Simplicate + add lightness

A traditional Jock Scott, for example, is confusing even to us. Given three seconds or so to look at an old, fully-dressed fly, could you describe it accurately? Therein may lie the clue, for many of the successful hairwings manage to give the overall impression of their old counterparts in a more direct way. Hold up a Thunder and Lightning and a Willie Gunn at arm's length and half close your eyes. You will see what I mean.

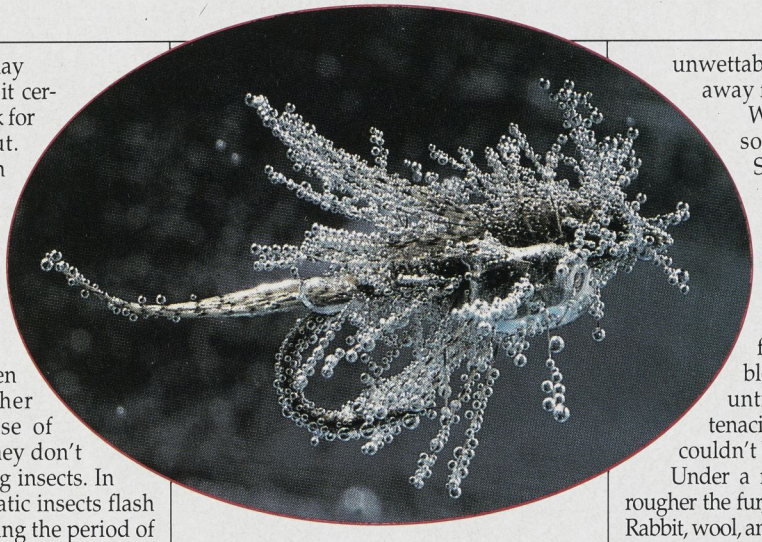
All the samples in this booklet have been tied by Dusty Miller, one-time airman, lifetime angler, and now professional fly-tyer. Perhaps it is appropriate that he often follows the maxim of the late C. G. Gray on how to build aeroplanes: 'Simplicate and add lightness'. At the other end of the scale, his many suggestions have improved the balance and 'swim' of the big articulated flies and have contributed to the success of patterns such as Willie Gunn, Pilkington, and Frank's Fancy.
Rob Wilson

This guide has been compiled in response to the many queries received every year about hairwing salmon-fly patterns. The 50 patterns illustrated and described in alphabetical order should be sufficient to keep any salmon-fisher happy for the rest of his fishing career, but that will doubtless not prevent the creation of many more. All the patterns illustrated have been tied by Dusty Miller for Rob Wilson, of Brora, Sutherland.

BY RALPH CUTTER

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Flies that sparkle have always attracted trout. Here's an easy way to add some "flash" to even the drabbest nymph patterns.



All that glitters may not be gold, but it certainly has a knack for catching trout. Since the mid-seventeenth century when Izaak Walton ribbed his flies with threads of silver and gold, anglers the world over have found that a little sparkle in their imitations increased the catch.

Glittering flies have been called "attractors" rather than "imitations" because of the mistaken belief that they don't imitate naturally occurring insects. In truth, the majority of aquatic insects flash and glitter like jewels during the period of emergence and during underwater egg laying. Many aquatic bugs glitter as they go about their daily routine.

Caddisfly and midge pupa and many mayfly nymphs generate bubbles of carbon dioxide between themselves and the membrane which surrounds them. The function of these bubbles is probably twofold. The bubbles add buoyancy, which helps the emerging insect ascend through the water column; and the swelling bubbles likely aid in the rupturing of the membrane that traps the adult within.

Many adult caddisflies and some mayflies such as Baetis swim or crawl underwater to lay their eggs on lake and stream bottoms. Their respiratory systems require free oxygen, so the insects carry an air bubble (called a plastron) with them as they prowl about underwater. Other air-entraining bugs such as backswimmers, diving beetles, and water spiders also carry a plastron with them during underwater forays. As the oxygen in the bubble is used, the pressure differential between the bubble and the surrounding water forces fresh oxygen into the bubble.

From underwater, these air-entraining insects look like living jewels, and they twinkle and glitter unlike any manmade material. The plastron shimmers in a quicksilver sheath that wildly distorts the insect enveloped inside. A swarm of ovipositing caddisflies crawling about the streambed or a shower of backswimmers cascading from a clump of aquatic vegetation is indescribably brilliant and beautiful.

The author is an innovative angler who enjoys a lot of streamside research.

The glisten of air-entraining insects is surprisingly difficult to imitate. The air/water interface casts not only a distinctly silver glow, but reflects the surrounding environment. Tinsel and refracting plastics such as Flashabou and Crystal Hair shimmer enticingly, but fail to reflect the environment as an air bubble does.

Antron and Zelon are superior to any other material to date—both tend to trap tiny bubbles like those of some of the emerging insects—but many hundreds of hours spent underwater observing aquatic insects convinced me they still fall way short of imitating the real bubble.

Instead of attempting to imitate the insect bubbles, I took a different tact and tried to affix an actual bubble to the nymph pattern. After a great number of failures, I ended up enveloping a nymph body in an airtight bubble of crystal clear, heat-shrink polyethylene. A few strands of marabou or soft hackle flowing over the bubble imparted a living quality to the nymph. Trout went wild over the imitation, and when viewed from underwater, it was easy to see why; the air bubble glistened and reflected the environment just like the real thing because it *was* the real thing!

As good as the imitation was, it proved to be of little value because trout quickly shredded the plastic. That done, the fly (which isn't simple to tie) became as ineffective as the standard patterns.

In frustration I went back to the real insect to find out how it could entrain such a neat little globe of air. It turns out that plastron breathers are covered with millions of tiny hairs that are coated with a waterproofing similar to bee's wax. These unwettable hairs actually push water away from the insect.

Without much expectation I soaked a few nymphs in Scotchguard, let them dry overnight, and then dropped them in an aquarium with a few untreated nymphs. All the nymphs became swathed with shimmering bubbles. I swished the bugs back and forth in the water; the bubbles quickly washed from the untreated nymphs, but clung tenaciously to the treated flies. I couldn't believe it was this simple.

Under a microscope I found that the rougher the fur, the better it held air bubbles. Rabbit, wool, and beaver underfur were excellent; bear, seal, and most guard hairs were poor. If a material was easy to dub, it was probably a good candidate for trapping air.

Loosely dubbed patterns held air much longer than tight bodies and the best patterns were sheathed in feathers (soft hackle, Carey Special, and Bird's Nest). Two of the most effective patterns were Gary LaFontaine's sparkle pupa and emerger tied with soft wool rather than Antron.

Of all the waterproofings I tested, Superior's NuflyKote was the most effective.Thoroughly soaking the nymphs, then allowing them to dry overnight, provided maximal proofing.

Nymphing techniques had to be modified to enhance the bubble-carrying ability of the treated flies. Unless you are imitating emergers in the film, split shot, crimped several inches up the leader from the imitation, must be used because the air-encrusted nymphs want to float. Ironically, buoyant nymphs act more alive than the same flies untreated; for this reason and for improved hooking ability, I use unweighted dry fly hooks rather than the thicker nymph models.

Nymphs should be false cast between drifts to dry them out. They also should be treated with a desiccant such as Siedel's 800 or Cortland's Dry Ur Fly every few minutes to maximize air entrainment. Never use paste-type floatants; they gum up the fur and hackle fibers, which causes them to lose their air-holding abilities.

The treated nymphs should be lofted gently on the water rather than sharply driven through the surface. Slapping the nymphs through the film will cause much of the bubble to shed from the fly.

PHOTO BY JIM KRAJICEK

"...the truth is, that oil change took less than 29 minutes, didn't it?"

I sensed he was about to crack. An oil change at a GM dealership taking an hour and a half? Not at a Mr. Goodwrench Quick Lube Plus dealership, mister. So much for your alibi.

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120 BROADWAY
NEW YORK

18 Apr. '65

Dear Mr. Proper:

My friend Larry Duckwall tells me that the idea of winding a hackle around the base of each wing was original with Frank Johnson of Missoula. There is another Tier of the same name in N. J.

Sincerely,
Herbert Wellington

DRY FLIES

by Chauncy K. Lively

How Dry Is The Dry Fly?

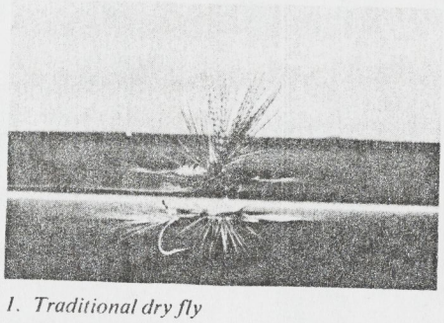
Photos by author

The earliest attempts to represent floating mayfly duns were, at best, crude and makeshift. Whenever an angler discovered that rising trout were paying no heed to his submerged flies, he resorted to tying on a fresh, fully-dressed wet fly of appropriate size and color. This was cast upstream as delicately as possible with the hope that it would stay afloat until it reached the trout. If the fish was hooked, the fly became too sodden for further use; in fact, a fresh fly was required after a few casts even if it was untouched by the trout. Then in the early 1800s the design we now know as the dry fly was born. Dressed with stiff hackle barbules for tails, split wings and resilient cock's hackle barbs radiating around the hook, the new fly not only floated well but withstood continued use. In the second half of the nineteenth century Halford picked up the banner of the dry fly and, through his celebrated books, developed a cult-like following.

The identity of the dry fly's originator is not known and it's a pity for I'm sure that grateful anglers would have erected a monument to his memory. His concept of hackling was radical for its time and was a major factor, more than any other element of the dry fly's design, in its success. Various other styles of hackling have evolved over subsequent years but all are offshoots of - or bear relationship with - the original concept.

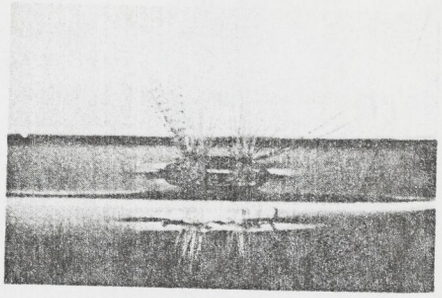
Much can be learned about the diverse types of hackling by underwater observation. A scuba-diving outfit isn't necessary; just place the fly on the water in a clear tumbler and peer at it from underneath. Or, if you have a glass slant-tank, better yet. If you've never done this kind of subaquatic snooping you're in for a surprise or two. For instance, in angling literature there are many descriptions of dry flies floating "high and dry" or "on their toes." Are these accurate statements or merely assumptions?

As an experiment I photographed five floating flies, each with a different style of hackling, to determine their floating characteristics and light patterns. Each was photographed through a water-prism which simultaneously affords an above-surface view - as the angler sees the fly - and a sub-surface aspect, as seen by the trout outside its window. The photographs were made under worst-case circumstances on perfectly flat water. First, to simulate the condition of the flies after a period of on-stream use, each was permitted to float for several minutes before photographing. In every case the flies floated "higher" on first contact with the surface and settled somewhat a few seconds later. This would indicate that a fresh fly floats best on its first cast. Secondly, city tap water, as used in this experiment, does not have the firm, tight film generally encountered in most stream water. However, since all the flies were subjected to the same conditions, the results offer direct comparisons with each other. Here is the outcome:



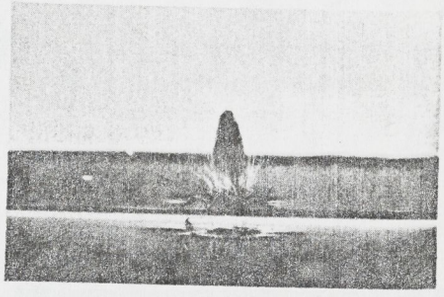
1. Traditional dry fly

Contrary to common belief, stiff hackle wound conventionally does not stand on its toes on water. The sharp points of the vertical barbules under the hook actually penetrate the film and the lateral barbs support the fly. The body's rearmost portion rests in the flim, as do the tails. A few of the tail barbules are submerged. The entire bend of the hook is visible below the surface. From the standpoint of the light pattern, it is possible that this style represents spinners better than duns.



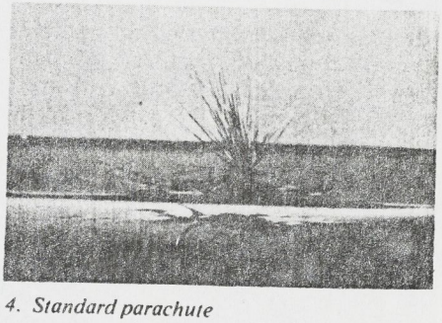
2. Fore and aft

Again, the lateral hackle barbules support the fly and the vertical barbs puncture the film. However, the fore and aft hackle arrangement supports the fly in perfect balance with the body out of the water. Most of the hook's bend is submerged. Since tail support is not required, materials such as woodduck fibers may be utilized and the tails angled upward. The light pattern is compact and realistic.



