Silver Wilkinson

A SALMON DELIGHTS IN GAUDY COLORS

One hundred years ago, a large female salmon hung suspended in the current of a river in the south of England. She had been born in that river, worked her way downstream to the ocean as a tiny parr three years before, and had traveled thousands of miles before returning. She had not eaten in a month, since she entered the river. The complex of chemicals in the river, as distinct as a fingerprint, had led her to this pool, her birthplace, by her olfactory sense.

A parr, the same size she had been three years ago, flickered in front of her. She moved to it with barely a shiver of her sleek body, opened her mouth, and crushed the parr. There was no malice or hunger, it was a reflex, honed by tens of thousands of years of survival. The parr was killed not because it was important to her now, but because it would be a month later, when she would be laying eggs in the gravel bed and parr would cross back and forth, eating the genes of her future generation.

Another parr swung in front of her. This one did not look quite like the first but her reflexes did not discriminate. As she pounced there was a sudden pull on her jaw, and she burst through the water in fright, turning upside down before she crashed to the surface. If her sense of smell were as tuned to feathers as to the ions of her home river, she would have been able to detect bustard from southern Africa, three species of pheasants from China, fruitcrow and cotinga from the jungles of Latin America, turkey from North America, and grey junglefowl from India. All of them, parts of the same feathered lure that stuck in her jaw.

AS YOU WALK INTO the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont, your eyes are drawn to reds and greens and blues so brilliant they rival butterflies or tropical birds. There are hundreds of Victorian salmon flies mounted in shadow boxes and protected by glass, part of the Joseph D. Bates Jr. collection on loan to the museum. Unlike most flies used for fishing, which are drab counterfeits of obscure aquatic insects of interest to no one except trout fishermen and entomologists, these colorful attractors are painstaking replicas of feathered lures that were in vogue with English and Irish salmon fishermen at the turn of the century. Classic Atlantic salmon flies are enjoying a revival that is more than merely nostalgic, for they are the most ornate and pleasing artificial flies ever created.

The evocation of butterflies as well as tropical birds is apt. George Kelson, called the high priest of the Victorian salmon fly, postulated that salmon, which do not feed when they ascend freshwater rivers from the sea to spawn, would strike butterflies, moths, and caterpillars that fell into the water. In *The Salmon Fly* (1895), Kelson listed patterns for 250 different salmon flies. Most consist of many exotic bird feathers. To tie a Baron, for example, a fly-dresser would need to obtain the following feathers: ostrich herl, "Indian crow" (fruitcrow), blue jay, two types of feathers from a golden pheasant, swan, mandarin duck, peacock wing, mallard, "blue chatterer" (cotinga), neck feathers from an Indian junglefowl, blue macaw wing feathers, and claret-dyed hackles from a domestic chicken. Then he'd have to get some thread,

Lady Amherst

article by TOM ROSENBAUER
photography by G. ALLAN BROWN

Jock Scott

Green Highlander on a grey junglefowl cape.

silk floss, and silver tinsel, but these items must have been easy to find once he had the feathers in hand.

A friend became interested in these flies a couple of years ago. He was a fearless ironworker, walking girders hundreds of feet above the ground, until a bridge collapsed on an interstate highway, killing two of his best friends and leaving Pete hanging from a girder for several minutes. He couldn't go back to work and, as part of some self-prescribed therapy, began tying the most intricate flies he could find. Knowing I also had an interest in salmon flies, he talked me into taking a special course in tying the Victorian patterns from Bill Hunter of New Boston, New Hampshire. I had caught two Atlantic salmon in my life. Pete had never gone salmon fishing and didn't intend to—he just liked the flies.

While ten of us sat around two card tables for a day and a half, spellbound, I realized that not all of the construction of the Victorian salmon fly was frivolous. The golden pheasant crest, curving over the top of the fly, holds every other feather in place vertically and frames the fly in a translucent halo. The macaw wing fibers, placed along the sides of the fly, hold the fly's wing fibers in place laterally. The underwing of turkey or pheasant tippets is carefully placed, used as a brace for the small slips of colorful goose or swan feathers. Even the order in which the tiny slips of bustard, swan, teal, and wood duck are put together is important, as some will not adhere properly, or "marry," to others.

But we didn't have swan or bustard or macaw. We used hen hackles dyed to match the natural colors of Indian crow and toucan and blue chatterer. For bustard we substituted the secondary wing quills of a wild turkey, and for English jay we used guinea hen hackles dyed blue. Some of the feathers Victorians used are available today, so we completed our patterns with genuine wood duck, teal, golden pheasant, Lady Amherst's pheasant, and ostrich—all domestically raised or legally hunted.

Why we could use some feathers according to the original patterns and had to substitute for others is a story that is tied up in the history of the American conservation movement and in the current laws of interstate and international commerce.

HOW DID THE LURING OF A SALMON to a feathered hook reach such excess? Salmon had been caught on artificial flies since the 15th Century or earlier, but the flies were simple concoctions using drab feathers like snipe, partridge, and bittern. By 1658 Richard Franck, a soldier in Cromwell's army, observed that the salmon "delights in the most gaudy and Orient colors you can choose." In his memoirs Franck described the flies he used for salmon and recommended feathers from chickens, partridge, peacock, pheasant, mallard, teal, snipe, parrot, heron, parakeet, bittern, flamingo, and macaw. Where Franck got his materials is not known, but he must have been very well traveled or have befriended a sympathetic sea captain.

By the middle of the last century, salmon flies could be divided into two types: somber flies for times when the fish were supposedly feeding on aquatic insects, and bright, gaudy flies for inactive periods when the salmon needed to be aroused into striking. (Despite empirical evidence to the contrary, suggested by the fact that salmon were always caught with empty stomachs, salmon fishermen a century ago still believed that salmon fed constantly on their spawning runs.) Much to the disgust of traditionally minded anglers, flies with wings of mixed feathers, usually of contrasting colors, began to come out of Ireland. The "Irish fly" was even banned on Britain's River Tweed, because those who held the fishing rights on the river considered these flies "a kind of bugbear to the fish, scaring them from their accustomed haunts and resting spots." But the gaudy flies won out, at least until the end of the Victorian era.

Soon, fly-dressers were competing with one another to create the most extravagant patterns. It was a status symbol to a Victorian angler to have a killing pattern that his peers could not own because their fly-dressers could not obtain a bird-of-paradise skin at short notice. Eventually, it became easier to obtain exotic feathers as the millinery trade began buying feathers from around the world at a rate that would never again be equaled. British ships returning from around the empire would be greeted by eager fly-dressers, looking for a new and colorful feather.

The competition for special patterns increased as salmon fishing became fashionable. Kelson caught the spirit of the period when he stated that "there is no vocation that claims for its contingent a finer race of men than Angling—level-headed Britons whose lives are superior to those of lower fortune more by the graceful exercise of generous qualities than for their immediate possessions; it is quite certain that no sport has gained favour with fashionable folk so fast as Salmon fishing."

Fishing was elevated from a rough sport to a pastime of royalty. Men descended on the rivers wearing bowler hats, bow ties, three-button tweed suits, and either breeks (breeches) for fishing from the bank or wading stockings of waterproofed canvas with heavy brogues. The Princess of Wales and her daughters set the fashion for the ladies. *The Daily Telegraph* described their outfits:

> Gowns made with skirts to the ankle, loosely fitting coats and blouses, are the kind of garments which these Royal ladies usually wear for fishing . . . The coat is of tweed, with lapels and cuffs of porpoise hide, and it is bound with this leather-like substance and furnished with many pockets; for the ardent Fisherwoman likes to have everything she may require at hand . . . The luncheon must be easily portable, and is usually confided to the attendant, but most women, knowing the strain that such continued exertion imposes, carry nourishment in a compressed form, furnishing their pouches or satchels with frame-food tablets, or meat lozenges, or such things as they most approve for the purpose, besides a small flask of sherry or claret in their possession, as it would be awkward to want food or drink on one side of the stream with the attendant carrying it on the other.

But the Victorian salmon fly never became an important part of the American sporting life. Until after the Civil War, field sports were lumped with cock fighting, boxing, and horse racing as idle pursuits of the lazy or foolish. Fishing and hunting were still part of the frontier ethic, practiced for subsistence or commercial sale.

edge to watch the fish. It was too far to reach except perhaps with a pole, but no one moved to fetch even a long stick. Instead, on hands and knees, we hung over the rocky edge, watching the salmon flopping this way and that, its aerodynamic form useless, its fins of no help. It could not even control its direction, if it had such control in mind. Two flops right, three left, and then it paused to rest. Six feet away a small opening appeared in the mat of boards and sticks, yet no one moved to help. The cleft could only be approached through the water (from the other shore) or by rope, from above.

"That's it, laddie," the old man said as the fish flopped twice toward the hole. He swept the air with his hand as if to aid the fish. "Don't give up now."

Five of us now hung over the edge. How long could the salmon last out of water? How long could it squander its store of energy in floundering about? We were only watchers, waiters, communicants gathered awkwardly to record a duel between time and fate. They were far better at it than I, who am inclined not only to question fate but to force it to swerve toward a better end by selecting my encounters.

I looked across the river for a boat, but there were none. How long would it take me to find a length of rope or a pole? It wasn't fair or reasonable simply to allow the fish to die after having come so far... come so close... And then it flopped again and again and again, and suddenly, unbelievably, it hurled its tail upward, drove its nose down through the hole, slipped into the water, and disappeared.

The men around me cheered loudly, unabashedly, took out their cigarettes and lit up, and the old man took a pipe from his pocket and began packing it carefully.

"There were six at one time there, yesterday," he said. "I've never before seen as many as that." He smiled. "They all found their way, though it took a bit of urging."

Another great silver fish burst from the dark pool below, soaring above the top of the falls and falling into the transparent water to the left.

"Go, laddie!" one man shouted, using his hands in the air to push the fish upstream. "Swim, laddie!"

"Aye, swim, swim!" shouted another, and when the fish found the crease in the ledge and drove itself up over the shallow spot with its back

COURTESY OF ARGOSY BOOK STORE, NEW YORK CITY

out of water, the men applauded and cheered as if honoring a great athlete.

By lunchtime I was badly confused. We sat in the car with our bread and cheese and ale and watched the rain and talked of where we would go the following day; which one of the several paths we had laid out might serve our fancy. But no matter where we drove in the afternoon, I could not get the salmon shepherds from my mind. It seemed certain that there was something more than mere seasonal rotation beneath their enthusiasm.

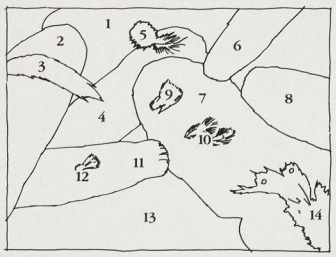
Before dinner in the pub, I asked again about the salmon, taking care to be oblique and failing utterly. "Why do they care so much?" I asked a man in his early sixties. "What does it matter to them whether the salmon make it upstream or not? They don't fish for them."

He smiled the sort of smile knowledge alone can spawn. "It's true," he said, his Scottish burr making music of the words he used, "they canna fish, for the permits are much too dear. But sometimes in the dark of the moon where it's thick along the bank and the water is still, salmon have been known to disappear. Never take many, for then there would be n'more."

"But what about the water bailiff?"

He smiled. "It's a long river, lad."

The petty felon in my heart smiled too, even as the conservationist blanched. In the end, we hammered out an understanding. The river had always been private, and there had always been poachers, and still the salmon returned to spawn. It was something both the poachers and the owners understood; yet where I come from such a system would not survive. The poachers, left to their devices, leave nothing valuable behind.



TREASURES FROM A FLY-TIER'S ATTIC

1. Great argus pheasant, Asia
2. Denham's (speckled) bustard, Africa
3. Vulturine guineafowl, Africa
4. Red-tailed (magnificent) cockatoo, Australia
5. Andean cock-of-the-rock, South America
6. Denham's bustard
7. Denham's bustard
8. Great bustard (florican), Eurasia
9. Toucan, Central America
10. Lovely cotinga (blue chatterer), Central America
11. Ocellated turkey, Central America
12. Red-ruffed fruitcrow (Indian crow), South America
13. Grey junglefowl (jungle cock), India
14. Satyr tragopan, Himalayas

A modern version of the Laxa Blue salmon fly was tied with (clockwise, from lower left) blue-dyed gray squirrel, silver tinsel, fluorescent-red rayon floss, blue rayon floss, golden pheasant tippets, and blue-dyed chicken hackle.

THE COMING OF THE INDUSTRIAL revolution gave the emerging middle class more leisure time, and fishing with the fly became an accepted if not desirable pastime. But the American fly-fisherman had to be satisfied with trout and bass, because most of the salmon rivers of New England had already been destroyed. Salmon lost their habitat to dams and to the scouring ravages of logging drives. In *Fishing With the Fly,* by Charles F. Orvis and A. Nelson Cheney, published in 1883, came this comment on just how dear salmon fishing was, even a hundred years ago: "Wealthy Americans in private yachts steam away to the tributaries of the St. Lawrence . . . the humbler citizen, with more limited purse, betakes his solitary way to the rehabilitated streams of Maine."

By the 1890s there were many trout flies of American origin, simple constructions of two or three brightly colored feathers. Mary Orvis Marbury, who wrote the definitive book cataloging American fly patterns, tied a collection of flies to be shown at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. The original flies are in the collection at the American Museum of Fly Fishing, saved from the ravages of moths and dermestid beetles by an airtight framing job. Commonly used were feathers from gamebirds such as turkey, mallard, teal, and goose; barnyard birds, including peafowl, chicken, and guineafowl; and songbirds such as blue jay. A few patterns were tied with more exotic feathers like those of the ibis, golden pheasant, and grey junglefowl—not the sort of feathers an Irish fly-dresser might covet.

Apparently the few Americans who were fortunate enough to afford salmon fishing had to order their salmon flies from the other side of the Atlantic. Mary Orvis Marbury, who was in the fly-tying business and quite adept at self-promotion, must have felt that the salmon-fly market was not large enough to warrant the acquisition of all those fancy feathers. For the rivers of Maine

An oil still life of Atlantic salmon flies and tying materials, painted in 1890 by Englishwoman

and Canada, she recommended all English patterns and suggested that anglers "order them from Mr. Forest of Kelso, Scotland."

Some American tiers were trying to develop the salmon fly in America, notably the expatriate Englishman J. Harrington Keene, who gave a complete list of feathers necessary for tying Victorian salmon flies in an 1887 edition of the American sporting magazine *The American Field.* But the most unusual source in Keene's list was not an exotic from a faraway jungle but an owl: "The eyebrows of this bird form a very beautiful species of hackle for the legs of many of the medium-sized flies that I make."

Where did the fly-tiers of the last century get their feathers? Poring over early fishing tackle catalogs, I can find no lists of fly-tying materials until the William Mills catalog of 1921. The 19th Century catalogs like those of Orvis, Thomas Chubb, Abbey and Imbrie, and Allcock listed rods, reels, leaders, and finished flies, but no materials for making flies.

I asked Paul Schullery, an angling historian who is writing a definitive history of fly-fishing, where the 19th Century fly-tiers got their feathers. He admitted we really don't know much about where they got their materials, but suggested that a hundred years ago, when there was no refrigeration and we had a large rural population that hunted, everyone was in more frequent contact with animals. Many of the birds that we consider songbirds appeared regularly in markets and butcher shops. He also suggested that most of the 19th Century fly-tiers who were producing flies in any kind of volume had contacts with the taxidermy and millinery trades. Both concerns advertised in the sporting periodicals, stating that they had fly-tying materials available but listing no specific kinds. "Send requests," was how they most often solicited orders.

