better points, and more strength. Many seem willing to pay more, but not to accept more weight. I am still trying but have not been very successful in convincing anglers that a dry fly can, in fact, float with a hook somewhat heavier than normal.

My impression is that Americans are also uncomfortable with offset points. I share that prejudice and often bend the offset out of the Code A before tying. Never had any problem until I hit one recent batch with more temper, and some of those did break unpredictably.

My guess, then, is that for this market you should keep the shank fairly long, the wire a bit light, and the offset nil or slight. Mind you, I'm not suggesting a design change; the hook needs to be relatively wide-gaped (i.e. short-shanked) and strong to retain its character.

I have been plugging the Code A as the best thing there is for tying small dry flies like the Trico. Would hope, therefore, that you retain sizes down to about 6 mm overall, including eye and bend. A size 17, perhaps 18, should be small enough, if you stay with Redditch sizes. I hope you do stay with the old sizes, for a hook so traditional. Might even brag about it. (I guess they sell Purdey shotguns at outrageous prices because they refuse to change with the times.)



In the same vein, I suspect that Americans might like odd-numbered sizes -- they sound sort of old-fashioned and hand-made. But <sup>given</sup> if they may be illusory, unless you can hold the tolerances awfully close.

Suppose you've seen Dick Stewart's book. Seems like a good idea, though I must write him about a couple of problems. The main one is that he has no single, logical scale for sizes, so that comparisons between different hooks are difficult. The shank-length measurement isn't accurate enough for sizing. (In the absence of a clear point where the shank ends at the rear, different people seem to come up with different shank lengths.)

The second edition of my book is coming out this spring -- I think -- with Nick Lyons publishing. There will be an up-dated chart on hooks to reflect some of the models you now have on the American market (e.g. Capt. Hamilton) and one or two of the new Japanese hooks. My strength tests don't always agree with Stewart's, but we tested different batches. I'll ask Nick Lyons to send you a copy.

Yours,





PARTRIDGE OF REDDITCH LIMITED  
MOUNT PLEASANT  
REDDITCH  
WORCESTERSHIRE B97 4JE, ENGLAND

☎ Redditch (0527) 41380 and (0527) 43555

Telex: 335540 WEMMAS G. for PARTRIDGE OF REDDITCH

Registered Office (as above): Registered No: 993972 England

Alan Bramley-Managing Director and Secretary

Terry Emms-Production Director

MAKERS BY HAND OF HIGHEST QUALITY BRITISH FISH HOOKS AND SPLIT CANE RODS

Our Ref AB/DLS

10th December 1986

Mr. D. C. Proper,  
1914 N. Johnson Street,  
Arlington,  
VA 22207,  
U.S.A.

Dear Datus,

I have been told by a number of our good U.K. fly dressers that a small chance we made in the shank length of some of the Code A sizes - they were marginally shorter than before - was not a good change.

Have you got any comments on the ideal shank lengths for the Code A range of hooks?

Please bear in mind that we now only expect in the next year to be offering sizes 8,10,12,14 and 16.

One or two people have said that at least in this range we should also offer sizes 9,11,13 and 15 but this is a development that I don't really feel is necessary. I would welcome your views however.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan", followed by a short horizontal line.

Alan Bramley





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Our Ref AB/DLS

15th December 1986

Mr. D.C. Proper,  
1914 N. Johnson Street,  
Arlington,  
VA 22207,  
U.S.A.

Dear Datus,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd October. I fully understand your feelings and will not press you for a recommendation on our K12ST hooks.

I appreciate very much your loyalty to our "A" hooks. I would agree with you that it is very difficult to get a really objective test for the hooking characteristics of various hooks.

I have no idea, unfortunately, when I will be able to get to Montana but look forward to joining you there some time.

Best wishes for Christmas and a peaceful and fishful year in 1987.

Best regards.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Alan Bramley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alan Bramley



Datus C. Proper  
1914 N. Johnson St.  
Arlington, VA 22207  
U.S.A.

October 22, 1986

Mr. Alan Bramley  
Partridge of Redditch Ltd.  
Mount Pleasant, Redditch  
England

Dear Alan,

Thanks for your letter of 10 October and the accompanying sedge hooks. I look forward to trying them but, at this point, do not have a dressing that I'd feel comfortable in recommending. The main problem has to do with my sedge pupae in general. There's one in my book, and it works, but I'm not sure that it works any better or any worse than any other general pattern of nymph. I've experimented with a number of other pupa dressings with similar results. It's not clear to me that the trout take these flies as pupae -- though they're certainly taken as something. A number of American fly-tyers are marketing pupal and larval patterns, but I don't know how many are proven. Gary LaFontaine's strike me as the most original and best-researched.

My other question has to do with hooks having in-turned points (point masked by brow). My only experiment of this kind involved a Mustad hook that seemed to be nearly trout-proof. A number of anglers on this side are recommending such hooks, but I wonder if they've fished with 'em. Your design is much less extreme and probably hooks well, but I'd want to try it a long time to be sure. There must be something I don't understand about the turned-in points, because the Japanese also seem to be making them. I've tried one Japanese dry-fly design marketed by Orvis that seems to do pretty well -- usually. After missing a couple of fish with it, I go back to your old Code A and feel more confident. Wish I could come up with a reliable test for hooking ability.