3. Reverse-palmer

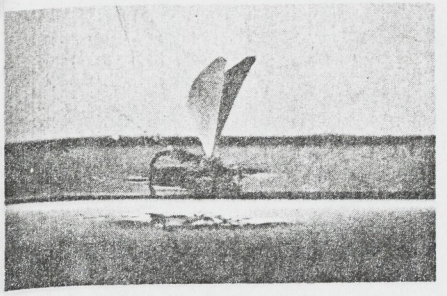
In this style of dressing the hackle is wound open-palmer fashion and an inverted V is trimmed from the barbules underneath. Here the steeply-angled barbs have penetrated the film and the fly is supported uniformly by the lateral fibers. Had a wider V been trimmed the penetration would have been minimized. The fly balances properly without tail support, permitting tails to be angled upward. The underside of the body creases the surface film but otherwise, the light pattern is compact.



4. Standard parachute

In this tie the hackle radiates horizontally around the base of the wings, above the body. The fly floats with most of the body and hook bend

submerged. There is little penetration by the tips of the hackle barbules and good balance is achieved without tail support. The light pattern is similar to that of the reverse-palmer but with more body area submerged.



5. Bottom parachute

In this dressing the parachute hackle is situated on the underside of the body and anchored directly underneath the base of the wings. There is virtually no penetration of the hackle barbs, nor does the body touch the surface. The tails angle away from the surface and only a small part of the hook is submerged. The resultant light pattern is extremely lifelike.

What does it all prove? It's fun to theorize and swap pet ideas with fellow fly tyers but when the chips are down the trout is the final arbiter. Although in our experiment the traditional dry fly did not fare as well as other styles of more recent vintage, it's a fact that many fine trout are caught daily on dry flies bearing the classic trademark. Still, if I were confronted with a steady riser taking duns in flat water I'd pin my hopes to a bottom parachute or reverse-palmer.

UPDATE TROUT/SALMON

EDITED BY JERRY GIBBS

NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

NEW CATCH-AND-RELEASE BILL INTRODUCED

■ It's easy to ignite verbal fireworks among trout fishermen. All you need do is spark the conversation with terms like no-kill, flyfishing only, trophy waters. It's frustrating, because all trout fishermen know that fishing quality today isn't even close to what our grandparents enjoyed. Still, attempts at special regulations to restore that quality often bring flack from anglers.

OUTDOOR LIFE visited recently with California Senator Bob Wilson, a soft-spoken state legislator who just touched a match to the trout-regulations "powder keg." His bill, aimed at nurturing wild trout populations, has the support of angling organizations across the country. They hope the legislative ball will roll in other states as well.

Senator Wilson introduced SB 192, which says California's Department of Fish and Game must prepare an annual list of at least 25 miles of trout streams and one lake to be under catch-and-release regulations (zero limit, or a limit of one or two trout with minimum and maximum size restrictions).

The bill also calls for management plans to restore fisheries on all California trout and steelhead streams. Where streams contain wild trout, angling regulations would be changed to make fish populations self-sustaining.

"Catch-and-release regulations with a zero, or no more than two, trout limit are necessary," says the senator, "because of heavy fishing pressure. Even a two-trout limit reduces trout harvest by only 50 percent. Zero limit, together with restrictions against bait fishing, reduces angling mortality of trout to about 10 percent."

Supporters hope the legislation will provide an angling alternative throughout the state, giving fishermen a chance to experience a quality fishery and catch larger trout.

As this issue goes to press, the bill has cleared the Senate Natural Resources Committee. It's supported by the Department of Fish and Game, Cal Trout, California Wildlife Federation, Federation of Fly Fishermen, and Northern California Council of Fly Fishing Clubs. Senator Wilson will accept comments at his office: State Capitol, Room 2065, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Crowing Angler Silenced By Court

☐ British Columbia steelhead angler Darrell Gradwell was pretty pleased with his catch. The big sea-run rainbow weighed 21 pounds. Taken on a fly rod with three-pound tippet, the fish was boasting material, and understandably, the angler felt compelled to crow a bit.

Gradwell was sure that his fellow anglers would be interested in the catch, so he asked a local newspaper to take his photo with the prize. The picture soon appeared with a short story about the catch. But it seems that area game wardens were also quite interested—Gradwell had taken the big steelhead before the season opened.

Red-faced, Gradwell pleaded guilty and was appropriately fined. No one reported what happened to the fish.—*Ross Currie.*

Trout Attracted To "Cartoon" Features

☐ What do the exaggerated characteristics of a cartoonist's creation have to do with trout fishing? The key word is attraction. In about the same way that an oversize nose or toothsome smile helps us identify some famous cartoon character, so an overdone fly or lure can induce a hungry trout to strike when ordinary lures bring only boredom. Animal behaviorists first pointed this out.

Fish don't look at an entire object the way humans do, say the scientists. Rather, they are motivated by some particular feature that attracts or repels them. Behaviorists call that special feature a "releaser." Advanced anglers call it a "keying feature."

Such a feature could be the segmented body of a grasshopper, a swollen belly shape, a particular splash of color. It could also be movement or some other characteristic. Innovative anglers who learn the keying feature of particular forage exploit it in a fly or lure have discovered that trout are often more attracted to the artificial than the real food. Exaggerated features are called "super-normal releasers" by the scientists.

Exaggerated attractors thus far proven include such things as a fluorescent-bright thorax or tag on a fly, and a distended belly on a plug. When trout hit some odd creation or refuse a normally effective pattern, pay attention. They're telling you something very important.

Night Fly Deadly For Big Browns

☐ A lot of anglers would do just about anything to land a big brown. But there's no need to get desperate—just listen to this bit of advice from George Harvey, recently retired fishing and flytying instructor at Penn State University.

Harvey has scored on countless big browns and beyond all other methods, recommends stalking them at night with the Night Fly. He designed it years ago. The fly has a bulky body, but the secret of this tie is in the wings. They flare at right angles from the body and swim like those of a drowning insect when you twitch the fly forward. Harvey ties the Night Fly like this: hooks, 4 to 2/0. The heavily dubbed body stops abruptly near the eye. This makes a wedge that flares the wings. After the body is palmered, tie in another hackle, winding it tightly against the body at the head end. The wings are matched, heavy-quilled duck or goose breast feathers tied to flare at the sides. The wings should be long enough to reach the bend of the hook. Dark colors are best. Harvey recommends fishing the fly across and downstream on the drift. Work it back slowly by twisting the line and slowly raising the rod tip. You'll find the biggest browns in riffles and good currents.

Quebec Brookies Imported To Beef Up American Stocks

☐ A 12-pound brook trout might be hardly more than a dream to an American angler, but in Quebec, brookies do get that big. And a crossbreeding program is brightening the prospects for bigger brook trout in U.S. waters.

Hatcheries in the U.S. have typically bred trout for fast growth, early sexual maturity, ease of handling, and egg-producing ability. That's been causing a problem, says Cornell University research biologist Bill Flick. "The domestic fish were dying about the time they became a desirable size to catch." Now, crosses with those big-growing, long-lived Quebec strains are "beefing up" U.S. stocks.

For nearly 20 years, Cornell researchers have studied management schemes based on crosses. They produced a brook trout that grows faster, larger than the domestic strains, and lives longer too. Many lakes and ponds in New York's Adirondack region have been stocked with the hybrids, and now the research is paying off in other states. Experiments with hybrids or pure-strain Canadian trout are in progress in Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Wyoming. More will probably follow.

Two strains of Quebec brook trout, both from the southeastern James Bay region, are involved in the experiments. The scientists call them by their technical names of *assinica* and *tmiscamie*; anglers more likely will call them terrific. The assinicas live at least 10 years and the tmiscamie almost that long. They're quite vulnerable to angling and eat both insects and alewives.

The brook trout can reproduce in lakes or ponds without inlet or outlet tributaries because pond bottom springs provide enough aeration for the eggs. This has biologists worried about overcrowding in small ponds, but carefully regulated management programs should keep populations in balance.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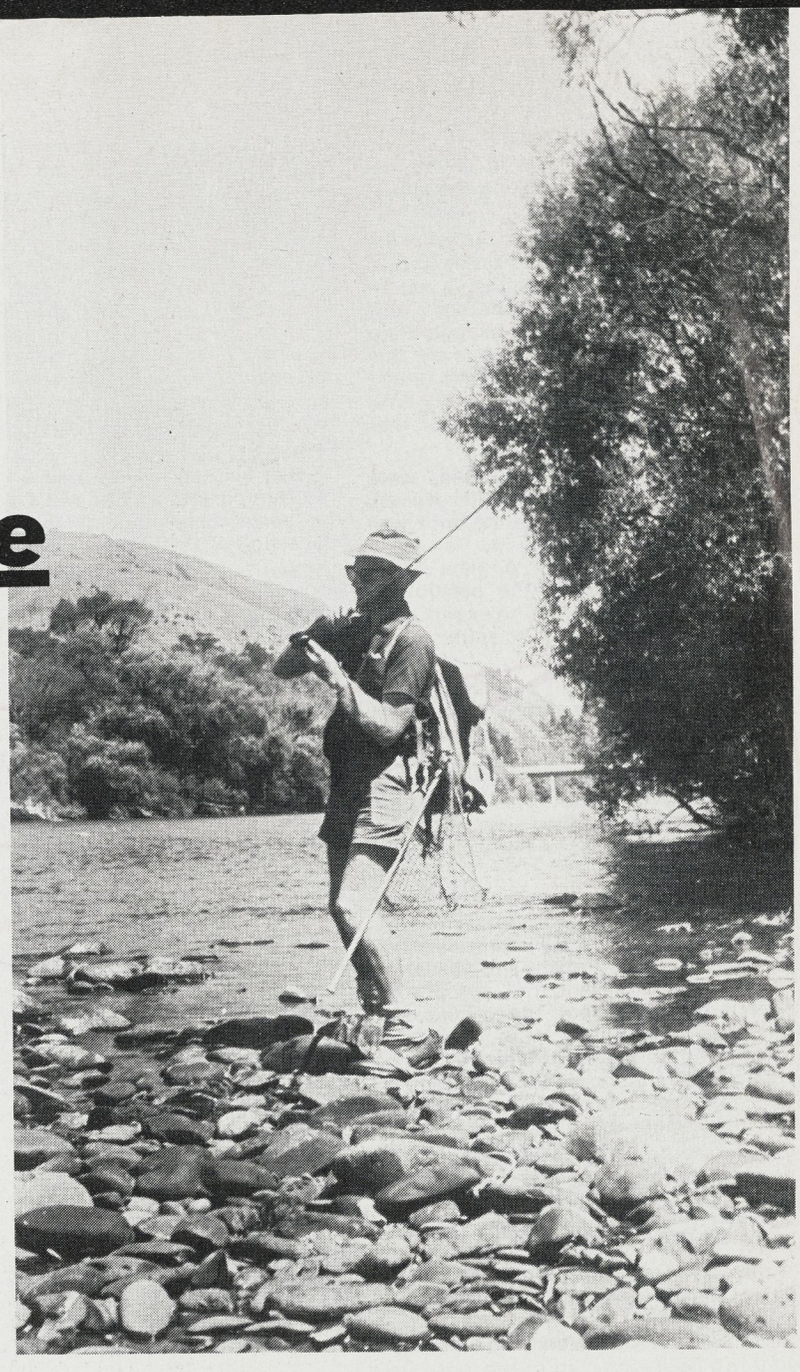
The case for caricature



Jim Ring playing a brown trout on New Zealand's Motueka River.

Trout the world over fall for artificials that make real flies look drab, says TONY ORMAN

ONE EXPERT ANGLER I know is Jim Ring. Jim fishes nymph, often a Pheasant Tail pattern, on the rivers and streams of the Nelson district in New Zealand. He is not a New Zealander by birth, but some years ago the attraction of New Zealand's trout fishing drew Jim and his wife out to the South Pacific to settle.

Jim is no ordinary angler. He is exceptionally skilled and gifted, but he is also endowed with a scientific background which enables him to understand a good deal about the biological behaviour of a creature such as a trout.

Jim is a science teacher and has a degree in science. Some time ago he wrote: "I think, without exception, books on fishing which deal with the imitation of flies are completely wrong. They are based on misconceptions of how fish recognise things."

Basically the misconception by anglers is understandable. It would be easy to fall into the trap of assuming trout see things, such as a fly, as the human eye sees. When we tie a fly, we hold it up and admire it. That in itself is a mistake. The real test is how the trout sees it.

However, let Jim Ring continue: "The animal behavourists (e.g. Tinbergen and Lorenz) have done a lot of work on this, and have come up with some pretty definite conclusions. Simple animals such as fish do not look at a whole object — they see some special feature which they recognise.

☆ ☆ ☆

"This feature is called the releaser. Tinbergen's classic work on sticklebacks shows this — they recognise males by a patch of red, and pregnant females by a swollen belly. But the interesting and important thing to us anglers is this. It was found that if the sticklebacks were offered a bigger or brighter red patch, or a grossly swollen belly shape on a crude wooden model, they took more interest in it than they did in the real thing.

"These bigger or brighter features are called super-normal releasers.