There was no shortage in numbers or kinds of feathers. On one day in 1886, the ornithologist Frank Chapman counted 542 out of 700 women's hats decorated with forty species of birds. An article in *Science* that year stated the writer had seen thirteen female passengers in a Madison Avenue horsecar with hats that included the heads and wings of three European starlings; an entire bird, species unknown, of foreign origin; seven warblers, representing four species; a large tern; the heads and wings of three shorelarks; the wings of seven grassfinches; one-half of a gallinule; a small tern; a turtle dove; a vireo; a yellow-breasted chat; and ostrich plumes.

SEVERAL THINGS ASSURED THAT salmon flies with fancy feathers would never become widely used in America. One happened in Washington, D.C., and changed the meaning of the word conservation forever. Another occurred on the salmon rivers of Atlantic Canada, and the third took place in Iceland. These last two would have no consequences for anyone but a salmon fisherman.

In the last part of the 19th Century, the noose began to tighten around the feather trade. Ironically, the same sportsmen who were buying and tying flies helped to dry

Catherine M. Wood, is on display at the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont.

up their own sources of supply. To understand what took place it is necessary to realize that fly-tiers don't create markets. They are scavengers of whatever feathers and furs are cheap and widely available. Fly-tiers undoubtedly contributed to the demand for ibis, heron, and crane feathers, but their demand was a pittance compared with that of the millinery trade.

George Bird Grinnell, editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, took one of the first initiatives to protect nongame species of birds and wildlife with the formation of the first Audubon Society in 1886. In a front-page editorial, his first sentence stated that "very slowly the public are awakening to see that the fashion of wearing the feathers and skins of birds is abominable." He documented the case of a single taxidermist who collected 11,018 bird skins in three months. By 1888 the society had some fifty thousand members, many of them sportsmen. The Audubon Society was so successful that Grinnell had to discontinue it in order to continue his editorial duties. But individual states, led by Massachusetts, formed their own organizations. In 1905 many of the states banded together, forming the National Association of Audubon Societies, the original name of the National Audubon Society. Grinnell became a director.

As early as the 1870s, individual states had passed laws to regulate the enormous slaughter of birds for plumage. Until the turn of the century, however, there were no laws that regulated interstate commerce in wildlife. The Lacey Act, a milestone in American conservation, was passed in 1900 after four years' debate. Authored by Representative John Lacey of Iowa and Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts, it sought protection for all species of songbirds by prohibiting the interstate transportation of "birds, feathers, or parts of birds to be used or sold."

While the Lacey Act regulated interstate commerce in feathers, it wasn't until later in the first quarter of the 20th Century that the taking of birds for their plumage was prohibited. The Migratory Bird Treaty, concluded with Great Britain in 1916, gave the federal government authority to regulate the taking of all migratory birds. It established a closed season on migratory gamebirds between March 10th and September 1st, and gave complete protection to all species of songbirds. The treaty took effect on July 3, 1918.

Local guides in Atlantic Canada, who knew little about fancy feathers and expensive tackle, were, for pragmatic reasons, making all this fuss about feathers moot from a fisherman's point of view. As politicians and sportsmen in the states were fighting to eliminate the feather trade, Canadian guides were making crude, simple flies from whatever materials were available. These "fox-smelling lures" or "guide patterns," as the wealthy sports disdainfully called them, were made from strands of wool from old sweaters or blankets, with wings of hair, notably of hair from black bear, skunk, squirrel, and fox. The sports who were adventurous enough to try the new patterns instead of their British flies were amazed to find that the hair patterns frequently outfished the gaudy feathered lures. The use of hair in salmon flies was not new, as Richard Franck had recommended "dogs and

A fly-tying box and 1874 fishing license that belonged to an Irish sea captain.

bears heir" in his dressings nearly three hundred years before. But apparently Victorian fishermen, blinded by tradition, had largely ignored hair as a tying material.

Even in England, Victorian excess was giving way to a more pragmatic, Edwardian style. An Englishman named Ernest Crosfield, who fished the salmon rivers of Iceland, favored a salmon fly that exhibited no ornamentation that didn't also have fishing value. His flies, surprisingly similar to those being created across the Atlantic, were also sparse and simple, but held to the tradition of feathers rather than hair. His patterns featured a single internal wing of dyed goose or swan, sheathed with a speckled feather from a mallard, teal, or pintail.

Crosfield-type patterns and Canadian hairwing flies dominate the fly boxes of modern salmon anglers. But most fishermen still have a couple of Green Highlanders or Jock Scotts tucked away in a corner of a box, to share with friends and to preen and admire the beautiful feathers. There are more good tiers of classic Victorian patterns today than there were ten years ago. Despite the unavailability of most of the exotic feathers, they make do with a combination of dyed substitutes and the duck and pheasant feathers that are legal to buy and sell.

WHAT DETERMINES THE SUPPLY of feathers today? It is a complicated, often confusing system that "requires a Philadelphia lawyer to understand," according to one retailer of fly-tying materials. Rather than trying to look up all the laws involved, most people who sell fly-tying materials rely upon the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. John Harder, head of the fly department at the Orvis Company in Manchester, Vermont, one of the largest fly-tying retailers in the country, has found the people in the Fish and Wildlife Service more than willing to help if he has a question about the legality of a particular feather. Jim Sheridan, the special-agent-in-charge at Fish and Wildlife's Boston office, told me, "We seldom have any problems with fly-tiers or people selling fly-tying materials. Most of the time it's a guy who has bought a single pheasant skin in England. They're legal here and in England, but unless the buyer has a permit to import the pheasant skin under the quota system established by the Tariff Classification Act, we have to seize the skin at customs."

And misunderstandings do occur. Dick Surrette, a fly-shop owner in New Hampshire, traded fishing tackle for woodcock wings from birds that one of his customers had shot during hunting season. He hung them up next to his mallard, grouse, and wood duck wings —which are perfectly legal to buy and sell. A man came into his shop twice, looked around, but never bought anything or talked to anyone. On the third trip, he walked over to the counter, paid for two pairs of woodcock wings, pulled out a badge, and declared that he was from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Surrette was in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

How could Surrette legally sell wood duck and not woodcock? The original wording of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act said that it was "illegal to offer for sale the part of any migratory bird." But, tucked away in subpart J, 20.91, under "commercial use of feathers," it allows the sale of "migratory waterfowl for the making of fishing flies and similar commercial uses." Woodcock are migratory but are not waterfowl. They fall between the cracks, and even though they are legally hunted gamebirds, their feathers cannot be sold.

The grey junglefowl, or jungle cock as fly-tiers call it, is another interesting case. The Tariff Classification Act of 1962 made it illegal to import the feathers of any wild bird, with exceptions made for a quota of 45,000 skins of six species of pheasants, 1,000 skins of mandarin duck, and 5,000 skins of grey junglefowl per year. The junglefowl grows an unusual waxy hackle that looks as if it were painted with several coats of shiny lacquer. Jungle cock was de rigueur in most Victorian salmon flies.

In 1967 the Indian government became concerned about the harvest of grey junglefowl, which was taken for food as well as for its feathers. Export of any part of a grey junglefowl was prohibited. Two years later, the United States and British governments announced import bans on grey junglefowl feathers, and American enforcement agencies clamped down swiftly and effectively. With the passage of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in the mid-1970s, India's export ban became an import ban in every nation that had signed CITES.

Three years ago, an enterprising Englishman named Ron Taylor, an amateur ornithologist and fly-tier, obtained some grey junglefowl eggs and began raising them commercially. After many problems with fertility and diet, he began selling capes in England for up to eighty dollars each. He arranged to sell his capes in the United States through a small mail-order company in Washington State. The company even took out ads in fishing magazines proclaiming "legal jungle cock." Apparently no one had checked with the Department of Commerce. Even though the feathers were domestically raised and legal in England, under the Tariff Classification Act the quota remained at zero and the capes were still illegal to import. Fly-tiers will have to wait until a fancy bird breeder finds out how to raise these birds in our climate.

As feathers become harder to obtain, the salmon fly will get simpler. One of the most effective new salmon-fly patterns is made by lashing blue- or yellow-dyed hair from the tail of a white-tailed deer to a clear plastic tube obtained from a disposable ball-point pen.

With the exception of several species of pheasants and the feathers of legally hunted birds like teal and wood duck, it is illegal to buy, sell, or import the exotic feathers used in the Victorian salmon fly. But it is not illegal to *possess* any feather except those from bald or golden eagles. The exotic feathers still turn up—passed on from a grandfather to a favorite grandson who ties flies, or in the attic of some widow who sells an old fly-tying chest in a tag sale—enough of them to keep the craft alive. Some tiers may be working from skins of birds that were killed when George Bird Grinnell was still alive. Salmon fly-tiers have also been known to court the veterinarians who clip the wings of the tropical birds in the aviaria of large metropolitan zoos.

These feathered lures are too breathtaking to be lost to history—even if the salmon don't care.

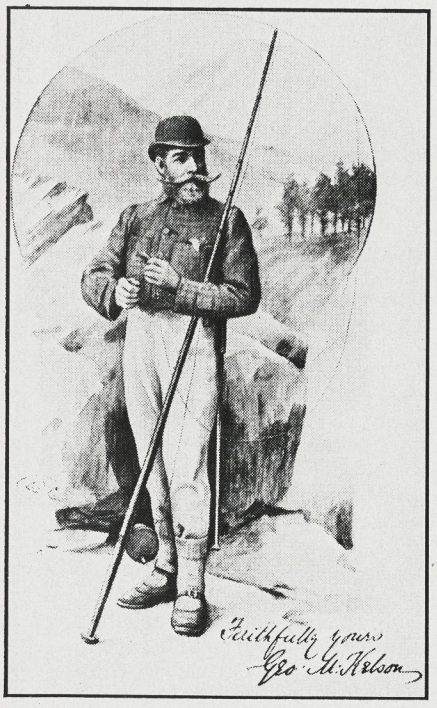

R. C. P. Gordon Esq.
has permission to fish on the Boyle River
during the present season for Trout
&c. —
tions as stated on the other side.
By Order
Rent-Office, Boyle,
Mar 26. 1874.
Jas. Hutchinson Jnr.
Jas.
Captain Gordon.
Feathers from a Jay's wing.
Clitheroe Febry 27/64
Dear Sir
I have yours this
morning, and forward
you a line and set
of flies for Spey, as
sample, because I
cannot say whether
my standard flies
and drawn gut lines
will not be too fine for
your fishing and fish,
but if you can manage
with so fine tackle
you will have greater
sport than ever you
had before,
ROBERT
FISHING TACKLE
STANDARD
CLITH
The result of Thirty-
Great
No. 1. BRAZEL FLY.
This fly appears on the
ebruary, and continues
a good standard fly.
No. 2.
Comes on about
will kill well on a
year.
No. 3.
This is a
on about
the end
No. 4.
No. 5.
This is the
used by the angler
it comes on about the
will kill fish throughout
No. 6.
WOODCOCK BLACK.
Comes on about the 5th of April; it
point fly until the middle of May.
SNIPE BLOE.
about the 10th of April, and is
ed by some anglers.
OCK BROWN.
the 10th of April; it is
the season, in all
be best, as the last
ded fly, and in
the water
KINGFISHER MOTH.
Comes about the 10th of August; it
a beautiful fly, and very much
met with but not
of August, but will
time.
No. 33.
May, and is
ever known.
No. 11.
Comes on about
favorite on all
standing w


Huehnergarth
FISH 335A
SECTION
CASE

Much ado about Kelson

GEOFFREY BUCKNALL turns historian to find the truth about a famous salmon angler

ONE OF THE books on my shelf is a rather tatty copy of George Kelson's mammoth work on the salmon fly. Some time in the future I must have it professionally rebound. Kelson has come down to us as the 'Father of the salmon fly'. Many of us who casually study origins of salmon flies assume without question that he originated the traditional 'mixed wing' which we are beginning to abandon in favour of more practical substitutes which are easier to make.



***This signed photograph of George Kelson appears in his book* The Salmon Fly.**

A curiosity about fly-tying is the way in which a minority of fanatics work themselves up into a fine lather about minute points of history or material. I recollect being taken to task as to whether the great Northern angler, T. E. Pritt, used the feather from the outside or inside of a snipe's wing for a copy of the Iron Blue. The futility of this argument was emphasised by the fact that he used either, according to the shade of dressing he required, but never mind. That's another battle!

☆ ☆ ☆

The chances are that if you pick up a modern book on salmon flies you will see the name 'Kelson' applied to many patterns from the past. Only an angling historian will recall that Kelson was involved in a fiery controversy in 1908 with the editor of *The Fishing Gazette,* R. B. Marston.

Kelson was then in his seventieth year, and my reading of this is that he emerged from it with a tarnished reputation which time has fortunately ameliorated. Since it involves the invention of many famous patterns which even today are attributed to Kelson, it's worth recounting the story.

Several years earlier Marston had reviewed Kelson's book *The Salmon Fly* in *The Fishing Gazette.* This review had, according to Kelson, damned it with faint praise, and in retrospect, Marston evidently believed that Kelson had claimed many things to which he had no right, and so, it seems, there was a brooding atmosphere as the years went by.

Then, in 1907, a new Kelsonian masterpiece was claimed in *The Fishing Gazette.* This was a fly called the 'Inky Boy', which has long since died on us. Kelson claimed to have invented it, and he hailed it as a miracle fly, but also upbraided other anglers for making minute mistakes in its dressing when it failed to live up to his claims for it.

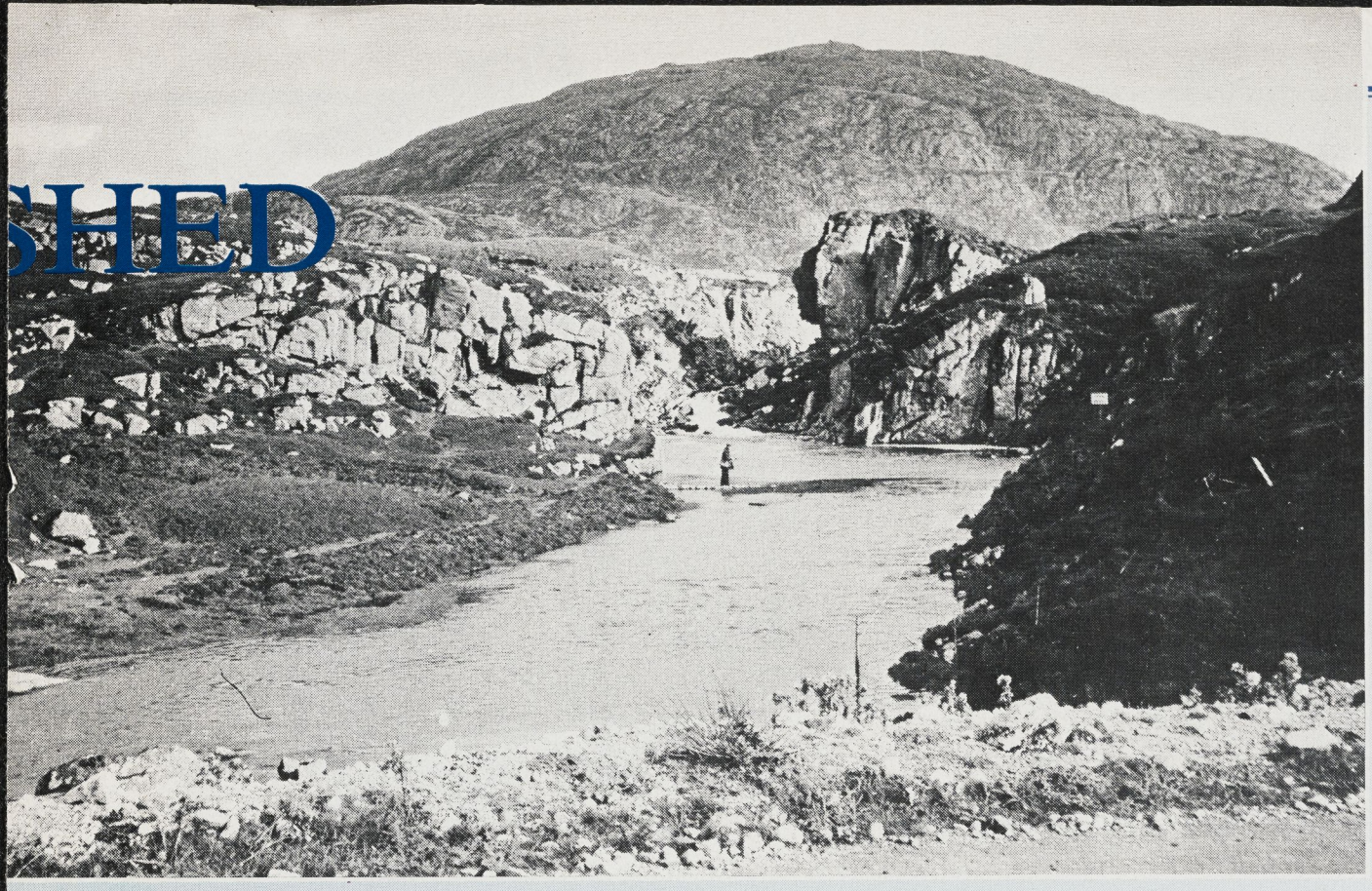
In passing, the body of the Inky Boy was of black horsehair, the hackle of tourocou crest, and it had a typically complex wing. Throughout 1907 Kelson thundered in the correspondence columns of the 'F.G.' and he argued that Spey salmon had been refusing the 'Jock Scott' fly for 15 years past in preference to his Inky Boy.