As you know, Fly Tyer is testing a lot of hooks, with my encouragement and such advice as I could give. The second edition of my book, due out next spring, also has some up-dated testing results. I think I got the Capt. Hamilton in this time, and dropped some earlier versions.

You'll have to come fishing with me in Montana one of these days. I may already have told you that I now have a short piece of stream that behaves a lot like a carrier of the Itchen, but with wild trout.

Yours,

Datus





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Our Ref AB/DLS

L0th October 1986

Mr. D.C. Proper,  
1914 N. Johnson Street,  
Arlington,  
VA 22207,  
U.S.A.

Dear Datus,

We are shortly to introduce a new style of advertisement in Fly Tyer Magazine.

We are going to feature one range of hooks and show three flies tied by different experts with tying instructions.

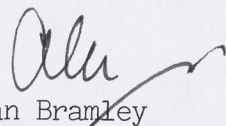
The first range will be our new Code K12ST Long Shank Caddis hooks.

Could you possibly let me have a fly tied on one of these together with the detailed tying instructions, i.e. materials.

The fly should be one which would be of interest to readers of Fly Tyer so if it is slightly different from any standard patterns so much the better.

As a means of thanking you for your help in ths way, perhaps you would like any 500 of our trout hooks which we would send to you.

Yours sincerely,

  
Alan Bramley

P.S.

I am sorry to ask for some urgency but ideally I need the fly and tying instructions by the end of October at the latest.

K12ST 25 x each size



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England

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# PARTRIDGE OF REDDITCH

*Makers of high quality handmade  
British fish hooks & split cane rods*

Reg. Office (as opposite)  
Reg. No. 993972 England

Alan Bramley:—  
Managing Director  
and Secretary

Terry Emms:—  
Production Director

12 January 1990

*Book + note sent  
Feb. 16, 1990*

Mr. Datus C. Proper,  
1085 Hamilton Road,  
BELGRADE,  
Montana, 59714,  
U.S.A.

Dear Datus,

Many thanks for your letter of the 13 December.

I hope you got on well with the Grey Shadow hooks  
and if you need any more samples, please don't  
hesitate to write to me.

The Japanese have certainly made in-roads into hook  
markets throughout the world and there are plenty of  
people who are not Japanese who are only too pleased  
to help them to make some money at the expense, in  
some cases, of jobs for their fellow-countrymen. The  
Japanese "infusion" is certainly a major problem  
although I must say that we have tended to try and  
keep above the <sup>middle</sup> ~~metal~~ market in-fighting and in  
fact, Japan is our number one export market for fly  
fishing hooks.

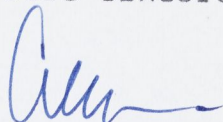
I have not yet got a copy of your second edition, but  
have dropped a line to Nick Lyons asking if he could  
get one to me although ideally I would like it  
inscribed and signed by you first.

I have dropped a line to Jack Heddon to re-establish  
contact.

I hope you can get to the UK before too long and look  
forward to seeing you and fishing with you if that  
happens.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,



ALAN BRAMLEY

Enc. K12ST 25 of each sizes 16, 18, 20 and 22



Partridge of Redditch Ltd  
Mount Pleasant  
Redditch  
Worcestershire B97 4JE  
England

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PARTRIDGE OF REDDITCH  
NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER  
22nd February 1990  
Telephone Nos:-  
Gloria Noyce 0527 541067  
General Office 0527 541380  
Fax 0527 546956

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Managing Director  
and Secretary

Terry Emms:—  
Production Director

6 June 1990

DATUS PROPER  
1085 HAMILTON ROAD  
BELGRADE  
MONTANA 59714  
U.S.A

Dear Datus,

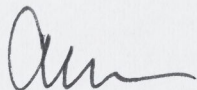
I wondered whether you got my letter of the 29  
January.

Just in case you didn't, I enclose a copy.

You might like to try out the new barbless Roman  
Moser hooks that we are now making.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,



ALAN BRAMLEY

Enc.

Sent Ricco  
8/17/90

Answered July '91  
Promised a set of  
Tricos



~~BF 12 DEC~~  
~~APRIL~~  
~~OR JUNE~~

Our ref AB/DS

29 January 1990

Mr D C Proper

Dear Datus

I was looking again at your article on "Designing a better Trico".

I would love to try some of each of the three flies myself this year and would also like to frame one of each for my angling den at our farmhouse in the Lake District.

Could I therefore beg a few of each of the three flies tied by you.

I would also very much like a photograph of you fishing - coloured if possible to frame along with the flies.

There is an old expression that if you don't ask you don't get anything and I hope you don't mind me being forward in asking.

I enclose some hooks which at least will partly offset your time and trouble.

I am sure you will also be interested that we are working on a new range of dry fly hooks including all the odd sizes again. When we have got a little bit further along the line with those and have some hard samples I will send them to you.

Best regards

Alan Bramley

Encs