"The whole principle has been found to be completely general so we can assume that when a fish chooses a natural it does so because the natural provides some releaser. If we knew what this releaser was and could include it in a artificial, the artificial should be readily taken, no matter what the rest of the fly was (within reason). But better still, if we could include a super-normal releaser in the artificial, it would be taken even in preference to a natural."

Exaggerating certain essential features of a fly pattern has been recognised by some authorities, but it has not claimed the attention is should have.

For instance, Eric Horsfall Turner, in *(Anglers' Cavalcade,* talks of exaggerating a feature as caricature (i.e. exaggerating a feature just as a cartoonist exaggerates some characteristic of a political personality). This fly-pattern philosophy had been mentioned many years before by Skues who, when talking of imitation in fly patterns, said: "The

most common is caricature."

Jim Ring tells me that in all his fly-patterns he is always seeking the super-normal releaser.

"My method is this: I find out what the trout are eating at various times and in various rivers, tie an imitation — not an attempt at exact resemblance but a sort of caricature, stressing and exaggerating any prominent characteristics. I try this on the trout, vary it, and try again, until I have a pattern which is taken every time by a trout feeding on naturals of that kind."

Jim Ring's views, as quoted, were related in a book *Trout with Nymph* which I wrote. At the time the book was often severely criticised by reviewer-anglers who 'knew better'. Anglers can be dogmatic . . . I was in the position of knowing Jim Ring's amazing expertise as a trout angler and his scientific background.

I recall the first day I ever fished with Jim. It was a windless summer morning. I sat under the tall willows watching the Motueka River, thinking and wondering where the trout would be as the sun's heat gathered strength. I was waiting for Jim, who had remarked over the telephone: "Oh, there's no hurry; see you about ten or so."

When Jim eventually arrived I enjoyed a most remarkable angling lesson on how to take trout on nymphs in the sunlight of summer. We fished upstream, delicately pitching our Pheasant Tail nymphs in front of nymphing trout. The technique of Jim's was nothing new. He modestly lays credit for it to Frank Sawyer. Nevertheless, Jim's adoption of the technique to New Zealand conditions is an angling accomplishment on its own.

That morning's fishing was worth many years of striving and learning. I took two good brown trout and Jim took several — a good guide to my clumsiness alongside his finesse.

Frank Sawyer also holds to the super-normal theory it seems. In August, 1975, in *The Shooting Times,* he discussed the Buzzer Nymph and related how "something the trout expected to see was missing". He talked of imitating the movement of the nymph, which therefore does not preclude the super-normal releaser being some *characteristic* movement of the natural.

☆ ☆ ☆

Richard Walker wrote in an article that "it is necessary to use an artificial that incorporates at least some of the characteristics by which the trout recognises its food at that time . . . Of these, the most important is colour. However, some exaggeration of colour, and of movement, may increase the attraction of the artificial, even to the extent that it is preferred to the natural."

I personally have a high regard and admiration for Richard Walker's writings and ideas. Even from as afar as halfway around the world, his knowledge and practical approach is easily seen.

Have you ever experienced a day when trout will not show any interest in the usual patterns, and then suddenly you hit upon the right one and success is yours? I'm sure it happens to all trout fishermen.

I was fishing the Mohaka River, which holds some good brown trout. Usually a green stonefly pattern fishes exceptionally well. However, on that morning the trout would not take it and, in fact, showed mild panic when they inspected it. I tried for several brown trout which were feeding but I put each one down. My presentation was satisfactory for fish came to the nymph, but, on close inspection, they refused it and swam hurriedly away.

I was puzzled. I then tried a Pheasant Tail Nymph and a hare and Copper but the same behaviour of the trout on inspection of the nymph, happened.

It was not until I returned to the Speckled Nymph that I found success. The first fish took the nymph immediately. The trout was in such shallow water that I almost stepped on it. I froze and then quietly backed until I was 4 yds. behind the fish.

☆ ☆ ☆

Fortunately, the fish had not seen me. I pitched the nymph in and it took without hesitation. I lost that fish, but just hooking it was gratifying.

Further upstream I found another fish — feeding in shallow rippling water. It took the Speckled Nymph instantly and I played out a lovely 5lb brown trout. In the next pool the nymph accounted for a 6lb brownie. The success of the day was built entirely around the Speckled Nymph.

That was significant enough.

However another significant point was that the Speckled Nymph is not far removed from a Pheasant Tail pattern, which the trout had refused. The Speckled Nymph has a golden pheasant tail tippet, a cock-pheasant herl body ribbed with dark copper wire, a wing case of dark cock pheasant herl, and a greenstone-coloured wool thorax. A turn of honey hackle suggests "life".

Since then experimentation with the pattern has convinced me that the greenstone thorax may well be the super-normal releaser.

The experience does show the super-normal releaser may be (to our eyes) only a point of detail, but to the trout it is obviously of great importance in recognising its prey of the moment.

Finally, a few more words from that remarkable angler-author, Richard Walker. It is from his excellent book *Fly Dressing Innovations.*

"The creatures that trout eat have not evolved over vast expanses of time to be attractive to trout, rather the reverse. It may therefore be possible, in designing artificials, to exaggerate certain of the points by which trout recognise them . . . We now think that the right kind of difference can be an asset, and, further, that in many cases the very fact that a perfect copy of the natural insect cannot be made may also be an asset. If the artificial incorporates sufficient points of recognition, the exaggeration of some of them may add to its attractiveness.

Trout are trout, whether in New Zealand or Britian, and their feeding behaviour and responses are the same. It is a point often ignored by trout fishermen, except for those truly successful ones like Frank Sawyer, Richard Walker, Eric Horsfall Turner, Jim Ring, and others. Their names are sufficient recommendation for me.

Modern fly-dressings

THE PERCH MATUKA

THIS MONTH'S fly is yet another addition to an already considerable range of patterns intended to suggest small fish, in this case small perch. Its advantage is that it is very durable.

The dressing is as follows:

Hook: No 6 long shank.

Body: White fluorescent wool, fat.

Rib: Fine oval silver tinsel.

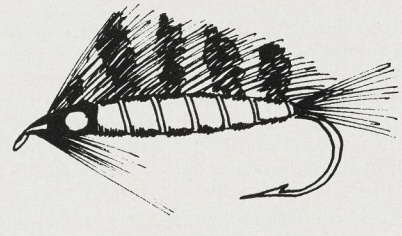
Throat hackle and tail: Hot-orange cock hackle fibres.

Wing: Two large Plymouth Rock cock hackles, tied Matuka style.

Eye: A white spot with black surround cut from a guinea-fowl feather.

Silk: White, with black for the head.

Start at the hook-bend, where you tie in the tail, wool, tinsel, and the small ends of the two large cock hackles. Wind the body wool, then lay the cock hackles, from which the fibres have been stripped from the lower edge of the stalk, along the body and secure with the tinsel in open spirals.



Tie in a bunch of orange fibres at the throat and finally, having changed over to black silk, tie in two pieces cut from the centre ribs of guinea-fowl feathers. You can always find some with white spots coinciding with the central rib. They make a reasonable substitute for jungle cock.

If, of course, you still have some jungle cock eyes, by all means use them; but the guinea fowl feather stands up better to long casting and catching fish.

Richard Walker

NO MORE EXACT IMITATION!

RICHARD WALKER puts the case for deliberate exaggeration of colour and shape in trout flies

THE OTHER DAY I realised, somewhat ruefully, that I had been tying trout flies for more than 40 years, having started doing so at a tender age for the sole reason that I hadn't the money to buy them.

Looking back over those years, I find that I seem to have spent them in a series of delusions, my consolation being that these delusions have been shared by a good many others, some of them great and famous men.

Of these various delusions, the one I laboured under longest, and have only quite recently discarded, was that if it were only possible to tie an artificial fly that no trout could distinguish from the real thing, then that would be perfection.

Let me qualify that. I believed that the perfect artificial should resemble its natural prototype in every respect — size, shape, colour, translucence and behaviour.

I no longer believe this.

Two things brought about my change of heart. One was on account of the research carried out by Dr. Dietrich Magnus, of Darmstadt. The other was the realisation that if insects were ideally suited to attract trout, those that live in the water or emerge from it would soon be extinct. It is much more likely that in at least some respects, aquatic insects have evolved in a way that avoids the attention of trout and other predators.

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Dr. Dietrich Magnus was neither investigating the behaviour of trout, nor that of aquatic insects. What he wanted to discover was the means by which the females of a species of butterfly, the silver-washed fritillary, attract the males.

The method he adopted was to construct a rotating beam, turning in a horizontal plane, at each end of which was attached a model butterfly, the wings of which could be flapped at varying speeds. At one end of the beam was a model that, as far as could be contrived, resembled a real female. It was the same size, it was of the same colour, and its wings flapped at the same rate. This was the control.

At the other end of the beam, Dr. Magnus tried various models that differed from the real thing. The whole apparatus was contained in a cage in which large numbers of male silver-washed fritillaries were confined, so that Dr. Magnus could observe their reactions to his model females.

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He found that the real thing — or rather, the closest copy he could make of it — was by no means the most attractive. To cut a long story short, the male fritillaries were unanimous in their preference for a lady four times natural size, flapping her wings 10 times faster than the real one can, and with a greatly simplified pattern of orange and red markings.

The inference is — and it seems to me a fair one — that the female silver-washed fritillary's appearance and behaviour have evolved in a compromise between attraction to the male and camouflage to protect her from predators. It is of no use to the female fritillary to be immensely attractive to the males if that draws the attention of, for example, a hungry thrush.

It seems to me probable that similar considerations apply to many insects, probably to the majority. They are to some extent camouflaged to avoid the attention of predators; and if this is so, then it is likely that by exaggerating, in our artificial flies, certain characteristics of the natural insects, we can make them even more attractive than a perfect imitation would be.

What are the characteristics that we can with advantage exaggerate? I think that they must be some of the characteristics by which the trout recognise insects of that species. Dr. Magnus's male fritillaries, while preferring a simplified pattern of orange and black, were not interested in any other combination of colours.

So the problem would seem to be that of choosing which characteristics to exaggerate, and to exaggerate them to a sufficient extent, without destroying their effect as points of recognition by the trout.

The most obvious way to exaggerate is in respect of colour. An interesting example was given in *Trout and Salmon* last November when Mr. C. R. Pearce drew attention to the efficacy of Commander C. F. Walker's dressing for the nymph of the claret dun, *Leptophlebia vespertina.*

As Mr. Pearce pointed out, even in this dressing, which is an attempt at exact imitation, the claret tying silk shows clearly through the dubbing when the thing is wet. It appears much more claret than the natural nymph, in which I, personally, have never observed the least sign of claret, though some is perceptible in the dun stage.

Another example can be found in that North Country favourite, Snipe and Purple, which is taken when the iron blue is on—and sometimes when it isn't. No iron blue, at any stage, has as bright a purple body as the Snipe and Purple; but there is a hint of purple in the real insect. The exaggeration of this is clearly attractive to the trout.

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I have no doubt that experienced fly-fishers can think of many more examples. So can I; but perhaps I have said enough about them to make the point. I find that when I review my experiences down the years, and read what others have written, I find example after example where exaggeration in fly-dressing has proved effective.

I am sure those same experienced readers can remember occasions

An easy way with tandems

WHY DO WE MAKE the simple job of tying hooks in tandem so complicated? Over recent months twisted nylon, plaited nylon, and fold-back nylon have been advocated, all of which in my view and experience are completely unnecessary and time-consuming.

For years now I have tied my tandems with single-strand monofilament, and have yet to lose a fish through the tying slipping and releasing the hold on the hook. Let me explain my method, assuming we are tying a three-hook lure using No. 12 (Redditch scale) hooks.

With the hook mounted in the vice, cut off about $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins. of 18 lb. monofilament and gently bite along half-an-inch of one end to serrate it. Judicious use of a pair of pliers can also achieve the same effect.

Tying silk next? No, I rarely use the stuff for any fly, and never for tandems. We take a reel of Coats Gossamer Terylene, not cotton. Other Terylenes may be used, but I have found no other to be as smoothly finished as Coats.

Start winding the Terylene on to the hook immediately behind the eye and wind on four touching coils. Now lay the crimped end of the monofilament along the top of the shank and, holding in place, continue winding the Terylene in touching coils around the shank and monofilament for a further seven or eight turns.

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A much greater tension can be applied to Terylene than to tying silk, and this gives a real bite into the monofilament. A little practice will soon determine the amount of tension that can be applied. I often doubt if the original serrating of the monofil is necessary, but it is so easy to do I continue to do so out of habit.

Now continue winding touching coils for a further five or six turns around the hook-shank only (Fig. 1), then again around shank and monofilament to the bend of the hook, tying in any tail and/or wire ribbing in the usual manner. The Terylene is now wound back, still in touching coils, to eight turns short of where the tying started. There is now a nice, even base for the Lurex or tinsel, and this is now tied in with a couple of turns of the Terylene which are then slipped into the holding button on the vice. (Fig. 2.)

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Next wind the Lurex in touching, not overlapping, coils down to the end of the shank and back again, holding it in position by a single turn of Terylene. This method imparts a nice smooth body and I thank an earlier correspondent for advising it. Finally, the ribbing wire is wound up using reverse turns to those of the Lurex and tied in with another single turn of Terylene. The surplus wire is cut off and the head whip finished.