Eventually, I suspect, Marston was fed up, and he decided to pull the plug on the Inky Boy with a sarcastic cartoon depicting a salmon fly shedding tears of black ink, with the caption 'I hope I'm correctly dressed at last!' Then the fur began to fly!

The first broadside came from George Kelson's son, Reginald, pater being under the weather. He was upset by the reflec-

Continued on page 54

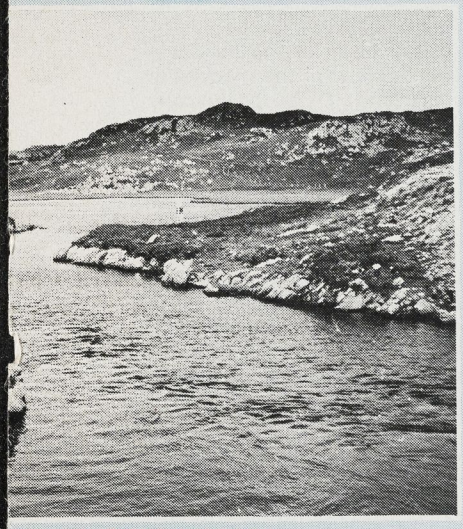
SHED



The Fhorsa River and the Falls.

usually holds more fish as they run through on their journey to the head-waters. This day Callum rowed me over all the likely lies: along the shore-line, where fish congregate at the Black Burn; in the Stream, where the river enters from Suainaval; and found the Pin Rock, where they lie on the edge of a patch of weed. Fish after fish was covered.

As the day progressed my frustrations were eased by the quiet philosophy of this Highlander as he sat at the oars, as seemingly as permanent as the hills around us. He lived in a house built by his own hands and his pride and joy had been an English setter, long dead, which he had had for working the few grouse on the sparse heather. There is a picture I shall always have in my mind of a tall man, a dog questing ahead, appearing on the skyline and keeping a watchful eye on the salmon in Loch Slacsavat.



…non rose off the far point.

One of the main holding pools in the system is the Gorge. A big head of fish builds up when the river is rising and they queue up to take the falls. Casting is difficult, both from the foot of the falls themselves and from high up on a rocky ledge; it also calls for a certain agility and the greatest self-control, as the fish can be clearly seen rising from the depths to take the fly!

One evening before dinner, with the sun off the Gorge, I was fishing the stretch just below, which is quieter and where the salmon were rising like trout. They were lying along the rocky bank opposite, shielded by the steep slope of a small hill. Every fish was easily covered, and it was only afterwards I thought that I could have used a large dry fly! As if in compensation for the blank, as I returned to the Lodge the setting sun threw light over the bay and filled it with the soft tones and pastel colours so sought after by water-colour artists.

Came my last day and my last chance. We had been kept awake all night by a gale and heavy rain. One of the guests, an experienced fisherman, suggested that as the fish were running we try the outlet of the loch and a temporary resting-place along the rocky shore-line. My gillie was Peter, a pensioner of 73 years, with a penchant for black twist tobacco, who with the help of a sister and sister-in-law still farmed a croft of 10 acres.

★ ★ ★

Putting-off from the little stone-built jetty, we drifted quietly along the near shore. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a rise, cursed at having missed it, cast again and was 'taken' in that heart-stopping way. With maximum check on the reel, I held him tight and he ran straight for the boat. Some frantic hand-lining followed, and he was still on! After that the old 'Perfection' had never worked so hard, but Peter calmed me down and soon, after the second attempt, a fresh-run Hebridean salmon of about 6 lb lay in the bottom of the boat; it had taken the dropper, a Muddler Minow. Peter smiled as I uttered a short eulogy for a beautiful fish; then we pulled for the shore to share lunch and tobacco.

To all those who helped me to achieve my ambition, fisherman, river-watchers, gillies, and to that wild and beautiful countryside. with its rivers and lochs and abundance of clean, fresh fish that run across the sands from off the tide — I dedicate my first salmon. The memory of it, deep-etched in my mind, will last me my lifetime.

Much ado about Kelson — continued

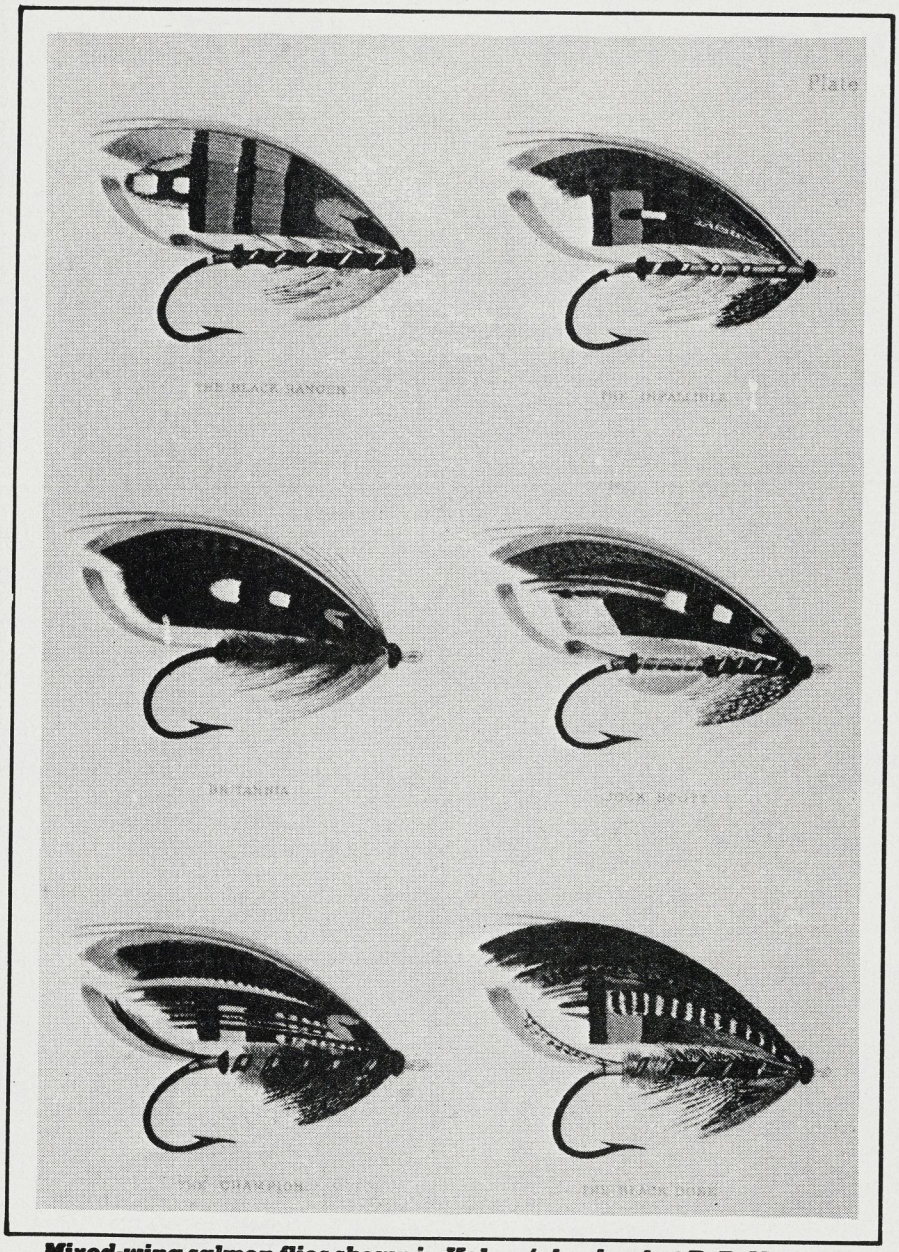
tions on his father. This gave Marston the opportunity for blasting away at a wider grievance he must have been harbouring for years.

This is how he replied: "His (Kelson's) book is supposed to give the history of certain salmon flies. I say that some of these he claimed to have invented or named were neither invented nor named by him . . . Kelson claimed he was the inventor of making salmon flies with mixed wings. Salmon flies with mixed wings were made before he was ever heard of or thought of . . ."

The crux of Marston's accusation was that many salmon fly-patterns claimed by Kelson were known previously, as was the mixed-wing style of dressing. Kelson came back with the obvious riposte — name these flies! But Marston had been doing his homework, otherwise, I wonder, why no action from tetchy Kelson for libel?

Marston stated that Kelson's book in 1896 laid claim to a fly called the Donkey, which had already appeared in an earlier book by 'Ephemera' (Fitzgibbon) in 1850. This was just the opening salvo. There were 300 standard flies claimed by Kelson either for himself, his father, or his friends, which were now called into question. Some, which we know today, the Black Dog, the Black Dose, the Bonne Bouche, the Wilkinson, were traced by Marston to other authors of over 50 years before, such as Stoddart and Paton. As for the 'mixed-wing' style, Francis Francis had described it long before Kelson.

When you're on the way up in life, friends pat you on the back. It seems they are really feeling for the soft spots for the knife to go in when you're on the way down again. Other anglers now waded in with yet more accusations, but Kelson couldn't leave well alone, defending the indefensible. Eventually, aware that a hatchet job had been done on his book and reputation, he wrote plaintively: "You (Marston) pose again as my benefactor as though the whale would pose as the protector of Jonah by inviting him to come in out of the wet . . ."



Mixed-wing salmon flies shown in Kelson's book — but R. B. Marston, editor of the old Fishing Gazette, proved conclusively that Kelson had not devised all of them himself.

☆ ☆ ☆

Then Marston went in for over-kill, printing, over several pages, two columns. The left-hand column was Kelson's claims. The right-hand column was a researched refutation. He ended with the final question — 'Shall we cry quits, K?'. And Kelson had no option. Marston had cut him down with uncharacteristic cruelty when he was a comparatively old man. But who did have the last word?

The sad fact is that a weekly paper is a consumer product, whereas a well-written book stands for posterity. I have no doubt that Marston destroyed Kelson's reputation in his life-time, perhaps deservedly. Yet, the book remains today as a collector's piece. Modern writers go to it as a standard work, repeating the claims unthinkingly which Marston had surgically exposed down to the last screaming nerve.

Historical angling books are collected, but only odd-ball fanatics like me leaf through the yellowing, sere pages of old magazines. In its day, the *FG* had the muscle to put down Kelson, but researchers and collectors go for the books. I think it must be the wry chuckle from Kelson's tomb every time his book is referred to as the "standard work" which echoes in my ears.

It's worth remembering, though, next time you see Kelson described as the 'Father of the salmon fly' that Marston "Drowned his honour in a shallow cup, and sold his reputation for a song . . ." The final irony is that today we have reverted to the eighteenth-century simplicity of salmon flies, the pre-Kelson Tweed patterns like 'Toppy' and 'Meg in her Braes'.

Historically that would make Scrope the real master, and I'd go along with that.

TROUT AND SALMON

MASTER FLY-TYER OF THE YEAR '81

Win a week's salmon-fishing on the Thurso

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

The competition is open to amateur fly-tyers only.
The competition is in two sections: Senior and Junior (under 15 at the closing date).
Each entrant is required to submit three tyings of each of the patterns given below (nine flies in all), using the materials specified.
Entrants may be asked to tie a fly in the presence of the judges.
To qualify, entries must be received at the *Trout and Salmon* offices (address below) not later than first post on Monday, February 2, 1981.
All entries will be acknowledged, but none will be returned.
The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
Please read also the item about the competition on page 15.

THE PATTERNS

DRY FLY

Hook: 14 up-eyed.
Silk: Orange.
Body: Orange silk.
Rib: Fine silver wire.
Tails: Three fibres from a teal duck flank feather.
Wings: Two slips of starling primary wing feather.
Hackle: Ginger cock.

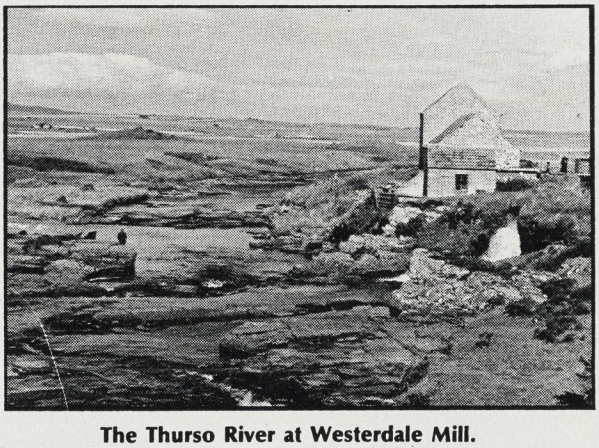
WET FLY

Hook: 14 down-eyed.
Silk: Black.
Body: Flat gold tinsel.
Rib: Black tying silk.
Tails: Three golden pheasant tippet fibres.
Hackle: Hen furnace hackle.
Wings: Teal duck flank feather fibres.

NYMPH

Hook: 14 down-eyed.
Silk: Yellow.
Abdomen: Grey heron quill fibres.
Thorax: Mole fur.
Rib: Narrow flat silver tinsel, abdomen only.
Wing cases: Cock pheasant-tail fibres.
Hackle: Brown partridge back feather.
Tails: Three brown partridge back feather fibres.

Send your entry to 'Fly-tyer of the Year '81', *Trout and Salmon*, 21 Church Walk, Peterborough PE1 2TW.



The Thurso River at Westerdale Mill.

THE PRIZES

First (Senior): A week's salmon fishing on the Thurso River during June or July 1981 (with the option of trout fishing on the hill lochs) and a Sue Burgess 'Diamondback' carbon-fibre salmon rod.