The remaining two hooks are tied in similar manner, but I do not bother to serrate the nylon for the middle hook; and, of course, room is left on the front hook, when first tying in the Lurex, to allow for the hackle or wings that may be required. If the hooks do not lie in line with each other when first tying the monofilament to the shank of the middle or front hooks, do not worry overmuch. This can be corrected by twisting the monofilament in the appropriate direction during the final section of the winding down to the hook bend, *i.e.* following the section where the Terylene is wound around the hook-shank only.

For convenience I usually tie-in two hooks only and then varnish the heads and put the lure aside to dry before I tie in the front hook. This prevents varnish getting on to the dressing where it is not wanted, and meanwhile I tie up some more two hook sections.

A fairly stiff 18 lb. nylon is advocated as this prevents the tail hook fouling the forward portion of the fly during casting.

Incidentally, while involving nothing new, my method of whip finishing may be of interest. Using a 9 in. or 10 in. length of 6-8 lb. monofilament, I tie it into a large loop. The folded end is then placed on top of the hook-shank with about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. projecting forward of the eye. The last four turns of the tying Terylene are whipped around hook-shank and looped nylon (plus the 18 lb. nylon if the rear or centre hooks are being whipped), and then, with the forefinger of the left hand holding these coils in place, the Terylene is cut with about 2 ins. left hanging. The hanging end is then passed through the nylon loop and pulled taut with the right hand. The left hand now grasps the longer length of the nylon loop and pulls the smaller loop back through the four Terylene coils, taking with it the end of the Terylene which is released by the right hand. Excess Terylene is cut off and a neat whip finish completes the tying. (Fig. 3).

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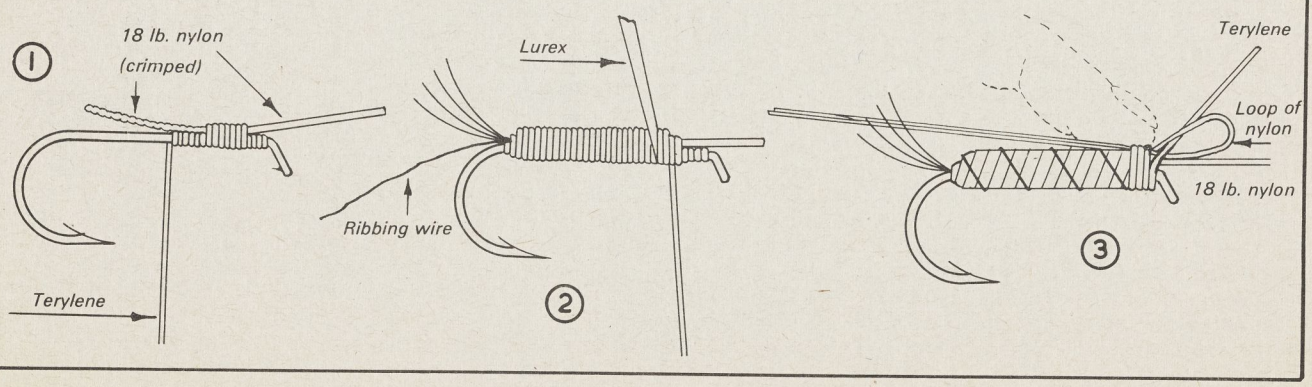
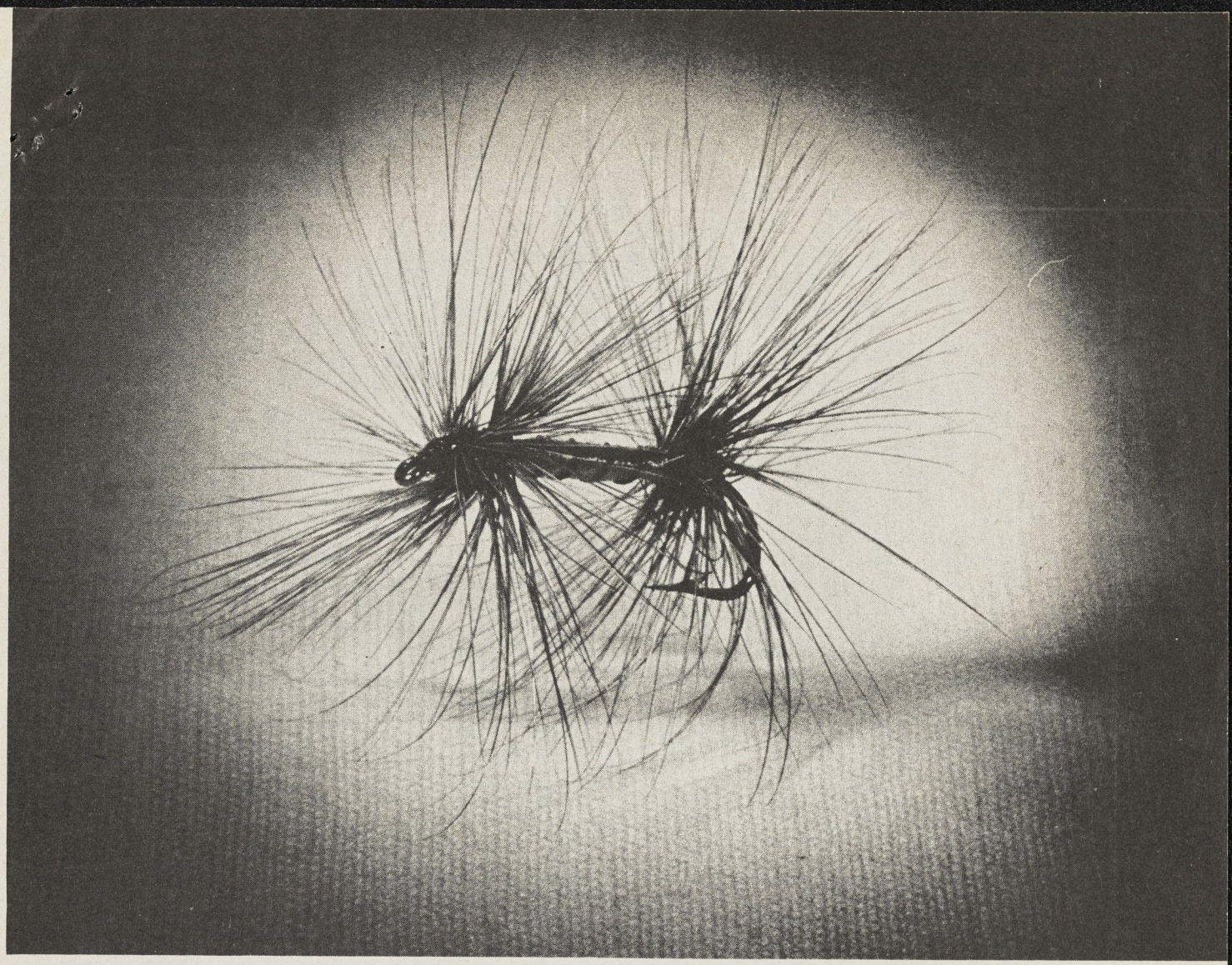
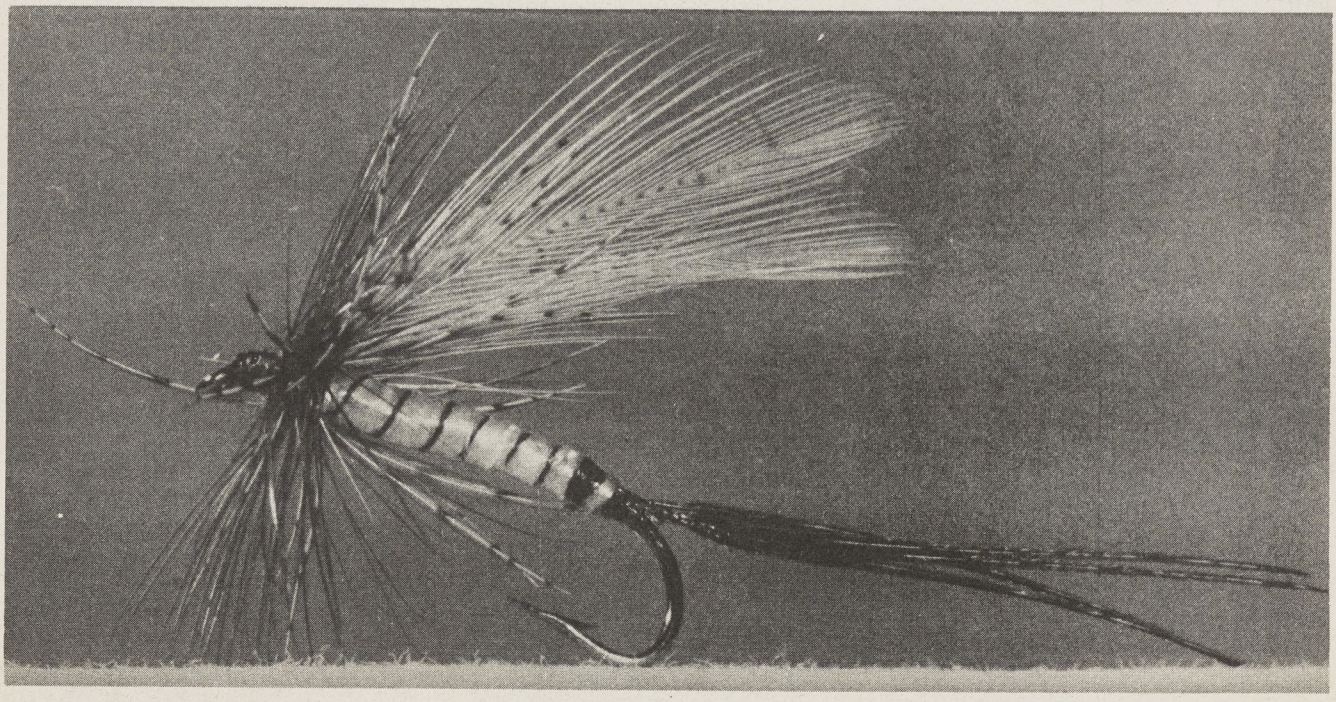
Finally, as a further aid to fly-tying in general, I have made the clamp of my vice so that the button position is adjustable. Thus it can be set to hold the Terylene out of the way to the right-hand side of the fly while further dressing is carried out, instead of to the left-hand side as is usual with commercially produced vices.

A. E. Moseley





IGNORE THE BEND and the ordinary artificial Mayfly pictured below seems almost alive to human eyes. But now compare it with the 'fore-and-aft' pattern shown above. The ordinary pattern has wings and tails and differs from the natural only in that it has many more legs. The 'fore-and-aft' has neither wings nor tails, but greatly exaggerates shape.



when a particular pattern, often a fancy one, caught fish when no other succeeded. It is common to hear or read something like this: "The fish were obviously feeding, but I tried pattern after pattern without success, until at last I tied on, in desperation, Blogg's Benefit. Though it bore no relation to any natural insect, it proved to be exactly what the trout wanted. Fish after fish . . ." And so on.

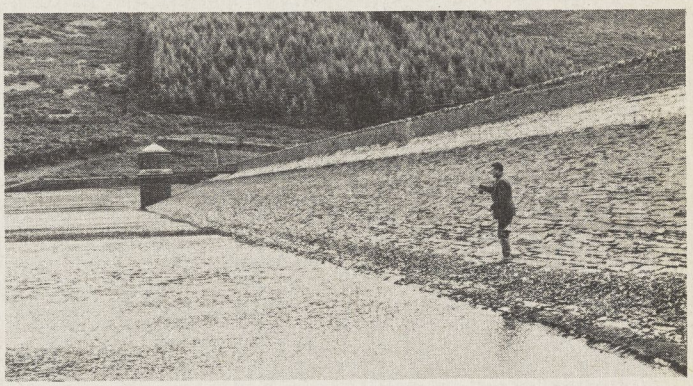
Well, it is true that Blogg's Benefit didn't look a bit like a real insect, to the angler. It didn't look like a real insect to the trout, but, purely by chance, it included in its appearance, in exaggerated form, some of the features by which the trout recognised the insects they were eating. They found it even more attractive than the real thing.

I think it probable that on those rare days when the angler hooks fish after fish, he is always using a fly that is more attractive to the trout than the real insects they are eating. Very often indeed, the angler's artificial is among dozens, even hundreds, of real insects. The odds against its being taken, if the trout could not distinguish it from the real insects, would be quite long.

In a fly tied to imitate a particular kind of insect, there is certain to be simplification, which is a form of exaggeration. Very often the colours of the materials are brighter, or more concentrated. I suggest that quite often this accidental exaggeration can be an asset rather than a liability. It might not be carrying the argument too far to suggest that if that were not in fact the case, we should catch far fewer fish.

If accidental exaggeration can make an artificial fly more attractive than a real one, then is it not likely that well-thought-out, deliberate exaggeration, based on an accurate assessment of the characteristics of the natural by which trout recognise it, would be more effective still?

Trout from the concrete slopes



OFF THE DAM of the Isle of Man's Baldwin reservoir.