Second (Senior): A week's trout fishing on the hill lochs of the Thurso Estate during June or July (with the option of a day's salmon fishing on the Thurso River) and a Sue Burgess 'Diamondback' carbon-fibre trout rod.

Third (Senior): A Sue Burgess 'Copperhead' glass-fibre trout rod, plus fly-reel and fly-line.

First (Junior): A Sue Burgess 'Copperhead' glass-fibre trout rod, plus fly-reel and fly-line.

Second (Junior): A fly-reel and fly-line.

Third (Junior): Two fly-lines.

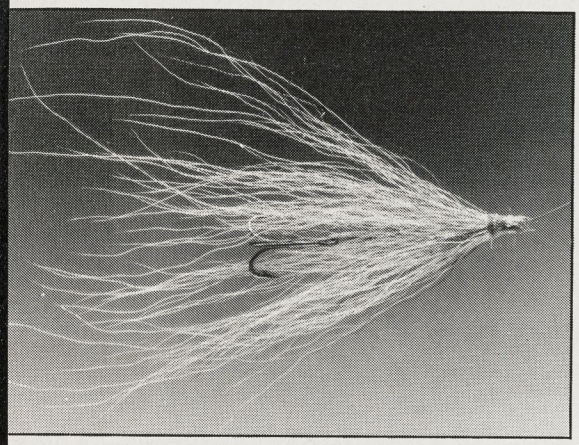
Details of fishing on the Thurso River and accommodation at the Ulbster Arms Hotel can be had from Thurso Fisheries Ltd, Thurso East, Caithness. Telephone: 0847 3134.

Salmon from

Roland Field ties the fly to tackle the places passed over by most other fly-fishers

IN MY SEARCH for a salmon fly for waters with little or no current *(as described last month),* I finally settled on a rather unconventional Waddington-type pattern with a heavy dressing on a lightweight shank. My choice has been compared to a Torrish tube-fly tied by an angler who had never heard of short rises! The performance of the fly in the water is most important; specific fibres or colours, less so.

The Waddington-type shank is formed by bending a length of best-quality stainless steel wire (hard spring, 0.65mm diameter), such as is used in dental laboratories *(Fig 1).* This is a suitable gauge for the eye of the fly if you use a nylon cast of 8-15 lb b/s. Should you wish to fish a stronger cast, 0.7mm diameter wire might be preferable to reduce the chance of knot slip. (I like the four-turn half-blood knot, but only because the double-threaded and the tucked half-bloods invariably give me a nasty kink in the cast within a couple of inches of the fly, no matter how carefully I moisten and coax the nylon.)



The writer's "overdressed Waddington-type fly": it may not look up to much, but its action is deadly.

The hook is a short-shanked treble with short points and small barbs — a size 12 Martin out-point if you can get one. Most hooks are far coarser in the barb than is necessary to secure a good hold. Thread the treble with a scrap of old monofilament nylon line of 6-10 lb b/s *(Fig 2)* and slip it on to the bend of the wire shank *(Fig 3).* The monofil is incorporated in the dressing to hold the hook in perfect alignment with the shank. It does not contribute to the strength of the fly in any way.

These nylon alignment strands and the hook should now be adjusted. This can be a bit tricky at first and a few loose turns of thread as a temporary binding around the wire and nylon can help to stabilise them. The permanent whipping of tying thread should hold the alignment strands secure and close the wire shank so that the hook cannot slip off it *(Fig 4).*

I have found it useful to rotate the shank in its long-axis while it is held horizontally just to check the alignment of the hook and shank. I like to wind the excess monofil up the shank towards the head end. There it is tied down and a binding is prepared to accept the fibres of the main dressing *(Fig 5).* When you are happy with the result, varnish the tyings and the shank of the treble hook and allow them to dry.

A "dead" pool on the Halladale, but one which is tailor-made for Roland Field's technique.

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12lb	£2.25	£3.80	£7.70
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slow pools

You now have an articulating hook and shank that is self-aligning, unobtrusive and extremely strong. There is no leverage for a fish to use, as the wire shank can easily bend and spring back again. Best-quality wire should be used, so there is no worry about corrosion or weakness in the shank.

The nylon for aligning the hook with the shank can be any scrap, but I especially like a cheap, colourless line that develops a degree of shine when it is stretched. The turns wound up the wire shank closely resemble a fish's vertebral column, as the translucency of the nylon is similar to that of fish-bone. The spirals of tinsel on many large fly-bodies were in my opinion originally intended to represent this part of a fish's anatomy.

The dressing is simple. I can't be bothered with a fly that has a 'right way up'. I use a generous bunch of coarse bucktail fibres tied in at the head so that they project well beyond the treble hook. This is necessary to achieve the buoyancy to support the weight of the hook when the fly is hanging as if weightless in little or no current. Under-dressing will give you a fly that sinks tail-downwards and so spoils the illusion when you pause during the recovery. I don't think the colours matter very much. My choice is usually a blend of yellow and medium brown, but use your favourite if it gives you greater confidence.

I have had equally good results with fibres from dogs, calves and a human — me! I prefer a wavy fibre with a taper. This gives greater drag and so greater lift to the tail-end of the fly when it is being drawn through the water. It also creates more movement and, hopefully, interest, as the individual fibres work within the fly. The dressing should be generous and very long, but of an open texture so that the fly is 'see-through' when held up to the sky. I think this translucency helps to reduce the visual impact of such a large fly in good visibility. It also allows the fish to see the nylon 'backbone' of the fly.

The bucktail fibres are temporarily held around the shank by a few loose turns of wool or sewing thread while adjustments are made to their length and distribution. Further tighter turns are wound towards the head end as the dressing is sorted into place. This is done to hold all secure while the proper head-tying and whip-finish is being applied *(Fig 6)*. Excess fibres should be cut away, the temporary binding wool removed, and the head-tying varnished. I hate the 'black paint' so common on bought flies. It doesn't look right to me.

My ideal tying thread is colourless so that it does not show at all. This prevents any interruption of the streamlining of the whole, and this is why I dislike a blob of black or red paint on the head-tying thread. I commonly use fine, colourless nylon monofil, but sometimes a little polyurethane dope is needed for extra security in the head dressing. When this is done, even the eye of the shank and the cast knot can be concealed by leaving some of the dressing fibres in front of the head-tying. A way through for the cast can be carefully cleared with a hot needle *(Fig 7)*.

When dressing for the hidden-knot-and-eye style of fly, try to avoid spoiling the streamlined outline of the head. This can easily occur at the head-tying thread, especially if it is very tight and the foundation is not firm. A tapered build-up on the shank can help here *(Fig 5* again). Should the dressing lie too close to the shank, stroke all the fibres the wrong way towards the head end and put a few turns of tying thread against their bases. This should make them stand out much better.

Be bold and fish your new fly in the salmon pools even if your fellow-anglers start to mock. There can be no logic in their reasoning to belittle a two-inch fly while they have confidence in an even larger spinner. Your fly has vibrant and ethereal fascination within its dressing, and its movement through the water adds to the impression of life. Fish it with a long fly-rod, a fast-sinking line, and a level cast of 10 lb monofil nylon. My outfit is an old Bruce and Walker 'Expert' 14 ft fibre-glass rod and a Gladding DT9S Aquasink. This combination will put out and control a good long line.

Keep your rod-tip well up and you will find that the process of the line sinking not only takes your fly under the surface, but also starts to work it for you despite the lack of current. A few draws on the line and you will soon get the feel of what is needed to offer an interesting presentation of the fly at various speeds and depths. I like to treat the fly to a couple of drops of pilchard or herring oil every few hours. This, I hope, disguises any non-fishy smell that might deter a following salmon. It also gives me greater confidence.

This fly and technique works well for me. That it is widely effective can be demonstrated by the fact that it has lured salmon up to 21 lb from rivers as diverse as the Ribble, Hodder, Lune, Annan and Nith. I use it in various sizes and weights for all my flies.

I hope you have equally good results on your salmon pools when you show them the 'hang' fly. Use it in the still pools that other fly-fishers tend to avoid and you will be fishing over undisturbed salmon. □

Fig. 1

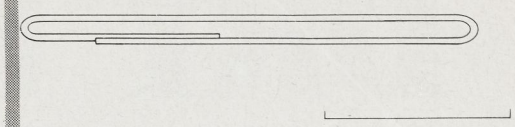


Fig. 2

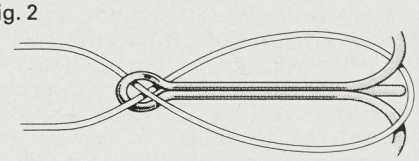


Fig. 3

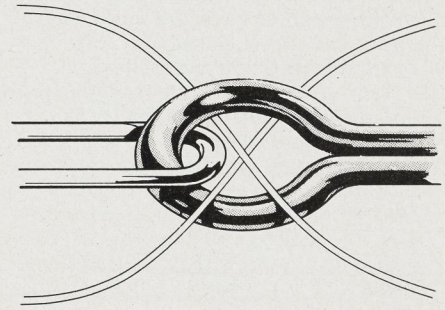


Fig. 4

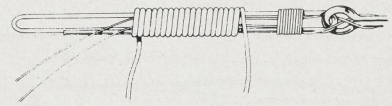


Fig. 5

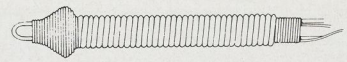


Fig. 6

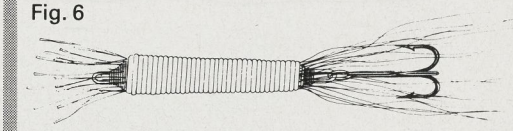
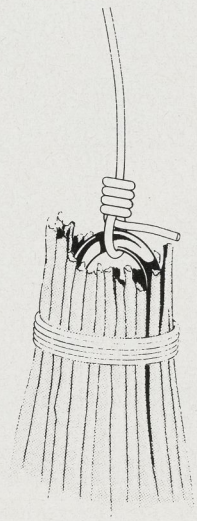


Fig. 7



DRY FOR HALF A

IT WAS IN 1930 when, aged 25, I caught my first trout on a dry fly. I remember it well. It was on a March Brown tied to gut of Victorian vintage joined to a silk line of 2lb breaking strain fished on a 12 ft three-piece rod of hollow bamboo with a lancewood top. To cover the fish I had to climb a tree, work my way along a stout overhanging branch and dibble the fly over the nose of the rising trout. This all took place on the Derbyshire Derwent at Rowsley, in the meadow behind what was then called The Station Hotel, but which is now renamed The Claret and Mallard.

That little incident fired my enthusiasm and started me off on the road to ruin. On returning home, I sent off to Hardy's for their catalogue, which in those days was a bound volume at least an inch think. Having read its contents from cover to cover, I acquired a 10 ft two-piece 'Pope' weighing 8¼ ozs, a 3⅝ in 'Perfect' reel and a No 3 'Kingfisher' silk line, all at a cost of less than £10.

With this outfit and some large dry Coachmen I frequented the Bedfordshire Ouse, which in those days ran clear and clean and contained shoals of chub up to 4 lb. I have a note in my first fishing diary that in July, 1930, I caught a chub of 4 lb 2 oz on a Coachman attached to a gut cast tapered to 4X. It took me 20 minutes to land that fish. My next success was a ¾ lb brown trout from the Colne at Fairford on a Baigent's Brown.

Ravensthorpe was my only local reservoir and I soon graduated to fish of 1 lb on a dry fly. In those days a trout of 1 lb was considered a big fish. Anything bigger was obtainable only from Blagdon, the Hampshire chalk-streams and the Irish loughs.

So off to Blagdon I went and fished for 21 hours non-stop, only to be broken by my first "monster". Night fishing was permitted in those days, and it was here that I first met the late Tommy Edwards.

For the next five years I went for a fortnight's dapping every May to Lough Derg on the Shannon, but soon found that I could catch more fish by dry-fly fishing with a Straddlebug type of Mayfly produced by Hardy's and called a Lough Arrow. It enabled me to cover more rising fish than I could with the restricted range of the dap.

Looking back now over more than 50 years, I still think that the most exciting fishing was casting a Spent Gnat to those Lough Derg monsters cruising along the surface, their dorsal and tail fins awash, sucking down the spent females in a flat calm of an evening. It was not long before I achieved my ambition to catch a 4 lb trout.

After the war I went with my Uncle for several seasons to the Teify at Tregaron, where I caught many small trout on Dai Lewis's Sunfly while my Uncle sat on his backside with "Roberts the timber", swimming three large lobworms around and catching the occasional salmon.

My Uncle died in 1954, and about that time our local vicar was offered the living of Brushford, near Dulverton, in Somerset. For the next 10 years I was a frequent visitor and fished the Exe, Little Exe, Barle and Haddeo with my 7ft wand, No 4 floating line and a Grey Duster, with one day each May with the late Cecil Terry on the Culm between Culmstock and Hemtock, where, with my brother-in-law, we caught more trout in a day than ever before.

It was in July, 1967, that I received my first invitation to fish the Bossington Water on the Test. Here it was my good fortune to meet a man who was later to become my greatest friend and benefactor. Through his generosity I must have had more than 250 days of superb dry-fly fishing on the most famous dry-fly river in the world.

In 1977 I had the distinction of catching the first American Brook Trout ever caught on that river. It went in at 11 am and I had it out at 2 pm.

Because of the heavy demand there must always be a certain amount of artificiality about fishing the Test. The fish are all stew-bred and the water is stocked

An otter. A rare moment remembered for ever.

Too many 'killers'?

ROBERT McHAFFIE narrows the choice of salmon flies

A FEW seasons ago I was faced with a problem common not just to fly-tyers but also to fly-fishermen: the old problem of too many flies in the box so that choosing the right one was somewhat difficult. We all fall into the trap of tying up every "killing" pattern we hear of, and after a few months tying in the "off" season our boxes are overflowing — at least mine usually is.

I therefore tried to evolve a type of salmon fly which was simple to dress, attractive to salmon, and, because of its style of dressing, two or three patterns in a couple of sizes covered all conditions. I should point out that all my salmon fishing is in high-acid peaty spate rivers in Northern Ireland. This type of peaty river is common elsewhere in the British Isles so the patterns which evolved should prove successful in many other areas.

I began by examining various types of flies that have proved popular over the years. I tried to get rid of their bad points and incorporate all their good points in one pattern.

The ordinary fully-dressed type of fly has gone out of favour mainly because it is both difficult to dress and expensive, although no one can deny that flies such as these are things of beauty and take the angler's fancy. This is a fairly important point because if an angler likes a fly he will fish with more confidence and is therefore nearer to success.

I then turned to hair-wing and shrimp-type flies. These are in my opinion are the most killing type of salmon fly available — or should I say 'preferred' as opposed to 'killing'. Their soft mobile wings and bushy hackles move freely in the current and provoke the fish's interest. This I considered to be the most important feature to incorporate in a fly.

Lastly was the success and simplicity of tube flies which in some cases are tied with no tails or bodies and only a sparse wing. They are effective I think because of the small trebles used which, once taken, in most cases have to be cut out. The only disadvantage I could see here was that tube and hook are separate; even when joined by a piece of rubber there is an ugly look about them.

The type of fly I settled for was a double Waddington shank with a very mobile wing and body hackle. On first sight I liked what I saw (confidence again). The fly was light and very active in the water. It was armed with a small treble and it was easy to tie.

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I suggest three patterns: a bright fly, a medium-toned fly, and a sombre dark fly in sizes 12½ mm with a size 12 treble, 15 mm with a size 10 treble, and 20 mm with a size 10 treble. This combination gave me three flies: one for low water, one for when it was up slightly, and one for big water, with colours to suit most conditions. Nine flies in all cover all conditions as far as I am concerned. They suit me, but readers should not just follow the tying instructions explicitly, but have fun coming up with their own colour combinations; they may find my sizes do not suit them and may wish to increase or decrease them.