DURING THE LAST two years or so, much of my reservoir trout fishing has been from concrete slopes or dam walls, especially on reservoirs such as Eglwys Nunydd, Ravensthorpe and Draycote. An angler fishing from such places can be handsomely rewarded in both quantity and quality, but the fishing is not easy. In fact, it can be frustrating at times, and I have come to the conclusion that it can be regarded as a completely different technique from the usual boat or bank fishing.

But why fish in such places? Perhaps the most important reason is the abundance of readily available food. A close second is the fact that many of these dam walls have their base littered with boulders, offering shelter where the big brown trout can lie in ambush, making forays on the shoals of fry that pass by.

For the angler there is the added incentive that trout can often be caught at any time of the day off these slopes. This is probably linked with the food supply. Unlike the fish of the open water that are active at dawn and dusk, feeding apparently non-stop at those times, trout that feed along the dams feed less but more frequently. Easily obtained food no doubt contributes to them becoming more lazy feeders.

Casting from such places is a problem, and the nature of the slopes, often with a small wall built on the top, can prove expensive on flies and leaders. It is not quite so bad when the trout are feeding close in (which they often do because the margins are not disturbed), but one has always to be wary of the fly hitting concrete on the backcast. The only safe course to adopt is constantly to inspect the fly and the end of the leader, too.

It is when distance is required that casting can be particularly difficult. Distance is not necessarily needed because the fish are far out, but rather because the bottom drops away steeply to deep water close in. To fish a fly along the bottom and up the slopes in a correct manner, so that as much ground is covered as possible, it is necessary to cast a considerable distance.

Many anglers in such a situation, and in an effort to cast a considerable distance, make the mistake of standing too near to the water's edge, leaving a high background of concrete slope or, as at Draycote, stones. This results in their having to alter their distance-casting technique in an effort to prevent their flies hitting the slope or wall. I have found that it pays to fish near the top of the slopes. Not only does this allow more comfortable casting, which in turn can lead to greater distance, but it gives peace of mind that when a take does come, you are likely to have a complete and sharp hook.

But there is one problem with standing at the top of a considerable slope. When fishing a sunken line, it is often necessary to retrieve your backing and part of the fly-line so that it will be dragging along the concrete. So it pays to keep your fly-line clean and occasionally to check the backing and pin knot.

For some distance out from a dam water the bottom is likely to be snaggy, resulting in lost flies, and it can be of great benefit to the angler if he goes to the trouble of finding from the water authority just how a particular dam was built, and to ask local farmers the location of old hedgerows, trees and bushes.

Another useful factor is the discovery of what I call 'the taking point'. Off every dam or slope that I have fished, I have found that bottom-feeding trout will be hooked at roughly the same distance out from the water's edge, depending on the slope and the reservoir. For example, at Eglwys Nunydd, 90 per cent of the big browns caught take the fly when it is passing over a ledge 12 ft. down and some 20 ft. out. Experience will soon show the angler where this taking point is, and then he can put the knowledge to great advantage. I don't profess to know the reason for there being a taking point, but I would think that light penetration into the water has something to do with it.

Peter Rayment

~~Spring 1974~~
Winter 1973 Volume 62 No. 247

Why that fly?

An approach to the design of trout flies

PART 1

by

G. C. ADAMS

ONE of the great charms of fishing is that no one will ever know all that is to be known about it. Perhaps the greatest satisfaction is to know, or to think you know, why you caught a particular fish with a particular fly. If you tied that fly yourself so much the better; but pride is often humbled. The master fly of today is often the failure of tomorrow. The conditions are so complex that the best that can be done is to arrive at a logical approach to why, and when, the trout will take a particular food and how to represent that food.

These notes give a personal approach, derived from fairly wide reading and from a good many years experience of tying flies for use on a wide range of waters. Part 1 considers the broad background of the subject. Part 2 is concerned with a more detailed examination of flies, and offers some questions and tentative hypotheses which need practical examination at the waterside.

The primary object in tying a trout fly is to deceive the fish into taking it as the object on which it is feeding. The range of objects which may legitimately be represented must be adjusted to meet the best interests of those fishing a particular water. There may be waters on which, say, the bluebottle might fairly be represented. There are few on which a representation of the maggot would be approved; though I once found an excellent example on the banks of a Devonshire river. These notes are primarily concerned with the normal range of duns, though there may be some minor reference outside this field.

Any real knowledge of this subject needs careful controlled experiment. This is easier said than done. Conditions change very rapidly in this climate. The fisherman who goes to the water irregularly is-

torn between the call of ordered experiment and the more urgent call to catch the fish rising before him. Regrettably the latter call wins all too often; but much can be learned without too great interruption of the catching of fish. It is little by little that the story can be pieced together. The final arbiter is the fish, which like the customer is always right though it may at times seem a trifle whimsical.

For convenience, the broad definition of dry fly fishing can be taken to cover the presentation to the fish in a natural manner of an artificial fly representing a particular stage in the life of a water-side fly. This would include the underwater nymphal state, where applicable. In some circumstances it may be reasonable to include the shrimp with the nymph, as presenting an entirely parallel source of food and method of fishing. It is dry fly fishing in this broad sense with which these notes are concerned, though the very difficult art of upstream wet fly fishing is closely allied. Downstream wet fly fishing tends to move into the realm of 'lures', though even for salmon and seatrout it may well be that there is more representation than is immediately apparent. It may be that here the field of representation, or suggestion, is greatly widened without our knowing quite what is being represented.

It is necessary to consider five stages, or periods, in the life cycle of typical duns:—

(a) The nymph swimming deep.

(b) The hatching nymph approaching the surface, in the surface, or on the surface.

(c) The fully hatched fly standing on the surface. (This period may be in two parts.)

(d) The egg-laying spinner.

(e) The spent spinner lying on the water.

It does not follow that all the stages, or parts of stages, are always of practical importance, since they may be of short duration or inaccessible to the fish. Airborne land flies may usually be regarded as in class (c), though perhaps at times they may be more correctly in class (e).

In its earlier stages the nymph, or perhaps some nymphs, may be at depths at which the fly is not easily fished. In such cases a weighted fly may be needed. More generally the nymphs on which

the trout is feeding will be somewhat nearer the surface and, finally, will be rising to the surface to hatch. It seems possible that some flies will start to emerge from their shucks before the nymph quite reaches the surface. At the surface they may not come fully out of their shucks for some time; and they may even float down in the shuck with their wings and legs outside. The wings may then be fully set. It seems that the wings of most flies may have a somewhat bluish tinge when they first emerge.

When the fly has left the shuck it will stand on the water with the body normally clear of the water. Immediately on emerging from the shuck, the colour of the body may, or may not, be that normal to the fully developed fly. It is not clear that much is known about this, and there may well be much difference as between flies, or as between rivers or conditions. In Part 2 of these notes, a practical example is given which raises possible explanations of the use of certain body materials. It also illustrates the case of the hatching fly with legs and wings fully exposed outside the shuck, as well as the change of body colour and appearance after emergence.

It is thought that the period of transition from hatching nymph to fully developed fly is often the most important period for the fisherman. It seems likely that, on some rivers at least, more flies are taken by the fish in the earlier rather than in the later stages of hatching and development.

The fully hatched fly standing on the surface may first come to the trout's notice as a pattern on the surface made by the fly's feet. When it enters the trout's window, the way in which the trout sees it is extremely doubtful and is the subject of a considerable literature. Experience suggests that the body may be the part of the fly most clearly seen, and is that part of the fly on which any efforts to achieve precise representation may be most fruitfully expended. Even so the variations of light, water and bottom reflection complicate the matter. It seems likely that a shiny surface, e.g. quill, or a matt surface, e.g. silk or feather, may be as important a consideration as colour. This is further discussed in Part 2.

It seems likely that the trout has a poor view of the wings of a fly. Winged patterns of dry fly can be very effective; but experience suggests that plain hackled flies are generally quite adequate. The important thing then is that the hackle should be of really first class quality. The mechanical properties of such a hackle give a good stance and 'life'. The clarity and sparkle are major factors in the

impression conveyed. Colour, as such, is a debatable subject. A really good hackle, even if almost black by reflected light, may appear almost colourless when viewed against a strong light. Experience suggests that it might be better to think in terms of tone, though it may well be that colour is often the easiest way of selecting an appropriate tone. This is largely a matter of opinion, and selection by colour may be the easiest way out. For all that, it is difficult to explain why two flies with the same body, but quite different coloured hackles, may appear to be equally effective provided that both the hackles are of top quality. The best compromise that can be suggested is to concentrate on the correctness of the body and the quality of the hackle. As Mrs. Beeton might have advised 'first catch your top quality hackle'; and that is the real and growing difficulty.

The stage of the fly in which it lays its eggs is of limited interest, since few lay their eggs within reach of the fish. The mayfly, however, lays its eggs by dipping on the surface and is then quite often taken by the fish. The attitude of the fly is then quite different, and a good pattern is given in Part 2.

After the spinner has laid its eggs it falls on the water in the spent condition. While still alive, its wings may be at an angle of about 30° to 45° to the body and not in the same plane. As a result, the fly lies with the body and one wing flat on the surface and with the other wing up in the air. When it dies, both wings are stretched out in one plane at right angles to the body, so that the fly lies flat on the surface in the form of a cross. This is the form in which most spinner patterns are tied and is the most generally useful. Flies tied with the wings in the 'live' position can be useful on occasion. This is a very old pattern of tying, which, if memory serves, was originally a variation on the *Red Spinner*.

The spent spinner, in particular, raises the question of the importance of the pattern made by the fly on the water. Before discussing this, and the question of size, it may be of interest to relate an incident of some forty years ago. I was fishing one summer evening on the upper waters of the Barle on Exmoor, on a short stretch which was relatively smooth flowing compared to the river generally. There occurred the most intense rise I have ever seen, as though every fish in the river was rising steadily — every square yard of likely water seemed to be dimpled with rises. I had in my box some small spent spinners which I had bought. They were essentially pale *Blue Quills* on 00 hooks, lightly hackled and tied

with spent wings made of similarly coloured hackle points. The fish took these without hesitation. For some reason, I put on a fly exactly similar except that it was dressed as an ordinary hackled *Blue Quill*. This the trout indignantly refused. I say indignantly because for the first time I noticed, in the conditions of light and water, that the fish were signalling the fact that, on close inspection, they found something wrong with the fly. The rise form was what I subsequently called a 'splash rise', though in those conditions it represented no more than a slight break or disturbance of the water inside the ring of the rise, as the fish turned away. In faster water there was usually a distinct splash.

Further experiment showed that this habit applied to the size of the fly, as well as to such an obvious difference as the pattern made by a spent spinner on the water as compared with a plain hackled fly more or less standing on the water. Once the signs were recognised, it was easy to demonstrate the reaction to size of fly. If the fly was a size too large, or perhaps overdressed, the rise form signalled the fact and never could you hook a fish. If the fly was a size too small, you started pricking fish and occasionally might hook one. If the fly was the right size, the fish were as easy to hook as any comparable small trout in fairly fast water. Old stagers used to talk about the Barle trout being 'quick'. In fact, they were no trouble at all if you used the right fly of the right size. Traces of this rise form can sometimes be seen on other waters; but it was the trout of the upper Barle which were kind enough to show me so clearly the paramount importance of correct size in a trout fly.

No doubt this is what is commonly known as 'coming short'. In slower waters, a fish may follow for one or two feet with its nose close to the fly, before turning quietly away; but in faster waters a snap decision is needed. Grayling have a reputation for coming short. It may be that the usual 00 size of fly is sometimes too large, or it may be that normally lying deeper in the water they often come up to inspect the fly and then find it not to be what they want. It is sometimes held to be of the nature of a near miss when rising from the depths. I am now sceptical of any fish missing a target of which it has reasonable warning, after an incident which occurred one day when fishing the Derwent in Cumberland. I was fishing one hot August day with a small low water salmon fly in the not very great hope of a salmon or a seatrout. I ran the fly down a deep, smooth, fast flow between two walls of rock. The water may have been as much as ten feet deep and the light was

such that I could see to the bottom. A ¾lb. trout rose from the bottom and took the fly. The trajectory of the fish was of such smooth and beautiful precision that it seemed incredible that it could miss any target of which it had reasonable warning. Of course in really rough water a fish may get only a fleeting glimpse of a fly, wet or dry; but even so it seems to get to it fairly well. Experience suggests to me that 'coming short' is normally a sign that it is the fly and not the fish which is at fault. Pricking fish may be a sign, not only on the Barle, that the fly is too small; but here the fisherman could also be at fault.

The shape of the fly and the pattern made on the water may be of great importance, particularly with the spent spinner which lies flat on the water. For instance, the method of providing wings for a mayfly spinner, using bunches of hackle fibres, is quite wrong representationally, though commonly quite adequate. Sometimes it proves inadequate, and then I have found that such a pattern as that in the Dunne series may be taken better. The wings of this pattern are well shaped, though they look clumsy by virtue of the material needed to provide a stiff enough wing of this size. It may be that in some circumstances pattern and shape become the overriding factor. The spent spinner should always be tied so that it lies flat on the water and is of as correct a shape as possible.

It appears that correct size is a vital matter for all flies and that correct pattern on the water is sometimes vital. For such flies as the fully hatched duns standing on the water, stance may be important and representation is most concerned with the body and the quality of the hackle. The hatching fly may be of great importance. These matters are further considered in Part 2 of these notes, with some details relating to actual patterns or methods of tying.

(To be continued)

Spring 1974 Volume 63 No. 248

Why that Fly?

An approach to the design of trout flies

PART 2

by

G. C. ADAMS

IN Part 1 of these notes a general approach to the design and use of trout flies was suggested. Some general conclusions were arrived at as regards the importance of size, quality of hackles, stance on the water, or pattern made on the surface; and questions were raised as to the hatching fly and the character of the newly hatched fly. Here this subject is taken a little further and some very brief notes are offered on methods of achieving these aims.

First of all it seems desirable to quote an incident which occurred when fishing the By Brook near Bath in 1948. On a bright day in June, I was standing in the water when a fly came floating round a bend of the stream about twenty yards above me. The current was quite slow, and when the fly reached me I scooped it off the water. It appeared to be a Blue Winged Olive with its wings fully developed. To my surprise the body was still in the shuck, with legs and wings outside. The shuck was rough and coloured in shades of dark and light olive. When I pulled the fly out of the shuck the body was bright and shiny, of a dark steel blue colour. The spaces between the segments appeared nearly colourless with a yellow under colour. I examined it for two or three minutes and then put it in my pocket in a glass topped collecting box. Unfortunately I did not look at it again for about an hour; and by then the body had turned olive with a matt surface. I cannot say how long the change took; but I think it was not fully completed after an hour in comparative darkness. Next morning I tied a body of olive heron herl, ribbed gold wire (after G. E. M. Skues), and it would have been difficult to provide a more perfect representa-

tion. I am no great entomologist; but I checked the fly as a *B.W.O.* against the book both then and when it later changed to a spinner. It appeared to me that, if the fish on that stream ever saw the fly fully hatched, it might well have a body more of the colour that I first saw than the olive of the fully developed fly. I managed to tie a body using the blue grey skin stripped from the outside of the stalk of a wood-pigeon's wing feather, over a primrose floss under body. I used a dark blue dun hackle. (I found the quill very difficult to strip and only managed to tie one example.)

The next time opportunity offered, I tried this on a known wary fish. I managed to get to a place where I could flick the fly to the fish at short range and observe every movement in the very clear water. I first floated down an *Orange Quill*. The fish followed this down for about eighteen inches with its nose close to the fly and then turned quietly away. I then put over the trial fly. The fish followed it in the same way; but it finally sucked it down and was hooked.

The hatches of *B.W.O.* on this stream were small. My rather rough records show that most fish were taken on the hatching fly, though two were taken on the *Orange Quill*. I have never caught a fish with a fly having the olive body, though I have not used that more than experimentally. My experience of the *B.W.O.* has not been extensive.

A single example such as this is hardly to be dignified as good evidence; but, taken in conjunction with what I have read about the *B.W.O.* and experience with other flies on many rivers, it seems to me strongly suggestive. There seems to be no doubt that several species of fly tend to take some appreciable time to emerge fully from the shuck after reaching the surface; but it is less clear whether this varies much from river to river, or in different climatic conditions. I would ask the following questions:—

(a) Immediately on emerging from the shuck, do all flies have shiny bodies of the kind which would be imitated with quill?
(b) If so, how long do they take to turn to a matt surface, with, or without, a change of colour ?
(c) To what extent are the answers to the above affected by characteristics of the river, or the weather, or both?

It may not be too rash to formulate a very tentative hypothesis as to why quill bodied flies are better on some rivers than on others. It will be assumed that, with moderate hatches of fly, fish will tend to concentrate on those floating flies which are most continuously

seen. (In rivers with a large food supply and big hatches, such as chalk streams, fish may become arbitrarily selective.) From the time the nymph reaches the surface, the fly will be floating on the surface until its wings are dry and it is otherwise ready to take off, including the trial flights so often seen. There may be three stages while it is on the water, which can conveniently be named in terms of the corresponding artificial fly as hatching, quill bodied and matt bodied. The hatch starts at the first stage and ultimately may include all three stages, if they in fact exist. After a time, the numbers of each stage present at one moment on the water will be proportional to the average of the times each fly occupies in each stage. For the case of the *B.W.O.* given above, it might be reasonable to guess that considerably more than half would be hatching, less than half would be quill and possibly none at all would be matt bodied. The proportions might be different on another river; but it might be expected that hatching or quill bodies would be generally best for the *B.W.O.*

From memories of West country rivers, particularly the Upper Barle, *'Tup's Indispensable* and *Ginger Quill* are well favoured patterns, presumably representing the first two stages of one or more of the species usually referred to as *Pale Wateries*. Allowing for the fact that I then tied the Tup only as a normal hackled dry fly, instead of as a hatching fly, both were first class flies on, say, the Upper Barle; though I had some preference for the *Ginger Quill*. This again suggests that the hatching and the quill periods were protracted. While the Tup dressed as a hatching fly is of general application, I have noticed that the *Ginger Quill* may seem less useful on some rivers and that matt bodies may then come into their own. (This is a general impression only.) This suggests that in some rivers the length of the stages may be changed. The difference could be in the species of fly, or in the nature of the river, possibly its temperature. Spring fed rivers are likely to differ from surface fed rivers both in chemistry and temperature.

This seems to be a subject to which both the entomologist and the fisherman could contribute evidence. I seem to remember West country fishermen saying that quill bodied flies took well in rivers that flowed from west to east. They may even have been right; but I should very much like to know why.

Some Flies and Methods of Tying

Nymphs. While I have fished the nymph in its various stages on a number of rivers, I would not offer much on this subject. In the

Rother, where hatches of fly were generally small, the nymph was fished perhaps more than the floating fly. In 1936 I tied a pattern for the shrimp which, in the hands of at least four people, proved the best general fly in these conditions. It will take in almost any river, but it is noticeably less effective where particular nymphs appear in relatively large numbers at one time. I have since seen a similar fly independently developed. The tie was:—

SHRIMP FLY

Hook 1 to 3 for general use.

Construction. Starting a little way down the bend of the hook, a small bunch of blue dun cock, or suitable coloured, hackle fibres is tied in by the points. A heavy dubbing is wound on from the same point and ribbed gold wire. The dubbing has a basis of natural white wool mixed with rabbit flank and a small quantity of bright material such as pale blue mohair and natural yellow seal. It is coloured to suit the local shrimp, usually with pale blue rabbit undercoat. The dubbing is pricked out downwards to the level of the hook point, pressed flat in the plane of the hook and trimmed off in the line of the hook point. The sides and back are trimmed, the hackle points brought over to form the back and tied down at the eye. The result should be a fly the shape of a shrimp, with translucent legs.

I once experimented with applying the method to represent a young crayfish, with a somewhat olive version on a low water salmon hook. When nobody was about, I presented it to a large dour trout in a hatch hole. It turned to the fly; but I was somewhat relieved when I missed it. Even if crayfish was its staple food, the method might not have been regarded as proper. Would something like this attract a salmon ?

Hatching Flies. The oldest of these flies is probably the *Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear*. It is most conveniently used as a hackled fly. The hackle can be pricked out hare, or rabbit flank, or various shades of blue dun hen or soft dyed blue cock hackle. It is fished just sunk, in the surface film or floating as occasion dictates. I usually carried a mixture of patterns on 00, and some 0, hooks. It became almost a habit to put it up on arrival at the waterside, if there was nothing very obvious happening.

Tup's Indispensable hackled with pale blue dun hen, or perhaps pale honey dun, hackle, on a 00 hook, presumably represents the hatching *Pale Watery*. The normal tie of the *Tup* as a dry fly with cock hackles may be something of an anachronism; but on the rougher rivers for which it was originally designed it probably settles down on the water to represent the fly in its shuck with the wings out. If that is so, hackles of very good quality should not be used, and doubtless seldom are.

The hatching *B.W.O.* should, I think, be of mixed shades of dark and pale olive seal's fur with some stiff fur such as hare's flax dyed pale olive. The hackle should be dark blue dun.

I tied a pattern of the hatching mayfly in 1936 for the Rother. It has proved useful wherever I have tried it.

HATCHING MAYFLY

Hook 2, 3 or 4 long mayfly.

Hackle. A softly mottled hackle from the woodcock, of which the fibres nearest the butt tend to be of blue dun colour.

Body. Very thick, well pricked out, dubbing of rabbit flank, with a little natural yellow seal.

Rib. Gold wire.

Whisks. Pheasant tail, fairly short.

In later years I ran out of the correct hackle and substituted other game hackles; but I think the original hackle was definitely better. Experience suggests that the hatching period before leaving the shuck may vary considerably for different waters and perhaps weather.

The fully hatched fly. As suggested in Part 1, the body, the stance on the water and the quality of the hackle are important features. The stance on the water implies that the fly should stand firmly on the water with the body well clear of the water. There are two basic methods of achieving this, and a combination of the two may be desirable for rougher waters.

(1) (Based on H. G. McClelland — *The Trout Fly Dresser's Cabinet of Devices.)* Tie the hackle in by the butt and wind three or four turns which cross one another *underneath* the hook. The remainder of the hackle can be wound parallel towards the eye. This provides a broad squarish base from the longer fibres.

(2) Move the hackle further from the eye than is normal to what might be called the point of balance, having regard to the pull of the gut attached to the hook. This point may be, say, one third of the way down the shank. This method can be used to tie a particular size of fly on a hook one size larger.

I think that method (1) with the first turns not quite so far down the hook as for method (2) may be the most useful; but however I tie the fly I have come to use method (1) always.

The most important thing of all is to make the fly of the right size. If anything the tendency should be towards too small rather than too large, and too lightly rather than too heavily dressed.

The selection of patterns is probably a very personal matter. The presentation of the fly is of great importance, and it is likely that any fly tier may learn to tie flies that will catch fish as presented by him. The thing that surprises me most, looking back over the years, is how few patterns I have used regularly as compared with the number I have carried, or have tied experimentally and discarded.

For quill bodied flies I would suggest *Ginger Quill* (00), *Olive Quill* (000) and *Gilbey's Upright* (Lunn's No. 22) (000.00). I have usually tied the latter with a very dark, almost black, blue dun hackle of high quality. There should be a quill for the *B.W.O.*, perhaps a dark variation on the *Blue Quill* rather than an *Orange Quill*.

For matt bodied flies, I find that for a good many years I used very little other than a fly similar to G. E. M. Skues' *Olive Greenwell* on 00 and 0 hooks, but normally 00. There were two hackles mixed, one olive and the other a very high quality nearly colourless hackle. This hackle was actually a very faint cuckoo dun. The *Greenwell* body of this fly, like many great inventions, is simple, practical and effective.

My own experience of mayflies is that the hackled patterns I tied for one river were seldom much use on another river. The only fly I have found universal is a *Straddle Bug*, with straw body and Egyptian goose hackle, fished as a dry fly. I prefer straw bodies. These are presumably equivalent to quill bodies, as they are very shiny. This suggests that this period is extended with the mayfly or that the final matt condition does not differ very greatly in appearance.

The egg laying spinner. The only fly I have seen being taken when laying its eggs is the mayfly. The stance is then with the body down

with the tail on the water. It is therefore tied 'reversed' with the hackle at the bend of the hook. The pattern with which I have caught fish is copied from a fly of unknown origin. The hook is 2 or 3 long mayfly and the hackle ginger cock with pale teal or partridge behind it. The body is raffia over apple green floss, ribbed silver wire. I have also tied the body with white horsehair over white, or pale primrose, floss.

The spent spinner. The essential here, particularly for the 'dead' spinner, is that it should be of the right shape and should lie flat on the surface. The hackle should be very sparse, just enough to suggest legs without raising the body off the water. The wings, body and whisks should be flat in one plane; so that this is a type of fly that it really pays to tie with meticulous neatness, both as affecting appearance and flotation. The 'live' pattern may be less critical; and of this I have only used the *Rusty Spinner* and *Pheasant Tail* on 1 hooks.

Of the 'dead' patterns, *Lunn's Particular* (0) and *Houghton Ruby* (00) (Lunn's Nos. 1 and 2) are clearly two of the very great flies. The fish seem to think so wherever I have used them, both here and on the continent. I have at times tied the first of these with a dark chestnut horsehair body, to avoid the trouble of preparing the quills. It worked quite well; but I would not suggest that it is more than a lazy man's substitute.

Some comment was made on the mayfly spinner in Part 1. On one river we had occasional falls of the spinner of the dark mayfly, and I once caught a brace and a half of good fish on such a spinner when the normal pattern was refused. It was easily copied and, if memory serves, the body was of raffia over dark green floss, ribbed with black tying silk.

Space does not permit of more than these brief notes on artificial flies relevant to the duns; and other flies must be omitted. It is hoped that they may help to illustrate the main features of the approach made in these notes to the everlasting mystery of why did that trout take that fly ? If what's been written suggests to others a line of thought to be followed up at the waterside, may this give them as much pleasure as I obtained over the years, groping for that unattainable truth ever hiding round the next bend in the river.