Just in passing I would like to say something on the colours of salmon flies for peaty waters. The colours fiery brown, claret, purple with just a hint of hot orange, red, and yellow, seem to have proven their worth over the years and should not be neglected when tying this type of fly.

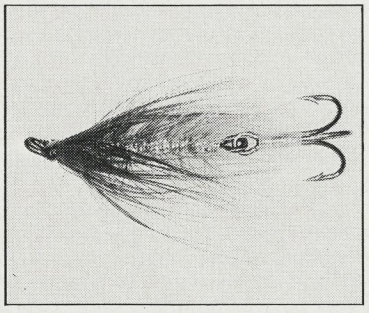
The new Waddington-type shanks have the great advantage of having the treble mounted so that if a hook breaks the treble can be removed. With this in mind the back section of the shank holding the treble should be treated as a separate fly, that is, tied with a silver tag or something similar over a good whipped under body well varnished to make it secure.

In the event of hook-breakage, simply remove this part of the fly, replace the damaged treble, and dress over again. I personally do not like the treble "hanging" at the rear so before tying commences I whip a strand of mono to the treble and then whip the other end to the shank under the tag at the rear. This holds the treble in line with the shank but allows it to bend whenever a fish is hooked.

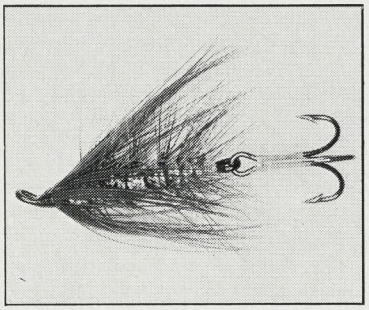
A word here on trebles: avoid cheap thin-wire trebles; they will let you down. You get what you pay for so insist on the best. There is nothing more annoying than thinking up a pattern, tying it, fishing all day before you hook a fish, and then losing it because a hook straightens or fails to penetrate because the hook-wire is so coarse that you would need to be a weightlifter to drive the hook home.

I am a great believer in the shrimp-type of fly and the following patterns are somewhat shrimp-like in their tying.

The body hackles tied palmer-fashion and the use of pheasant body-feathers for the wings give a lovely opening and closing effect, combined with the tinsel



THE WILKINSON
(Bright fly for fresh-run fish)
Body: Embossed silver tinsel.
Hackles: First half palmered blue cock, second half magenta.
Rib: Fine embossed silver.
Wing: Darkish golden pheasant red body feather, wound as hackle.



CLARET AND SILVER
(Medium-tone fly for fish that are 'holding up'.
Body: Embossed silver.
Hackles: First half dark claret, second half well-marked Greenwell.
Rib: Fine silver tinsel.
Wing: Very dark cock pheasant rump feather.

FIERY BROWN
(Dark-toned fly, especially good at the end of the season)
Body: Fiery brown seal's fur with a couple of turns of hot orange at rear.
Hackle: Light fiery brown.
Rib: Very broad embossed gold.
Wing: As claret and silver.

bodies to reflect the hackle colours when the hackles are closed over the body. The lightness of these flies makes them useful for both sunk and floating line techniques. They fish a few inches down with a floating line and ride well off the bottom on a sunk line.

In the smaller sizes the Wilkinson has proved very successful for sea-trout, holding more fish per offer than traditional-type dressings. Indeed while using a 9½ ft carbon rod, size 6 line, 4 lb cast, and a Waddington Wilkinson (size 12½ mm/14 treble) at dusk this past season, I hooked a salmon of 8½ lb. The pool I hooked him in was small and he proceeded to leave by the bottom end.

Unable to follow because of large boulders, I held my rod up and jammed the reel with my free hand. The tackle acted like a shock absorber, and I managed to turn him. Certainly a bit of luck was involved, but I jammed the reel three more times before I landed him. I had to remove the size 14 treble from behind the fish's tongue with artery forceps.

Of course innovative fly-tyers will no doubt find dozens of uses for this new type of Waddington shank — wiggle nymphs, bent nymphs, reservoir lures, and many more. What about a size 10 Waddington with a size 16 treble for a deer-hair sedge? Fish it wake-style with plenty of treble extending at the back for the slashers.

Richard Waddington did angling a great service when he made his ideas known. Anglers and fly-tyers who are unaware of his contributions should read his book on salmon fishing to learn for themselves the original thinking which went into the Waddington shank.

Grilse, fresh from the sea-cages

THE URGE to 'try something new' is strong in everyone. This and the angler's enthusiasm to catch fish have led to the rapid and successful growth of stocked fishings, especially in trout lochs and especially in large English water-supply reservoirs, the reports of which figure frequently in this journal.

And a good development it has proved, giving excellent sport to many more anglers and, hopefully, a source of revenue to some of the sponsors. The stocked fish have usually been rainbow trout, because of their rapid growth and acceptability to fishermen. Sizes have grown, too, over the years and fish of salmon-like dimensions are regularly reported. So why not stock with salmon?

That was the question which led up to what is thought to have been the first-ever successful stocking of a loch for angling with adult salmon, in Cardney Loch near Dunkeld in Perthshire.

First, could it be done? Would the salmon survive transport and the instantaneous change from salt to fresh water? Where would they come from? These questions were answered by the purchase of grilse from Messrs Marine Harvest and their transport from cages in a West of Scotland sea loch in a tank vehicle to Cardney. The fish were grilse, recognised as such by the cage operators and chosen simply because they would be ready in nature to move to fresh water, and would also be cheaper.

The operation involved lifting fish from the cages into a tank, tranquilising them mildly with oxygen, and providing refrigeration during a journey of some four hours. So it was with considerable relief that on June 12, 1981, the first batch of 25 arrived alive; better still, within half an hour of being ladled into the loch, the salmon could be seen to be well distributed and 'showing' in a manner guaranteed to excite any fisherman.

This promise was soon realised when, two days after the release, fly-fishing quickly produced a couple of fish, and lovely fish they were: bright, spotted, and extremely lively. So 'fly only' tickets were made available and fishing started.

The results did not come up to expectations — but do they ever? The fish were shy to take the fly, though they could often be seen following it and swirling, often when the fly was lifted from the water. But skilful anglers, particularly when there was a ripple on the water, met with some success.

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At the same time, in late June, the dry summer put salmon angling in the doldrums in many places as well as in Cardney Loch, and with a fall in catches fewer tickets were sold. Restocking continued successfully; it is indeed a tribute to Marine Harvest's transport technique, as well as to the hardiness of the salmon, that so far there has not been a single casualty or sign of disease among the salmon put into the loch, other than those knocked on the head on being landed!

Only occasional fish were landed during the hot, dry spell, so with the original intention of not leaving fish in the loch to over-winter, towards the end of September, the price of tickets was reduced and 'any legal means' substituted for 'fly-only'.

The effect was dramatic. Not so much because of the means used, since fish were caught on fly, worm, Toby, and minnow, but because of the September rain which enlivened the water and the fish everywhere. One ticket-holder having landed a couple of fish, enquired whether there was any limit and, on being told "No", he and his son eventually went home well pleased, with 11 salmon.

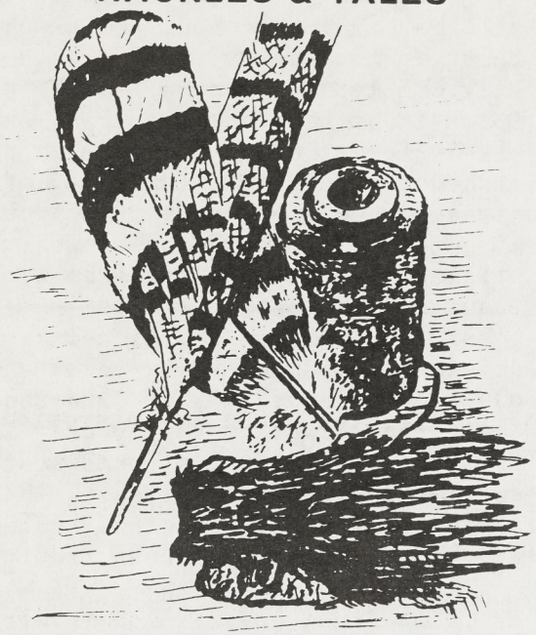
To try and improve catches during the drought, some immature fish were bought from the cages instead of stocking with grilse. These fish were still feeding and showing no grilse tendencies. Since no feeding was done in the loch, it was thought the fish might more readily take to a bait. In fact, this was not so, nor did they respond to pellets thrown into the loch — just as well from the poaching point of view! These immature fish were easily recognised later in the season as being leaner, longer, and more silvery — rather like the 'baggots' or unspawned fish seen in some rivers along with the kelts in spring. The grilse, on the other hand behaved just as naturally-run grilse do, became gradually less silver and much darker towards spawning time, and the cocks developed big kypes.

By the end of the season, more than half of the introduced fish had been caught by rod. Early in November the ditch-like stream running into the loch and which was choked with rushes was cleaned out. During this operation one salmon was found wriggling in the swollen and muddy water among the feet of the diggers, but after much splashing it escaped. Most of the remaining fish in the loch were however later caught and sold, so accounting for well over 90 per cent of the fish introduced: it is believed there are still a handful of survivors in the loch.

So the way is clear for the coming season when it is intended to start stocking in June and to continue at regular intervals through the year. 'Fly only' will be the rule; thigh waders are useful but not essential. It is hoped that this new venture will give good sport in 1982 at a modest price and it may be that salmon anglers having difficulty in taking fish from traditional salmon rivers will find the stocked salmon of Cardney Loch a worthy consolation prize.

I. A. Duncan Millar

HACKLES & TALES



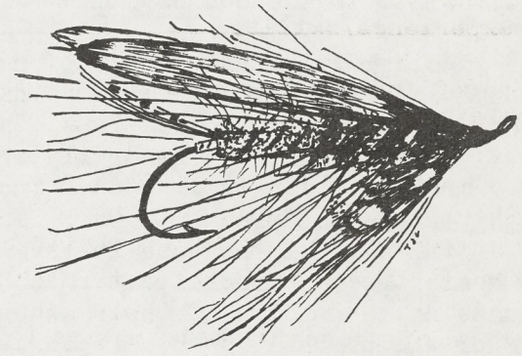
By Ted Godfrey

OF SPEY & DEE

When I began this column last year, I stated that I would make an effort to describe new methods of fly tying or at least describe some innovative flies. But this time around with the salmon fishing bug having bitten certain NCC members, it's appropriate to talk flies for the salmon. The old Spey and Dee flies such as the carron and akroyd (with the original Dee tie) are again gaining some popularity on Canadian rivers.

Everyone is looking for a fly that the fish haven't seen a hundred times over on the hard hit Canadian rivers. Some find success with salt water flies. When I visited the Catskill area a few months ago, Harry Darbee showed me some of his weapons that he uses. These are far larger than the everyday standard hairwings that everyone swears by, but they catch fish when the others are having poor sport. Some use very small nymphs and size 14 dry flies for a few hours then switch to 3/0 Jock Scotts and Durham Rangers. One simply does not know what will work on the heavily pounded waters. Some of the larger rivers have always been fished with the old classic fly with great success, but you can occasionally find a smart angler sneaking out a Lady Caroline on a river like the Matane to give the fish a break from the green butts and rusty rats.

The popularity of the Spey or Dee type fly has been somewhat hampered by the scarcity of suitable hackling material. As you may recall, these flies originally were tied with speycock tail hackles or with the recently embargoed heron hackle. These are long fibered feathers with that certain stiffness and breathing action which proved their worth on the Scottish rivers over a hundred years ago. I have discovered a suitable substitute for these feathers in cock pheasant rump feathers. Only two colors are necessary: The black which can be produced by dyeing the brown feathers and the grey which involves bleaching and dyeing slate grey. Use women's hair bleach for this. The original Akroyd from my copy of Kelson's The Salmon Fly is given below:



tag: gold twist (oval)
tail: topping & tippet
body: 1/2 yellow seal with yellow hackle; 1/2 black seal with black heron
ribs: gold tinsel (wider over the black seal)
throat: black heron
wings: two strips of cinnamon turkey with light tips
sides: jungle cock (short and drooping)

UPDATE ON VIRGINIA'S COLD WATER CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM

by Larry Mohn*

The classification of Virginia's cold water streams has progressed well into it's second year and several interesting observations have been made. Although the study will not be completed for another two years and much of the data has not yet been analyzed, it appears as though Virginia's cold water resource will have to be looked at in a new light.

The first observation and possibly the most important, is the number of cold water streams present in our state. Recent publications have listed 650 miles of trout water in Virginia (this includes all stocked trout water). A rough estimate, using the data we now have available, would put our wild trout resource at about 1500 stream miles with our total (including stocking) nearing 2000 miles. This total very closely approximates North Carolina, which has long been considered the top trout state in the Southeast.

Another important observation is growth rate and ultimate size of native brook trout. Many publications state that adult brook trout generally are 6 to 7 inches in length with an 8 inch fish being considered a trophy. This is definitely not the case in Virginia. In most streams, brook trout reach 6 inches by the middle of their second summer and probably do not reach sexual maturity until about 7 inches in length. In all streams that we have sampled to date, adult brook trout of 8 to 10 inches are common. In addition, 50% of our streams produce 10 to 12 inch trout and 10% produce trout in the 13 to 18 inch class. The old myth that native brook trout never get big and that streams are overpopulated with little fish is not true in this state.

A third point of interest is the distribution of brook trout as compared with rainbow and brown trout. Although rainbow trout have been stocked extensively, they have taken over only about 15% of our wild trout streams. Rainbow trout and brook trout do not coexist well and one usually completely outcompetes the other. Brown trout have not been used extensively for stocking but have established populations in about 5% of our streams. Unlike the rainbow trout, it appears as though the brown trout utilizes habitat not utilized by brook trout and therefore, coexistance is possible. This information may provide an excellent opportunity to expand our trout resource. Our data shows that brook trout do very poorly in lower sections of trout streams where species diversity increases. These areas remain excellent trout water and are good habitat for brown trout.

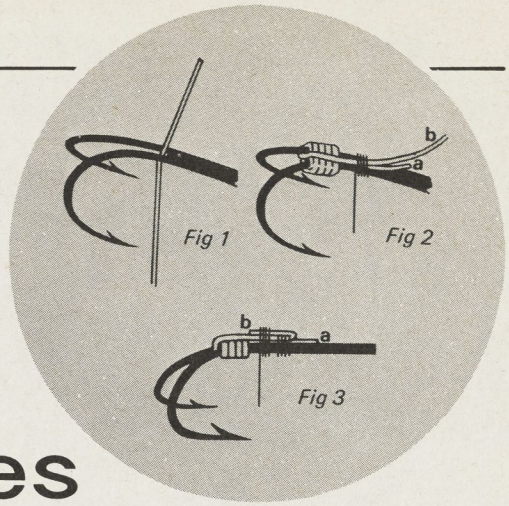
One final observation involves our hard water streams. Virginia is not noted for its high-productivity limestone streams, but the state does contain several such streams. Since most are located in the valleys and are on private land, public fishing has generally not been possible. With the cooperation of landowners and sportsmen's groups such as TU, we have managed to open a few such streams for experimentation. We hope to have considerable success in these studies and hope to create outstanding trout fisheries in harmony with landowner interests.

As dedicated trout fishermen, I know you are eager to promote regulation changes which are necessary for protection of your favorite natural resource. Data being collected now will make it possible to evaluate options such as size limits, creel limits, angling restrictions, and stocking restrictions. It is the Commission's desire to develop a trout management plan at the conclusion of our survey which is biologically sound and will guarantee the survival of our wild trout populations.

(This article was reprinted from the August, 1976 issue of the Shanandoah Angle)

*Larry Mohn is a Fisheries Biologist with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Tags, tinsels and doubling hackles



LESLIE LEWIS with his second article on the traditional salmon fly

TO THE FLY-DRESSER familiar with making only trout flies, the salmon fly can at first seem a formidable undertaking. But after a little practice, it will soon be realised that the traditional salmon fly, while more complex, is certainly not more difficult than the trout fly. In this series I am taking it for granted that the tyer has this experience with trout flies, and I am concentrating on those particular aspects of the salmon fly which give rise to difficulties. This month it is the turn of the body.

One common tying fault is that tags come adrift in use. Flat tinsel is regularly seen used, but this I do not favour. Flat metal tinsel tarnishes and is prone to snap. Lurex, although tarnish-free, is not durable.

For maximum durability, appearance and ease of handling, I favour round and oval tinsel. Thin round, number 20, for small low water and standard flies up to size 10, and thicker round, number 21, for flies in excess of 3/0. Number 14 and 15 oval is ideal for the middle range of flies.

I have little to add to what has been written on tying in the tag on a single iron. The double hook, however, requires greater detailing. To produce a tag which is to become a permanent feature, the following procedure has always served me well.

1. Pull the tinsel well into the space between the points. Leave about $\frac{1}{2}$ in standing proud *(Fig 1).*
2. Make four or five close, tight turns to the rear of the hook. Take the tinsel end between the points towards the eye, and bind A and B to hook-shank with the tying silk *(Fig 2).*
3. Double end B back to rear of hook and bind down. Trim off waste *(Fig 3).*

When tagging a single iron, leave $\frac{1}{4}$ in of tinsel protruding when starting and on completion. When the butt and tail is added, this will automatically bind down more tightly the tag ends without adding to the turns of silk used, so avoiding bulk.

If the tyer develops the habit of making the following operation complete the former throughout the salmon fly dressing, the result has got to be neat and durable.

For the butt most pattern books recommend ostrich herl, but after years of practical fishing, I must agree with J. C. Arseneault, of Canada, that ostrich is just not durable enough. A little wool spun on to the silk and wound in place is far more satisfactory *(Figs 4 and 5, overleaf).*

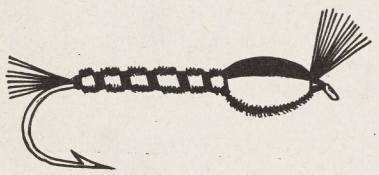
For tinsel-bodied flies — Night Hawk and Silver Doctor, for example — sheet plastic Lurex is excellent. It never tarnishes and provided it is always over-tied with oval tinsel, it is as durable as metal tinsels and easier to use. To achieve a perfect, flat, uniform body, tie in at the head end, wind

Modern fly-dressings

THE JUMBO PUPA

WHEN ONE is fishing from a boat in comparatively calm conditions on large, rich reservoirs, it is not uncommon to find a few large dark insects hovering close by. They have their abdomens curved in the form characteristic of chironomids, but they are far larger than any of the midges one sees on the water. They are also extremely agile, and I have never been able to catch one, nor have I found one inside a trout.

What I have found in trout is a very large and striking creature which I suspect is the pupa of the airborne animal described above.



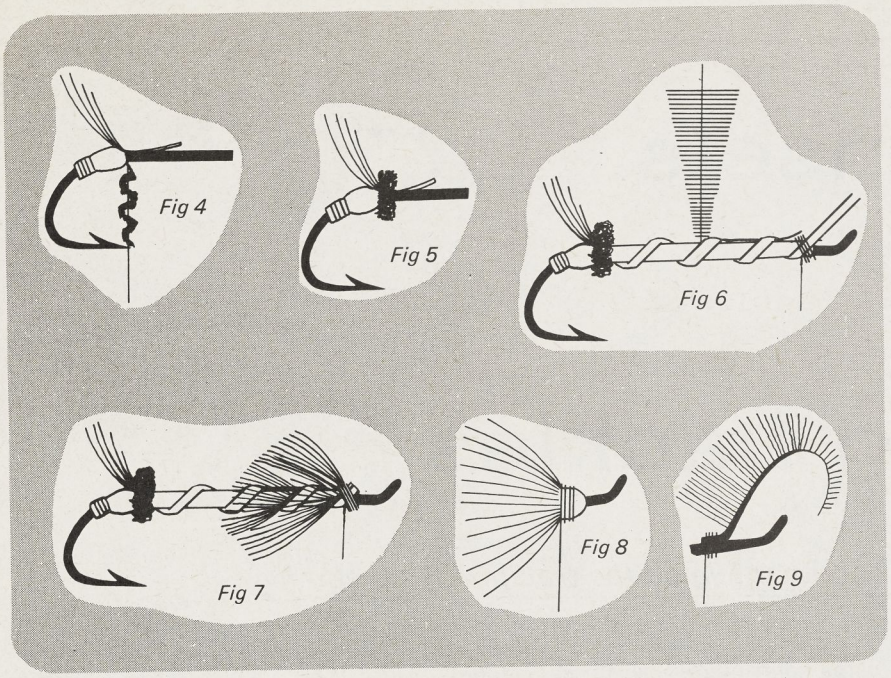
Some of these pupae were still alive, and I do not think their colours had been affected. They had dark olive-brown thoraces, medium olive abdomens with crimson segmentation, and the usual whitish appendages at head and tail.

An imitation which I tied has been successful. I call it the Jumbo Pupa, and the dressing is as follows:

Hook: No 8 long-shank. **Abdomen:** Green-olive feather-fibre ribbed with crimson floss. **Thorax and wing-cases:** Dark brown-olive feather-fibre. **Tail and head appendages:** White cock hackle fibres, clipped to length.

The crimson floss should be soaked in dilute cellulose varnish before tying in, to prevent its dye spreading to the feather-fibre when the fly has been wetted.

Richard Walker



to the butt and return to the head. The usual problems which bedevil the tyer, cut silk, uneven body and tarnishing, inherent with flat metal tinsels will be avoided.

Except to make one point, I will not elaborate on floss bodies, which have been well enough covered by other writers. When the tyer is dressing a fly larger than about size two, requiring a doubled body hackle, a pinch of wool or seal's fur added to the front half of the body (the same colour as the floss) will work wonders in enhancing the appearance of the finished fly.

The most suitable body hackle is a henny-cock. There are many ways of doubling the body hackle. All I can do is to outline what I consider the easiest method and let the reader draw his own conclusions.

1 Rib the body with tight, even turns of tinsel. When doing so, insert the hackle by its tip, leaving sufficient tip to be bound down a couple of turns by the tinsel. Do not trim off the tinsel *(Fig 6).*

2 Hold the hackle stalk with the right hand. With the forefinger and thumb, well-moistened with saliva, brush the hackle fibres to the rear. Wind the hackle to the eye, following the line of the tinsel. Bind down and trim off waste stalk and tinsel. Should the hackle break part way through the operation, by leaving the tinsel untrimmed until the end, it is possible to untie it and start again *(Fig 7).* With a little practice this method should be found easy and efficient.

Now the throat hackle. When tying middle- and large-size flies, a full hackle can be wound in the usual way, reasonably close to the eye, pulled back and over-tied *(Fig 8).* Small flies present more of a problem, as with some hackles bulk is created, gallena being a prime example. The way with this hackle is to strip off the fibres from the side which touches the hook-shank and tie in a little farther from the eye. Apart from bulking the head, the danger of over-hackling is also averted *(Fig 9).*

A final thought about those very, very small golden pheasant crest feathers found on the side of the head. Don't throw them away. They make first rate veiling feathers for Jock Scott.

Fine and dry

I SUPPOSE I must live just about in the geographical centre of some of the best reservoir fishing in this country. Yet I because of my preference for river fishing with a dry fly, I do not take full advantage of it.

But I have to travel more than 100 miles to find indigenous trout fishing in running water, so there are times when I fill in the gaps by experimenting with my floating fly on local still-waters. I have a modicum of success, but never feel quite so confident of results as I do when on a river, but I am always surprised to find how few fishermen try the floating fly.

It is unprofitable and boring to fish on top when the fish are feeding on the bottom, so when there is no general surface activity I confine my efforts to places where the bottom is near the top, which is another way of saying that I fish in shallow water.

I find it is possible to induce fish to rise from a depth of about 4 ft if the water is clear, and I sometimes do better by adopting these tactics than when a really big rise occurs to some surface food. On these occasions the fish become extraordinarily selective, and I imagine that a fish rising every five seconds to a particular insect must be better able to detect an artificial one, and the results, or lack of them, can be most frustrating.

☆ ☆ ☆

Normally I use only my Hope, which is tied with two red and one badger cock hackles, the first red hackle being tied palmerwise down the shank and held down with fine gold wire ribbing with the other two tied in front in the normal way. This fly will float all day and stand up to an occasional twitch, and it rides high on the surface film so that the fish can see only a blurred outline.

I tie up a minute Parachute Grey Duster for use when fish start smutting on caenis, and it works; but one has to cast it almost into the fish's mouth because of the thousands of naturals all around. It is not a good hooker on account of the size of the hook, but it is great fun and most exciting.

I am sure I do not catch as many fish as the expert wet-fly man, but I have graduated to the stage where my enjoyment of fishing is not always related to the size of my catch. I derive the greatest pleasure from that moment of anticipation when I succeed in dropping my fly just in front of a rising fish, and I feel a sense of accomplishment if a take ensues. The actual hooking, playing and landing become of secondary importance, particularly since I prefer eggs and bacon for breakfast.

Stanley Woodrow

LESLIE LEWIS with the last of a series of three articles on the traditional salmon fly

Jock Scott

Making light of wings

And a guide to feather type and quantity for varying hook sizes

THIS MONTH I am going to try to break through the mystery surrounding the preparation of married-wing salmon flies. To simplify matters I shall confine myself to the winging of the Jock Scott. Adapting the recommendations to other traditional patterns should not be difficult. I am assuming the tyer knows the principal of 'locking' together different bird-wing fibres and 'humping' to form the wing.

Jock Scott wings

Under wing: Black/white tip turkey tail. Peacock sword.

Married Wings: Peacock; goose, dyed red, yellow, blue; bustard; florican bustard; golden pheasant centre tail.

Outer wing sheath: Barred teal; bronze mallard.

Those who have previously been involved with tying salmon flies over the size range from 12 to 10/0 will know the above information, typical of most pattern books, is not explicit enough. Turkey tails, for example, are fine for flies larger than 1/0, but use them on size 10 hooks and they will be too stiff. While accepting that pattern guidebooks are a valuable source for information, I suggest the tyer accepts that they are intended only as guides, nothing more.

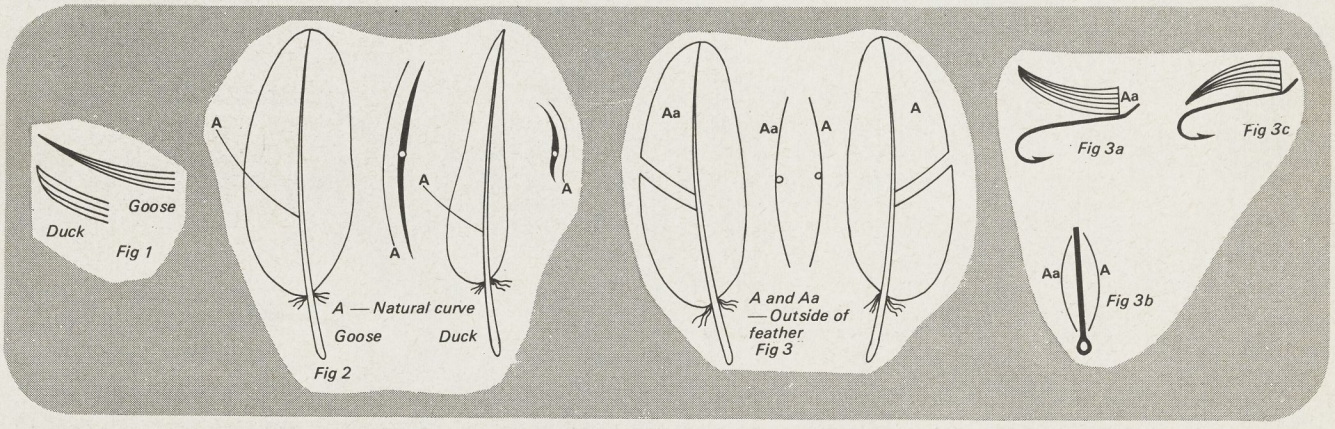
No other fly has such a wide range of sizes as the salmon fly, and nowhere is it more important to take this into account than when dressing the fully-dressed traditional. To tie over the whole range it is necessary to break the sizes into manageable feather groups. Consideration must be given to both types of feather used and the amount of dressing incorporated. It would be quite unreasonable to expect a tyer to incorporate on a size 10 hook, all the feathers expected on a 1/0 iron. The chart (*overleaf*) should serve as a useful guide to the quantity and type of feathers most suitable over the range.

The object of the 'married' wing exercise is: **(a)** to make wing fibres of various colours and textures form one composite wing; **(b)** to lock the fibres together in a manner which prevents the wing splitting when tied into the head; and **(c)** to exploit the natural curve of the feather to tie in a wing which envelops the body.

The characters of dyed goose and duck are very different, and because of this it is necessary to divide the chart into two groups and deal with each separately. Further reference to small flies will be those up to size 6, large flies from size 4. The reader should take for granted, that suggestions made in using these feathers will apply equally to the other feathers required.

When 'locking' the fibres together, the dresser should remember that all the different fibres must be taken from the same side of the birds. That is to form the nearside wing, all fibres must come from the right; for the farside wing they must all come from the left. If the sides are mixed they will not marry. If you have tried to put a left-hand threaded nut on a right-hand threaded bolt, you will know what I mean well enough.

I have a preference for duck on



Pattern book dressing for Jock Scott in hook sizes	Feathers and substitutes recommended				
	12 to 10	8 to 6	4 to 1	1/0 to 4/0	5/0 to 10/0
Under wing					
Black/white tip turkey tail	*Turkey rump*			*Turkey tails*	
Peacock swords	*Nil*	*As pattern throughout*			
Married wings					
Peacock quills	*Grey turkey quills*			*Grey mottled turkey tails*	
Goose dyed red, yellow, blue	*White duck quill dyed*		*Goose shoulder*		*White turkey tails*
Bustard	*Nil*	*Oak turkey quills*		*Brown mottled turkey tails*	
Florican bustard	*Small*			*Medium*	*Large*
Golden pheasant centre tail	*Nil*	*Brown speckled hen quills*	*As pattern*		
Outer wing					
Barred teal	*As pattern throughout*				
Bronze mallard	*Small*		*Medium*		*Large*

On the larger sizes, I add between the married and outer wing, when available, a little Amherst tail to give more sparkle to the finished fly.

small flies because it envelops the body better than goose and the fibre tips are not so hair-thin *(Fig 1).* The latter point is not important when making large wings, but vital on a small scale. It is only when the top of a goose feather is reached that the fibres take on the character of duck, but then they tend to be too stiff.

The art of winging is to exploit the two natural curves found in all feathers. Hold the feather by the base, with the outside (woolly fibre side) facing you and it will be seen the curves on goose are very different to those of the duck *(Fig 2).* For this reason the two have to be given different consideration.