(concluded)

GRAYLING

REG RIGHYNI puts the case for the use of 'fancy' fly patterns and suggests a

IT IS GENERALLY agreed that when grayling are rising freely to a good hatch of duns, the best policy is to use a pattern which is a suitable imitation of the natural fly. Hence, the Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear would be a fairly popular choice — and most probably a successful one — if the flies in question were medium olives. At the same time, some of the famous grayling patterns, such as the Yellow Bumble or Honey Dun Bumble, would be pretty certain to attract a lot of attention from the fish.

When plenty of grayling are to be seen feeding, a good selection of potentially-productive fishing spots is available. Normally this enables the angler to avoid any sort of background that would make it difficult to see the floating artificial, so there should be no problem in keeping your eye on the most sombre-toned pattern, not even on the popply surface of a North Country stream.

The chalk-streams, of course, are greatly favoured in regard to the duration of the hatches of duns in the autumn months. Often there is a more or less continuous light hatch throughout the day and at least some of the grayling are on the go non-stop. You can hardly go wrong with any of the appropriate trout patterns, fished in much the same way as for trout, but tending to allow the artificial quite a lot more drift before it covers the fish, and also allowing it to travel considerably further downstream before taking it off the water for the next cast. Frequently grayling show a tendency to let the fly get several feet beyond their lies before deciding to move to it.

In this context, on both the chalk-streams and the rain-fed rivers, it is generally agreed that the best ploy is to try and avoid drag just as much as you would when fishing for trout, although it might not be such a critical factor with the grayling.

In contrast to the chalk-streams, limestone-streams, and the more alkaline of the rain-fed rivers, the stony and practically weed-free streams of the North Country and Scotland tend to have relatively short-lived hatches of duns during the autumn, and on many of the heavily-wooded stretches, such as most of the Derbyshire grayling streams, there are probably more land-bred insects on the water than aquatic flies for the larger part of the day.

Happily, though, the grayling frequently show a willingness at any time to rise to any isolated item of natural food, or something that could easily be mistaken for such. And with the exception of the occasions when they are busily occupied in smutting, it is very rare for them to show any inclination to be very selective in their feeding.

Now the so-called fancy grayling flies come into their own. They make for highly-efficient fishing and are invaluable. The best chance of getting an offer, of course, is likely to be where a rise has been seen, and the prospects are that there will be at least a small group of fish there. That being so, there is usually no reason why several grayling should not be taken on the dry artificial from the same stand.

But here comes the crucial point: you have to accept the situation as it is and

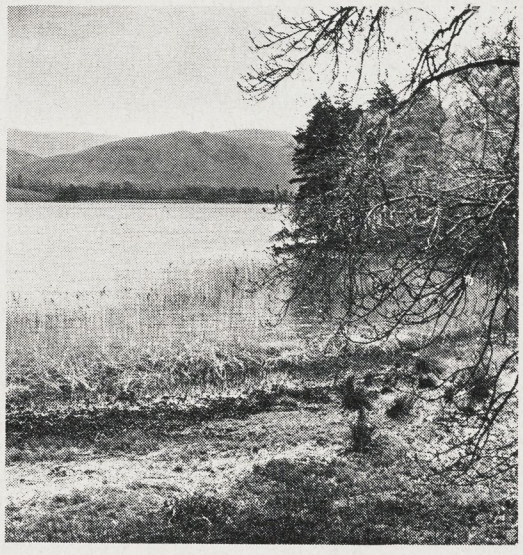
A winter grayling on wet fly.

BARRY LLOYD discusses

FLY-FISHING for grayling has but a short season. This may seem a strange statement to those of you who are not too familiar with the fish; you could, with reason, point out that the official season itself extends from June until March. However, most of us tend to ignore the grayling during the summer as we are too preoccupied with trout or salmon. Additionally, the grayling itself is not fighting fit and in its best form in most rivers until after the cooler weather arrives from mid-September onwards. Even on the chalk-streams the hatches of natural fly have usually been reduced to a trickle by mid-November, and hence my point about the short season — that is from mid-September to mid-November. Of course, the enthusiast fishes on until March, but the character of the sport during the winter takes on a different aspect which does not appeal to everyone.

Since the best of the fly-fishing is confined to this relatively short period, it would seem sensible to make the most of it. So I would suggest that you keep an

The golden years of Tweed trouting



St Mary's Loch, headwater of the Yarrow, a major Tweed tributary, was a prolific trout water in the 1800s. Now it is visited more by yachtsmen and water-skiers than by anglers.

WITH THE POSSIBILITY of a Protection Order being applied to the Tweed and its tributaries, the attendant prospects of developed and improved trout fisheries tempts one to wonder whether the trouting will ever attain the heady days of last century, when Thomas Tod Stoddart plied his wand, and his pen, along the waters of Tweed.

At the time of his writings from 1830 to 1870, angling, as a popular sport, was in its infancy. The first angling club was formed at Ellemford on the Whiteadder in 1828 and the meetings and competitions of Stoddart's own club, the C . . . h Club, are well recorded in his *Angling Reminiscences* with such mythical characters as Wandle-weir and Heron-bill, Tom Otter and Jack Leister.

For a glimpse of what trouting used to be like, and perhaps the reason why it is not as good today, we can browse through the pages of *Angler's Rambles* as Stoddart takes us around the waters of the Ettrick Forest.

Starting at Loch Skene on the Moffat side of the watershed, he and James Hogg, the 'Ettrick Shepherd', try for the 'perfections' of fish which rise freely during a soft south-west wind in a small quick ripple and a gentle rain. Stoddart was disappointed, however, that they only caught a dozen in two 'tedious' hours.

Leaving the loch, they made their way down the Winterhope Burn into Meggat Water. Trout rose nimbly and eagerly to their flies, not one at a time but two at a time, and they had soon mustered "three stone weight" of trout. Further downstream, in the deep pools by the kirk, they each landed trout in the two-pound class, and by the time they reached the Henderland rocks by St. Mary's Loch they had "seven and twenty dozen", some 324 trout, between them, including two at 2 lb, nine at 1 lb and more than 50 half-pounders.

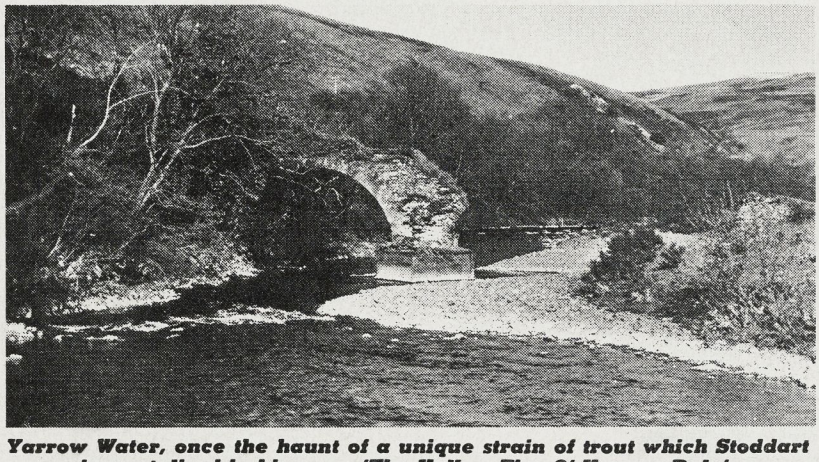
St. Mary's Loch itself was fished regularly by Stoddart and his friends from 1828 onwards. The fishing rights belonged to Lord Napier, who never prevented access nor insisted on written permission. In fact, he went out of his way to encourage the use of rod-and-line, in preference to the prevalent use of the 'otter-board', to which he was strenuously opposed. The 'otter' had been introduced to the area from Lancashire in 1824 by one Mr Beaver and was a fairly deadly method of poaching which was known to account for up to 50 lb of trout in a three-hour period.

St. Mary's Loch excelled as an angling spot. Stoddart's diary records a catch of 67 trout weighing 32 lbs on April 29, 1833, and on the same day the following year he exceeded this with a catch of 78 trout weighing 35 lbs. Stoddart further relates that his friend 'W' took a catch of 26 dozen trout to his rod in one day.

Draining from St. Mary's Loch, the River Yarrow carried its own special variety of huge, thick-shaped, golden-flanked trout which Stoddart described with feeling as "a lovely fish, ornate with a rare sprinkling of stars, darker than crimson, and these on a light amber ground, which, shaded off towards the belly, became gradually like mother-of-pearl. The head was small, the back curved, and the fins yellow, as a newly minted guinea."

How could he bring himself to kill such a delight to the eye? Nevertheless, killed they were. Even in Stoddart's time they were almost extinct — "harrowed without mercy, sifted and ransacked by every species of ingenuity, down from Douglas-burn-foot to the bridge at Broad-meadows." These unique trout he immortalised in his poem *The Yallow-Fins o' Yarrow Dale,* an epitaph to a dying race. The last 'Yallow-fin' caught in St. Mary's Loch turned the scales at 3½ lbs in 1853.

So the trouting was in decline even by that date. It takes little imagination to suggest that the huge baskets of Stoddart and his friends did nothing to arrest that decline. It would be unrealistic to expect a return to these halcyon days, but it shows what the rivers can produce and perhaps with protection and management — who knows?



Yarrow Water, once the haunt of a unique strain of trout which Stoddart immortalised in his poem 'The Yallow-Fins O' Yarrow Dale'.

Drew Jamieson

likely team

cope with any difficulties in the way of the light and surface disturbance which may make it difficult to keep sight of the fly. Indeed, the prime factor in choosing the fly is to pick one that is easy to see despite any problem created by the background.

That does not mean to say, though, that the extra impact of a brightish fly with two different strong colours may not have some appeal value to the grayling. There are, in fact, good reasons to believe that on occasions it is a definite advantage to use a pattern which would appear to create particularly good impact, as will be seen later.

Let us look at a few examples of the exploitation of the fancy-fly principle. Frequently the floating artificial passes from a brightly shining surface into the shade of a tree. The dark fly that could be seen well against the light background can easily be lost when it enters the very dull area.

But with the Treacle Parkin, for instance, the darkish brown of the hackle and the greeny bronze of the body show up well where the surface is bright, while the yellow of the tag can easily be detected against the dark background. Sturdy's Fancy — my personal favourite — the Grayling Witch, White Witch and Rolt's Witch, are some others which will perform similarly.

Winter grayling fishing out the Eamont, Cumbria.

On a very bright day when there are very few shaded areas, the Red Tag — the most famous of all fancy grayling flies — is easy to see and is undoubtedly well-liked by the fish. But when the sun is high enough possibly to be dazzling to the grayling, the Grayling Steel Blue — again easy for the angler to see — often does better, perhaps because it creates extra impact.

Another way to increase the impact

Continued overleaf

some aspects of wet-fly fishing in the shorter days of autumn

open mind as to whether you use a dry or wet fly. Strictly in terms of efficiency, the choice of method is dictated by the conditions appertaining on the day and not by personal whim. A preference for one style or another may be important to an individual, but the two methods are based on a different premise.

In essence the dry fly functions best on the calmer days when flies are hatching and the grayling can be located by noting the rises. Additionally, the water being fished must be suitable for a dry fly. The wet fly, on the other hand, is an excellent method of locating fish when they are not rising and when a strong wind or an awkward set in the current hampers the performance of the dry fly.

The chalk-stream fisherman may wonder why we should have any need to locate the grayling, but away from the chalk-streams these fish tend to wander from pool to pool and so may not be in the same pool two days running. This is particularly so as autumn progresses as they like to shoal-up in one particular pool out of many apparently suitable ones. So location becomes important and even location within a pool.

The deeper and steadier water in the middle of the pool and away from the trout is where we often find them. The gliding water at the tail is usually a reliable spot also, but they are only present in the runs at intermittent intervals throughout the day. The wet fly provides a quick method of finding them on these short autumn days.

One of the tribulations of wet-fly fishing is the many plucks at the fly before a fish is finally caught. At the risk of sounding facetious, though, it must be said that these plucks do tell you that a fish has been located — whether a trout or grayling has yet to be proved. A reasonably competent technique will reduce these annoying plucks to manageable proportions and so it is worth an examination of some of the basic points.

First, a floating line is preferable. Although it often helps to tempt the fish by achieving a greater depth with the fly, in my opinion the use of a sunk line imposes far too many other impairments to efficiency. Once the sunk line has been cast there is little you can do to alter or improve the presentation of the fly and, in addition, there is no warning of an offer to the fly until the pluck is felt.

With a floating line, on the other hand, you can be more versatile. At all times the speed of the fly relative to the current can be controlled by judicial mending of the line. This point is important as, ideally, the fly should be made to travel only fractionally slower than the current. This reduces considerably those hasty snatches at the fly as the grayling can make a more leisurely approach and time the interception correctly.