Large flies: With the outside of the feathers facing the tyer, remove a few fibres from the left side of each feather required for the pattern. Marry together to form one composite near-side wing. For the farside wing repeat the process, this time taking the fibres from the right of each feather *(Fig 3).*

Viewed from the side the natural curve will flow upwards, and should appear as in *Fig 3a.* Marrying the fibres to an upward curve prevents the wing splitting. Viewed from above the natural curves will produce the all-important enveloping effect *(Fig 3b).* After tying in the black/white turkey and peacock sword, all that remains is to 'hump' the married wings and tie in *(Fig 3c).*

Small flies: If the same technique were used for duck, it can be seen from the diagram that a split-wing dry trout effect would result *(Fig 4).* To overcome this, it is necessary to turn all the feathers upside down and then follow the marrying procedure for large flies. Turning the feathers will completely correct the duck curves and remove the need for humping *(Fig 5).* Using the feathers suggested, the tyer should not have any trouble at this small scale with splitting wings.

It should be noted that, with this method, the finished tied-in wings will be displaying the inner, duller face of the feather to the outside. This could be a point of criticism, but I feel the advantages offered far outway this disadvantage. Remember also that barred teal and bronze mallard have still to be added.

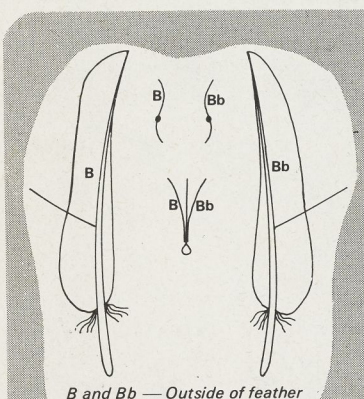
Outer sheath: Barred teal and bronze mallard. Incorporating these two feathers is not difficult and needs little elaboration. For large flies the dresser will not have any problems if he marries a little of the two feathers with an upward curve as outlined in *Fig 3a.* The actual tying in has been covered in my first article, dealing with the head.

For small flies, I find the easiest way is to place a little teal either side of the married wings, again as in *Fig 3a.* Follow this by folding a piece of bronze mallard, taken from one feather only, and tie in over the roof of the married wings *(Fig 6).* Add cheek feathers and topping to complete the fly.

Finally, with Durham Ranger and Lady Amherst-type flies, incorporating full feathers you should: **(1)** Tie in the first pair of feathers back-to-back, positioning with two turns of tying silk only. *(Fig 7);* **(2)** position the second pair of feathers and holding all four feathers, remove silk and re-tie all feathers together *(Fig 8);* and **(3)** If necessary, repeat the operation for a third pair of feathers. For flies up to 1/0 two pairs is usually considered sufficient.

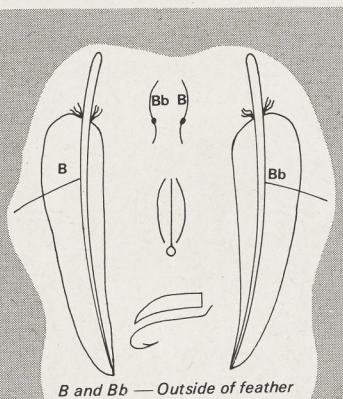
Failure to keep the feather stalk ends together will result in a most untidy looking fly.

☐ *Mr Lewis's two previous articles appeared in the September and October issues. — Ed.*



B and Bb — Outside of feather

Fig 4



B and Bb — Outside of feather

Fig 5

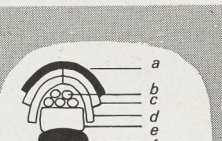


Fig 6

a — Bronze mallard
b — Peacock swords
c — Barred teal
d — Married wings
e — Black/white turkey
f — Hook

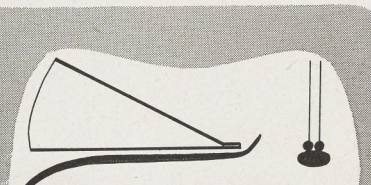


Fig 7 *End view*

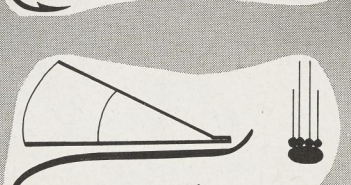


Fig 8

Fly Lines

Conducted by Ted Niemeyer

Smaller, Neater Salmon-Fly Heads

The bulk of materials used in salmon flies seems to make a very bulky head with a steep taper. This invariably makes my whip-finish slide toward the eye. Is there any way to make a steeply tapered head without sacrificing the whip-finish?

RICHARD FRANK
Brookline, Mass.

I can really get carried away with the subject of heads on flies, but I will confine my answer to your specific inquiry.

Tearing down salmon flies tied by the "Old Masters" reveals some strange goings-on. The fat, steeply tapered heads endorsed by many salmon-fly tiers may actually be a cover-up for their tying mistakes. Stripping their flies often reveals an improperly tied fly. I can best describe how they produce this mess by saying that they get the bulk of materials near the eye, bind them down tightly, apply a whip-finish, and then they cut the excess stub ends off at a sharp angle. Then they apply a heavy head cement that must look like tar. This is allowed to cover the head and form a ball when the fly is hung up to dry. It covers all the mess underneath.

If you will try applying each material and trimming each in sequence, well back from the hook eye, you should end up with only three small stubs to whip over: two jungle cock and one golden pheasant crest. The head will be very small indeed. I think you will like what you see.

Modifying Wing Burners

I obtained a set of Renzetti wing burners from Orvis such as you wrote about in the article, "Burning Wings," in the Winter 1978 issue of FLY FISHERMAN. I'm having a ball with them. I made one simple modification on the tweezers that insures making exact duplicates *every* time.

With a square, establish the center line through the tip of the tweezers. Drill a 1/16" hole through both legs of tweezers, 3/4" down from tip. This modification allows you to center the tip of the quill at the tip of the tweezer and also at the hole.

MELVIN G. ROSS
Park Ridge, Ill.

A superb solution to holding the stem of the feather in position when burning! I am doing a great deal of experimenting with burning tools of all shapes and sizes with some very exciting results. Previously impossible techniques are at least probable now.

The Jenny Lind

Perhaps you can be of some help to me. As I was reading the book, *Complete Fly Fisherman*, mention is made of a fly by the name of the Jenny Lind. However, no description of it is given. Would you be able to describe the fly?

PAUL J. HENNIG
Yonkers, N. Y.

One of the books you should consider obtaining is Ray Bergman's Trout. *You may find the information contained in this work invaluable for the rest of your tying and fishing lifetime. Tucked among its pages is a description of the Jenny Lind. It is a beautiful fly and one I especially like. Here is the description:*

TAIL: *Light purple dyed duck or swan.*

BODY: *Yellow, floss preferred.*

RIB: *Gold (I use fine oval).*

HACKLE: *Scarlet.*

WING: *Light purple dyed duck or swan with a scarlet stripe midwing.*

ends of the dowels. If you have small drill bits (I obtained some from a dentist) drill a small hole at each end of the dowels, coat the nails with soap and tap in. Soap helps to prevent splitting. With two dowels and four different-size nail heads you will be able to paint eyes on a variety of fly sizes.

A smooth base on the head is a must. The consistency of the paint for the eyes is important. It should drip freely when a small stick is dipped in and held above the bottle.

Using a small stick or a narrow strip of cardboard, stir the paint and lift the stick or cardboard to expose the paint on it. Touch the paint on the stick with the nail you have determined as being the correct size. Hold the fly by supporting your left hand on the table if you are right-handed. The dowel is held as if you were writing with it. Simply touch the head with the nail and lift the nail off squarely, but *don't press*. When dry, use a smaller nail for the pupil. I use large corks in which I stick the flies until dry.

The stick used for transferring paint is cleaned as soon as you are finished using it. If you use cardboard, you can simply throw it away.

Practice on a smooth surface, such as a piece of scrap wood or cardboard, to help develop your proficiency with this technique.

LESLIE LEWIS with the first

of a series of three articles on . . .

Jock Scott

The traditional salmon fly

Underwings, married wings, and neat heads that really hold

MUST WE SAY farewell to the fully-dressed salmon fly? Is it inevitable that Jock Scott, Dusty Miller, our favourites the Doctors and the like are to be no more than a part of piscatorial history? Are they destined to be found only in museum glass-cases with the birds from which they originated for company? Alas, the reply must be yes. With rising prices, ever-decreasing tyers of this specialist art, and the increasing shortage of exotic feathers the fully-dressed traditional salmon fly is as doomed as the Dodo.

To acquire the experience necessary to produce a quality fully-dressed salmon fly takes years of practise and painstaking attention to detail, and what are the professional tyer's rewards for his efforts? If he retails direct, which most do not, 35p to 45p, depending on size, is considered good remuneration. For most it is less, much less. Take out VAT and expensive material costs, and it is little wonder the traditional salmon fly dresser is a dying breed.

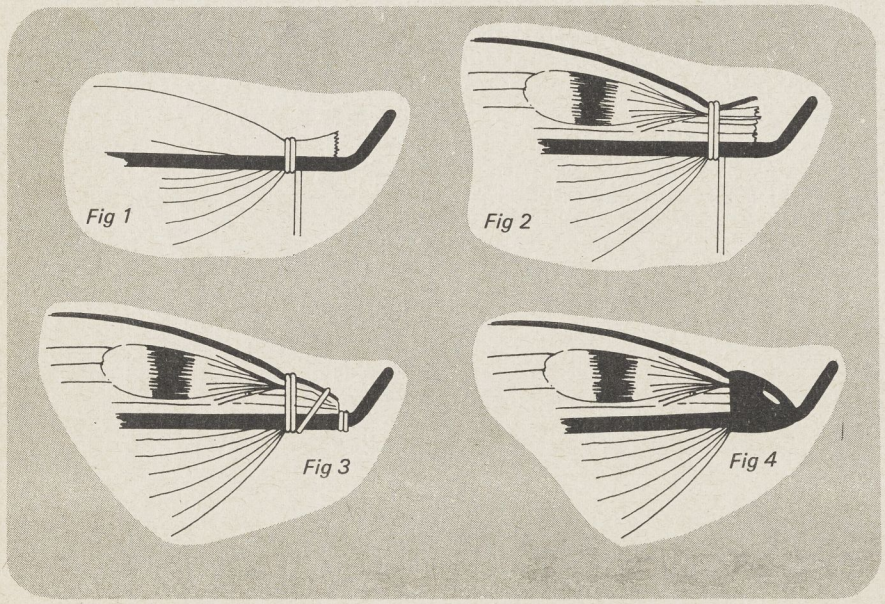
If the tyer is hard to find, what of the materials? In recent years we have seen the decline of many feathers considered essential to preserve the patterns. Jungle cock, swan, bustard are all protected birds, and rightly so. Toucan breast feathers are but a vague memory. Macaw tails, very nice if you can get them. And the future? Brown turkey tails are increasingly difficult to obtain. Peacock wing quills, gallena tails, Florican bustard wing quills? well, perhaps today, but tomorrow I think not. The list grows longer with each passing year.

But why, you may ask, be concerned with the traditional fully-dressed fly? It is expensive, not easy to buy and does not catch more fish than the simple hairwing. It may even be the reason for a poorer catch. Certainly many an angler would have left the water somewhat lighter if it had not been for a simple Stoat's Tail or Hairy Mary. But it is important to preserve the traditional fly, and we must make every effort to do so, if for no other reason than to preserve part of our angling heritage.

Indeed, that there is widespread interest in the art of tying salmon flies is evident from the many samples I receive each year for criticism. It is also evident that there are aspects of the art that need fuller explanation than has hitherto been put into print. And to clear up some of the problems that arise is my object in this series.

Pattern books refer loosely to married strips of dyed goose or duck for wings. Which, you may ask, should I use, and when and why? Should the tag be flat or round tinsel, and why? If three pairs of wings, a golden pheasant topping, cheeks of jungle cock and kingfisher are all to be tied in at the head, how is it possible to produce that small, neat head so typical of the work of the professional? These are just a few of the recurring questions which I am asked which I shall be attempting to answer.

The underlying fear of the conscientious fly-tyer, and one which is by no means confined to the beginner, is that of having the wings and dressings fall apart in casting, and it is this which is responsible for the oversized heads commonly seen. The tyer's solution to the problem is to use a thick Naples tying silk recommended for salmon flies and make tight turn after tight turn in each wing-fixing opera-



tion. With up to three pairs of wings to be secured, plus toppings and cheeks, the result is usually a very ugly and overlarge head. This is quite unnecessary, and unfortunately the end result may produce a fly which is no more secure than those of previous experiences.

Mr John Veniard has said many times that one tight turn of silk is worth any number of loose ones. I would like to go one stage further and say that in the salmon-fly winging operations two tight turns are preferable to three or four. If the dresser carefully follows the diagrams and instructions, he should have no further difficulties with large heads or wings falling away. The tying silk is used only to hold the feathers in position, not finally to secure them. Gossamer silk is more satisfactory for flies up to size 1/0 and has the added advantage over Naples in bulk reduction. I will take it for granted the tyer will assume the turns of silk in the following instructions should be tight and well placed. So, step by step, this is how you do it:

Tie in the underwing of turkey, golden pheasant, or whatever the pattern requires in the usual way, counting each turn of silk. Snip off the waste and remove all turns of silk except two. These will be quite sufficient to hold the feathers in position. The underwing should appear as in **Fig. 1.**

Repeat the operation with the 'married' wings. Ensure these wings go over and round the underwing. To this stage only a total of four turns of silk need have been used to hold both pairs of wings in place.

Marry a little teal with bronze mallard, place in nearside position and tie in with one silk turn only. Let the weight of a bobbin holder or hackle pliers on the silk give the tension to hold the feather in position.

Repeat this for the far-side sheath, again making sufficient counted turns of silk to hold the feathers in position during the waste-trimming operations. Remove all turns but one. The three pairs of wings will now be in position and held in place with only six turns of silk.

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I assume for this example that the pattern requires cheeks, and that the tyer is using in addition to kingfisher some old stock jungle cock or substitute. Prepare the two feathers in the usual way and then glue the kingfisher to the jungle cock with saliva, a wonderful aid freely available to the salmon-fly dresser. If this technique is adopted, the importance of purchasing materials from a reputable supplier cannot be over-emphasised. (The habit of licking feathers in fly-tying may be frowned upon-on-grounds of hygiene, but apart from swallowing the occasional fibre, which causes a momentary cough and appropriate oath, I am still fit and healthy.)

Place the combined feather on the nearside of the wings and position in with one turn of silk only. Repeat the process for the far-side wing.

Prepare the roof topping and position it with one turn of silk. All wing root fibres should be well-exposed and appear as **Fig. 2.**

With a dubbing needle work into the root a liberal amount of thin Cellire varnish. Make a further turn of silk over the root ends to pull them down into a neat head shape. Bring silk in front of the fibre root ends, as near as possible to the eye. Whip finish on the hook-shank only. The head should appear as **Fig. 3.** A maximum of 10 silk turns only need have been used.

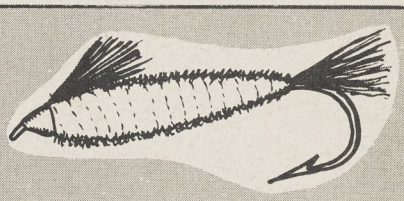
It is important at this stage to leave the head for not less than two hours for the Cellire varnish to harden. After a couple of hours, although hard, the head will still be pliable enough to be moulded into shape. After moulding apply a second coat of varnish appropriate in colour to the pattern tied.