Another advantage of fishing a floating line is that the flies work nearer the surface and so there is a chance of the take, or the fish itself, being seen before the pluck is felt. The much-quoted 'wink under the water' as the fish turns is something I see not too often as, when

Continued overleaf

REG RIGHYNI — continued

which can often be useful when there are very few naturals to keep the interest of the grayling keen is to impart little bits of drag to the artificial. This seems to be particularly successful in glides. Normally a grayling lying in a glide will not move far laterally to take any fly, but drag apparently creates enough extra excitement in the fish to induce it to make the greater effort required.

When there is anything more than just a light breeze, the fancy grayling patterns often produce fine sport fished wet — just beneath the surface — particularly when few natural flies are about. There seems no doubt that a pattern with a little bit of gold, silver, or some very bright colour, is more attractive to the grayling than is a sombre-looking fly.

Again, when the days are at their shortest, the water cold, and the angler resorts to the leaded fancy grayling flies fished much deeper than usual, the bright colours, possibly red more so that any other, have proved valuable. Bradshaw's Fancy is a particularly good example, and this pattern also does well earlier in the season when it is fished nearer the surface in a slightly-coloured water.

In all the situations I have mentioned it could be argued that duller patterns intended to imitate specific species of naturals could be seen easily enough and make sufficient impact if used in large enough sizes, say 14 and bigger. But only in the case of the leaded flies used in the depths of winter — when the grayling can be very hungry indeed — is it normally recommended to use anything larger than a 16.

It is true that in relatively special circumstances grayling can be caught on bigger flies. Especially is this so on some of the chalk-streams where fish are used to good supplies of naturals of large size. But on most grayling rivers it would be a dis-service to the beginner to suggest that he could take much liberty in respect of size. Lightly-dressed size 16 hooks are as big as he is ever likely to require for dry-fly fishing, and often he will do much better with an 18. Furthermore, size 16 and 18 hold grayling safely if the fish is hooked in the secure area of the top jaw. Larger hooks tear away from the soft parts in the corners of the mouth just as easily as the smaller ones do.

Most of us want all the help we can get when fishing, so look at it this way: Supposing a grayling would, in fact, accept a fly tied on a size 14, would it ignore a 16? It is most unlikely. But when fish will take a fly tied on a size 16 or 18 freely, they often refuse to accept anything bigger. Countless experiments over the years have proved this to my satisfaction completely. It is also equally true to say that exactly the same thing often happens when fishing dry for trout. This may look a little bit odd until you remember that with most dressings, flies tied on size 14 hooks are twice the size of those on a 16 — that is, the fly overall.

What advantage is there, then, in using size 14 hooks? On most rivers, where a pounder is a good grayling, the beginner in particular should heed this advice which has been given by expert grayling fishers for generations.

Finally, a question which perhaps should have been dealt with first: What determines whether or not a fly is a fancy pattern, or more to the point, a fancy grayling pattern? Take the Green Insect. It is a good caricature of the aphis and in that respect it is as good an imitation as any trout pattern is of its relative natural. Given the chance, the trout will often confirm this, too. Sturdy's Fancy was created as a trout pattern in the first place and, when it is well greased or oiled, it makes as good an imitation of a spinner as the Pheasant Tail Spinner, and who would call that valuable dressing a fancy pattern? The Treacle Parkin is prized highly as a trout fly for August and September both in Derbyshire and in Yorkshire, and the grayling are no more guilty than the trout in going for it if it is, indeed, nothing more than a fancy pattern.

The Treacle Parkin.

In the case of a great many of the most popular and successful fly patterns, it is not known today what precisely the originators had in mind when they first tied them. He would be a brave man who would dare to arbitrate concerning the classification of artificials into fancy patterns and attempted imitations of naturals.

Similarly, to make any division of flies for grayling fishing, other than on the grounds of using a pattern because you have good reasons to prefer it, has no genuine technical merit. Catching grayling on so-called fancy grayling flies is great fun. Let us agree that that — great fun — is what we are after, and let us say a word of thanks to those anglers of long ago who devised the patterns that have given so many grayling-fishers so much pleasure over so many years.

BARRY LLOYD — continued

conditions are calm enough for this, then I am usually dry-fly fishing. To me the most obvious signs are a definite ringing rise, a fractional movement of the tip of the line, or a slowing down in the rate of drift of the line. If such a sign ends up in a tug then I consider that I have been too slow and my technique has been at fault. Possibly the fly was travelling too fast or the fish felt some resistance before I could tighten. The first of these faults can be corrected by making the next cast squarer to the current, or employing a bigger mend. The second fault may be a compound of a few things.

The lightest line you can handle is desirable for wet-fly fishing, whether while trouting or after grayling. Such a line alights far more quietly, causes less disturbance, and offers less resistance to a taking fish. The advantages of even a size 3 line, which I habitually use, can soon be obviated by casting too far. Then the line-weight becomes similar to that of a shorter line used with, say, a size 5 line. So if you have the strength of mind — which I usually have not! — leave alone the fish lying out in the river 20 yards away and content yourself with the catchable fish nearer the bank.

A current argument is whether the rod-point should be held low near the river's surface, or at an angle of 45 degs to allow a slight belly to form. The idea of both styles is to reduce resistance during the 'take' and speed the strike. In theory both may seem to have certain advantages but all I can say from a practical viewpoint is that I prefer a light 10 ft rod to be held at 45 degs. For me this works infinitely better and I can catch many more fish this way when they come to the fly.

Before leaving the subject of lines, perhaps I should mention the 'Clydeside Shuffle'. This has been developed to an art — I would not describe it as a fine one — by some fishermen on the Clyde. They stand in the river and cast a sunk line, with innumerable flies attached, directly downstream. Then they slowly raise the rod point almost to the vertical before recasting. All the while they are shuffling their feet in the gravel and stones, stirring up the mud and debris so that the grayling come to search the resultant cloud in the water for food.

Most shop-bought wet-fly leaders are an abomination as, for some reason, it is considered that they should be tapered. This results in a reasonable tip of 3 lb B.S. being spoilt by a top dropper attached with 7 lb nylon. The whole thing is nonsensical. While you might get away with such tackle on newly-stocked brown trout, grayling are seldom as stupid and your top dropper is virtually useless. There really is little need to taper a wet-fly leader much at all, as accuracy is not at a premium and any wiggles in the leader as

Continued on facing page

Continued from previous page

it lands on the surface can be straightened out either by mending or allowing the current to do so.

The point needs to be as fine as you dare go with these shy fish, but remember that a fierce tug can be expected from time to time. This could snap off the fly if the point is too weak so 2½ lb is the finest I usually dare go when wet-fly fishing. If you wish to taper the leader sensibly, use 3 lb for the middle section and for a foot or so of the leader above the top dropper. Then use 5 lb and 7 lb line to achieve the desired overall length of the leader.

Three wet flies on the leader is the norm. More than this can bring problems. There is certainly no reason at all why we should not use two, or even one, if we wish, but having three flies does allow you to cover most of the options regarding choice of pattern.

Patterns for wet-fly fishing fall into two categories: imitative or fancy. The latter are used when the natural fly has almost finished for the season and the grayling are becoming hungry enough to succumb to a brightly-coloured moving fly. Strictly speaking we ought to refer to them as lures as we are not attempting to match any natural fly but simply appeal to the grayling's hunger, curiosity, or playfulness. This being so, it would be foolish to state dogmatically which patterns are best. It is sufficient to say that it is helpful to have flies of different colours on the cast.

For example, a good combination might be Grayling Steel Blue, Sturdy's Fancy and Treacle Parkin. My system is to have the half-dozen or so dry flies that I use duplicated as wet flies. This saves my having to buy a whole lot of new feathers, herls, and wool.

Imitative patterns are used when there are still enough natural flies about for grayling to feed on. Your ordinary trout flies are excellent for this purpose. The style of wet-fly dressing you adopt will depend to some extent on the part of the country in which you live. For those of you who have not already tried them, I can strongly recommend the so-called North Country patterns as these work wherever grayling are to be found. They are excellent nymph-imitating patterns and a selection of these to match the naturals which you expect in autumn will pay handsome dividends.

One well-known fly I cannot recommend is the Orange Partridge, either with or without a gold twist. I cannot catch grayling on this fly. All my friends can, though, and so they would say it is excellent. Why a particular fly can fail abysmally for one fisherman and yet be the answer to a prayer for another baffles me. Put another way, why is it that some fishermen are incapable of using a particular fly correctly while others can? Probably 'the singer and not the song' is at fault.

HISTORIC FLIES

THE BLUE DUN

Written and illustrated by DONALD OVERFIELD

IF A SURVEY were to be made of all the patterns that have been called Blue Dun down the years, the list would be quite astounding in its length. Perhaps when I have a month to spare I may do just that, including wet, dry and nymphal patterns!

Certainly the name Blue Dun has been with us since Charles Cotton contributed his fine addition to Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler* in 1676. In fact, John Waller Hills, writing in his *A History of Fly Fishing for Trout,* published in 1921, suggests that the Blue Dun of Cotton may well be the second Dun fly described in Dame Berners famous *Treatise,* thereby pre-dating Cotton by many years. For Cotton to describe the named pattern indicates that it was generally known, and if Hills is correct, then the fly was a recognised pattern even before the writing of the *Treatise.* Who knows just how far back the Blue Dun does go? It is an interesting speculation for the historian.

Certainly Cotton's fly would be recognisable today with its body of bluish-black downy hair combed from a black greyhound. However, the description of the Berners pattern is not at all clear.

Berners stated that "the body is of black wool, the wings of the blackest drake, and the jay under the wing and under the tail". I now quote Hills: "So our fly has a black wool body and clear dark wings of a drake's wing feather, but what is the meaning of a jay under the wing and down the tail? Does it mean a jay hackle run all the way down the body from wings to tail, and is this hackle the blue feather, or what is it?" Hills was of the opinion that the text was corrupt.

But back to more modern times. The Blue Dun dressing is still a firm favourite with many fly-fishers who wish to represent olives. My problem was which of so many patterns I should describe. I finally decided to give the Blue Dun that I habitually tie. But so long ago is it since I first dressed this pattern that I cannot in truth remember the originator!

Take a size 14 or 16 up-eyed hook and start the waxed primrose silk (1) down the hook-shank, tying in at the appropriate position wing slips of darkest starling wing feather-fibre (2). Continue the silk down the shank and at the bend tie in whisks of medium-blue dun cock hackle fibres (3). Dub the tying silk with mole's fur (4) and wind it up the shank to form the body (5). Remove waste dubbing.

Lift the wings into an upright position, dividing and holding them with a figure-of-eight turn of silk (6). Tie in a dyed dark golden-olive cock hackle (7) and wind behind and in front of the wings (8). Remove waste end and complete the fly with a whip finished head.

THE WELSH MAKE IT A

But the boatmen were the real heroes at windswept Trawsfynydd

Above: The victorious Welsh team and reserves, plus their secretary, Moc Morgan.

The scalesman calls out the weight while the English captain and individual winner, John Ketley, keeps careful watch on the scale-pointer.

Below: Norman Hampson, of Wales. His sweater suggests that he is not a one-fly man . . .

WALES completed the 'double' by winning the second of the season's internationals at Llyn Trawsfynydd. Local anglers say that when clouds veil the mountain tops the fishing at Trawsfynydd is likely to be dour, yet such a day with blustery winds and fierce squalls produced a match catch of 210 trout totalling 315 lb. Not since Loch Leven's great years have so many fish been caught in an international.

Wales, with no individual contributing less than a brace of fish, totalled 81 lb 1½ oz (53 fish). Even so they were pressed closely by England (75 lb 10½ oz; 42 fish), and Ireland (71 lb 12¼ oz; 38 fish). Scotland retained the Wooden Spoon with 46 lb 10½ oz despite mustering 42 fish.

The English captain, John Ketley, whose shrewd tactics so nearly prevented a home-side win, had the consolation of winning the Brown Bowl for the best basket with 20 lb 15 oz (nine fish). England, partnered by Ireland, had won the toss for first choice of water and the team's plan was to fish the shallow but wind-swept Home Bay for at least the first 30 minutes to an hour. The bay had been 'out of bounds' to boats for two days, and the English captain banked on its holding plenty of fish.

His hunch proved correct, but it was not until most of the boats had moved in search of new grounds that the Home Bay showed its real potential.

Afterwards John Ketley, who caught most of his fish on a size 12 Orange Matuka, paid high tribute to his diminutive boatman, David Jones, a 16-year-old Trawsfynydd angler who had volunteered his services when an official boatman had failed to report. David battled manfully on the oars to allow his anglers to fish as close to the shore as possible — some of the fish came in water only a foot deep. Once John Ketley had fish of 4½ lb and 3 lb on at the same time and, thanks to the help of his boat-partner, Jim Allard, boated them both.

Away from Home Bay anglers concentrated on fishing close to the shore in the sheltered bays. The Welsh clearly knew the form here, and none did better for them than Peter Medlicote whose 18 lb 1 oz catch — the second highest of the day — included a brace of five-pounders. He caught mainly on a Green Peter — a fly that Gwynfor Jones also used on the point to take 10 fish for 14 lb 9½ oz.

Best basket for Ireland was Christy Sleator's 13 lb 7¾ oz catch which included an eight-pounder. Scotland's top rod was Brian Peterson (nine fish for 7 lb 13 oz).