When dry (and although Cellire is touch dry very quickly, it takes up to 24 hours to go rock hard), give a final coat of clear, heavy cement. The result **(Fig. 4)** should be a small, neat head which holds in the feathers for all time and will be admired by the salmon fly connoisseur.

☐ *Next month, the body.*

Modern fly-dressings

THE LEADED D.F. DOLL



TWO OR THREE seasons ago, Bob Church introduced a fly which he called the Baby Doll. It consisted of a fat body made of daylight-fluorescent white wool, with the same material tied in to form a back and tail.

The Baby Doll has proved very successful; but I could never quite see the purpose of the back, which is the same colour as the body. I therefore experimented with a simpler dressing, in which the back was omitted. This seemed every bit as attractive to trout. Later, I introduced some lead to increase the sinking rate and to cause the thing to fish hook-point up, which goes a long way towards preventing the hook catching bottom, or snags, when fished deep. This version has been remarkably successful.

This is how it is made.

Just behind the eye of a No 6 or No 8 long-shank hook, tie in a length of daylight-fluorescent white wool with white tying silk, having varnished the hook-shank with 'Vycoat' to prevent iron stain.

Let the short end of the wool lie along the shank, projecting beyond the bend. Over this, wind the longer end of the wool in close, tight turns. Having reached the beginning of the bend, wind the wool back over itself. Continue winding back and forth, keeping the turns very close towards the middle of the fish-shaped body you are building up, but not so close at the ends; this will give a nice cigar-shape.

When you see that the point has been reached where only one more layer of wool is required, take three strips of wine-bottle lead foil, each a little wider than the thickness of the body, and lay them lengthwise along the top of the body, binding them down firmly with the final layer of white wool, which should finish just behind the eye, where the white tying silk secures it.

Then tie in above the body a false hackle of either crimson or orange dyed cock hackle, and finish the head. This hackle should be very short. Varnish the head, and clip the tail to length.

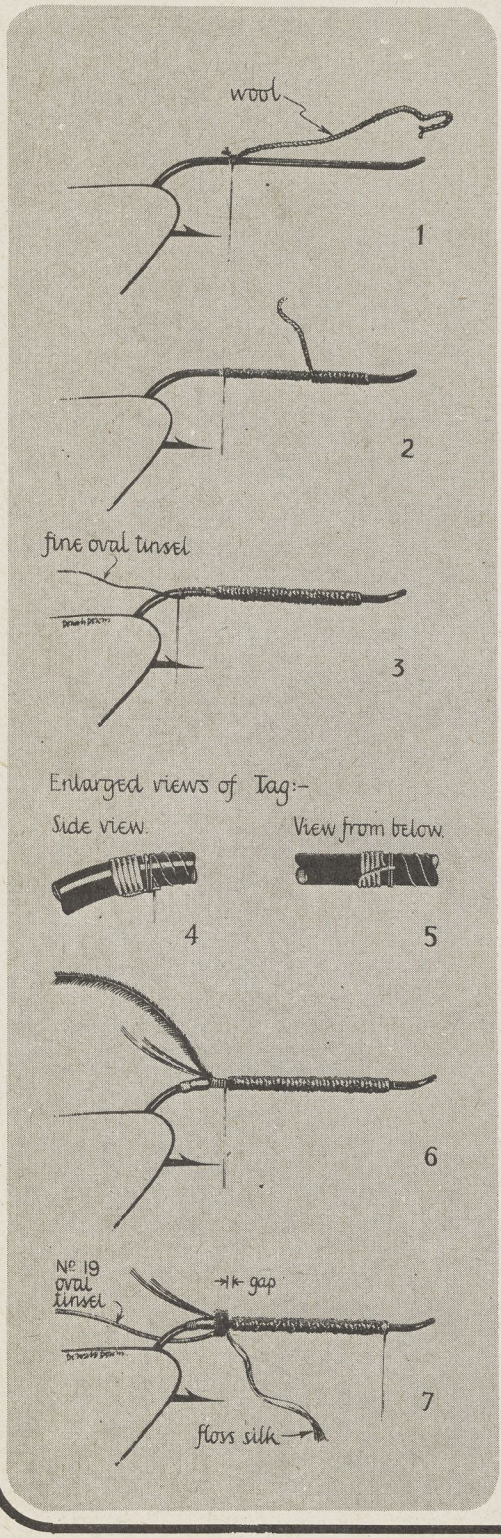
Then take a piece of fine glass-paper and rub the body all over, to fluff up the wool and make it look velvety. This is important, and gives most of the fluorescent effect.

This fly can be fished very slowly, or even allowed to lie inert on the bottom, from which trout frequently pick it up.

Richard Walker

NEW WAYS WITH SALMON

JOHN VENIARD and DONALD DOWNS return with some ideas that can be appli



WHEN THE ORIGINAL Fly-Tyers' Forum series came to an end in 1973, I promised that Donald Downs and I would resume when circumstances allowed. Circumstances do now allow, and paradoxically some of the other work which has prevented us resuming earlier is responsible for this and next months' articles.

Donald and I were in fact caught up in the present trend to re-introduce classic angling books of the past when we were asked to contribute a new section to Dr T. E. Pryce Tannatt's *How to Dress Salmon Flies.* We had the good fortune to enlist the help to Mr Freddie Riley, who has gone to great lengths to produce exotic salmon flies equal to any made in the past and has also devised some new tying techniques which I am sure will be of interest to readers of *Trout and Salmon.*

This enthusiasm for the angling classics is a healthy sign. Not only does it give the present generation of young anglers the chance to study the works of those who laid the foundations of modern fly-fishing, but it gives them also the opportunity to see for themselves the painstaking efforts that went into their experiments and observations.

Many young anglers today probably think that most of the flies they use, and the techniques of their presentation, are the result of contemporary thought. This is far from always the case. The reservoir lures they can cast such great distances today had their beginnings in the Demons and Terrors in use at the turn of the century. And it was G. E. M. Skues, in 1910, who first saw the potential of fishing the nymph, that most popular of modern flies. Those publishers who are making possible this return to the origins of our sport deserve our thanks.

One of the biggest changes that has taken place in fly-fishing is that of the angler's approach to the artificial fly. This has been brought about by the change in his habits, in that he now considers that the fly he ties himself must be superior to the shop-bought product. This does not mean that the amateur ties a better fly than the professional fly-tyer and, fortunately, many professional tyers are also expert anglers, so flies can still be bought with confidence), but it is my considered opinion that the fly has now progressed from being usually a shop-bought item of tackle to being an expression of an individual angler's interpretation of a dressing which will take fish, plus an essential part of his angling pleasure. This aspect of the fly-tying craft was not really appreciated, I feel, when Pryce-Tannatt produced his book, although the obvious beauty of the flies in the illustrations must have done much to foster interest.

I have referred to fly-tying as a 'craft' rather than as an 'art', which is its customary description. I do this deliberately because I know that fly-tying can be practised by anyone who is interested enough, whereas an artist has a special gift. That the craft can be transformed into an art form is also true, however, and I have been fortunate enough to have seen many examples where this has been the case.

There is one instance where Pryce-Tannatt makes a contribution to fostering pride in the appearance of one's flies, and that is in the section devoted to giving form and symmetry to one's efforts. This certainly prompted me to make my own flies as attractive as possible, and resulted in my tying flies that I thought were worth looking at, as well as being used to catch fish — which is where we get back to Freddie Riley . . .

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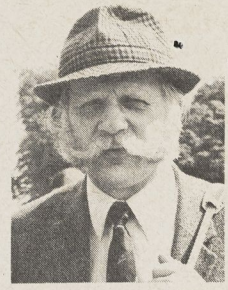
One of the features Freddie has concentrated on — in fact the main feature — is the extreme neatness and style of his flies, and nowhere is this more evident than in the bodies. So let me concentrate on this aspect of salmon fly-tying, up to the stage where the throat hackle has been tied in and wound, and the fly is ready to take its wings.

The first stage in all his patterns is the underbody of wool. This is tied in as Fig 1, wound to the point where the body will be finished off,

ON FLIES

applied also to long-shanked trout lures

John Veniard



Donald Downs

and then back again in the manner shown in Fig 2. Each wind is a touching turn, which is essential if real symmetry is to be achieved. The turns of wool are finished at the position shown in Fig 3, immediately above the point of the hook. The tying silk is then taken to the position shown in Fig 3, and fine oval tinsel tied in for the tag.

The winding of the tag is shown in Figs 4 and 5, and the object of this method is to have the turns of tinsel wound without having either tying silk or the ends of the tinsel underneath them. This results in a flat tag, with absolutely no distortion.

The silk for the rest of the tag is tied in and wound as in Fig 6, ensuring that it tightly covers the two ends of the tinsel. Now the tail is tied in, as is the ostrich herl for the butt. All this is taking place in the space left at the end of the wool body.

The next step is to wind the butt and to ensure that a close ruff is achieved, as in the illustration. This is done by winding to the right, ensuring that the flue is on the left-hand side of its quill, not the right. A little experimentation will soon enlighten you as to the reason for this, if you do not know it already.

Now the oval tinsel for the rib is tied in, followed by the floss silk for the body, and we are still within the space left at the end (Fig 7). Take the tying silk back to the front of the body, also as shown in this drawing. Although this shows the silk as a rib, this is only for clarity of illustration. It actually sinks into the wool underbody.

Now turns of the body floss are wound in the remainder of the gap, and then, when the floss is level with the wool underbody, it is wound up to the stage shown in Fig 8, where the body hackle is tied in. It will be seen that the whole of the rear part of the fly, from the back-end of the tag through to the point where the hackle is tied in, is one smooth whole, with no indication where any items were tied in or finished off. This is the whole object of the exercise.

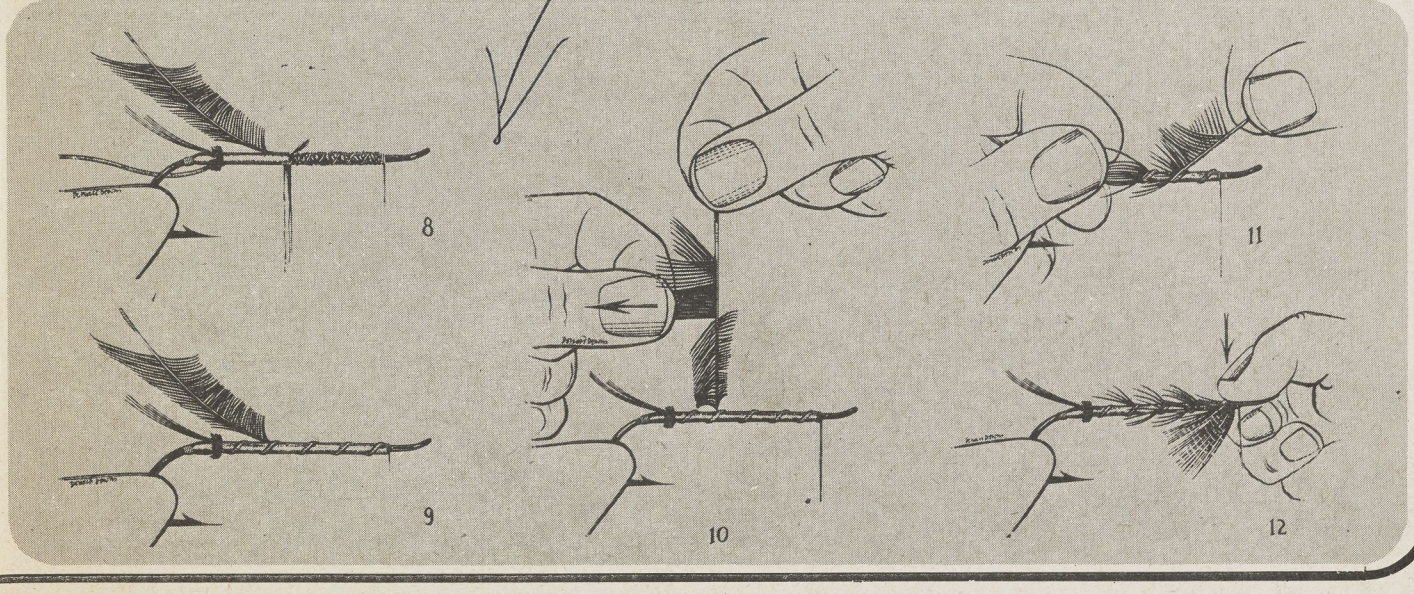
The floss silk is now wound down the rest of the body, continuing the smooth silhouette, followed by turns of the evenly-wound tinsel rib (Fig 9). Freddie prefers to use a rayon floss for his bodies to achieve the ultimate in smoothness, and it works. Although narrower than some of the real silks we use, it tends to spread while being wound and lies absolutely flat. Unless one is very careful, real silk can tend to 'rope'.

Unlike some of us, Freddie ties in his body hackles undoubled, preferring to double them after they are tied in as shown in Fig 10. This is the method described by Leslie Lewis in his recent articles, and some readers may recall that it was the subject of one whole 'Forum' article in 1971.

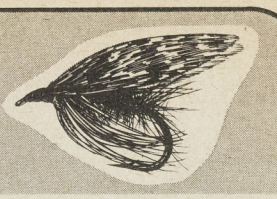
Once the hackle has been doubled, it is wound to the front of the body, the quill being pressed firmly against the oval ribbing tinsel, while the hackle fibres are stroked to the rear (Fig 11). Both these actions ensure that the hackles will have the attractive backward sweep which is the hallmark of a well-wound body hackle. Any surplus body hackle is cut off after one complete turn has been made at the front.

The throat hackle now has to be tied in and wound (no false hackles here), and this can either be doubled, as shown in Fig 10, or before it is tied in. When this has been completed, firm pressure with the thumb and forefinger is applied (Fig 12). This ensures that the fibres are evenly separated, ready for the wings to be added, which will be the subject next month.

There is no reason why this method of making salmon fly bodies should not be applied to our trout flies, particularly those tied on long-shanked hooks.



Tweed wet, Tweed dry ....



SOME WOULD ANSWER that, if it is the trout you're after, you should avoid the Tweed altogether. That is just not true. There are bigger trout on the Don and, if you can afford that kind of thing, the Test. But where in Britain can so large a number of residents enjoy such good fishing at such bargain prices? I do not under-estimate the Tweed. For 30 years, first my father, then my brothers and I, and now our sons, have been fishing the Tweed nearly every April and many Augusts. From our records it would not seem that there has been any noticeable change, either in the number or in the size of the fish.

The waters fished have been mainly the St. Boswells' Angling Association waters between Mertoun bridge and the Dryburgh Abbey hotel, varied with a few days on Lord Haig's beat at Bemersyde: one or two big salmon pools, split up by marvellous runs of (in average weather) perfect trout depth, 2 ft shelving to 4-5 ft. As in many reaches of the Tweed, the wading can be dangerous in high water; the large slippery boulders can upend the strongest and most agile anglers into 6 ft of water and a powerful current after just a moment of carelessness or rashness. It claims its victims every year.

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There have been few bad days, plenty with half-a-dozen to a dozen good trout, and a few on which they have been so obliging that one had to return most of them to the water. They average between ½ lb and ¾ lb, with occasional fish of up to nearly 2 lb. As a bonus, every year offers some excitement with sea-trout or salmon hooked on an 8 ft rod, light nylon cast and a tiny fly.

I reckon to have done better than the rest of my family, not because of any superiority of technique, but because of my obstinate preference for the dry fly.

In April, the Trout rise furiously for about an hour, usually between about one o'clock and two, varying slightly according to the weather and the time of the month. Towards the end, there are sometimes two active times: one a little earlier, and one a little later.

The wet fly devotee will pick up trout before and after the main rise. He will do better than his dry-fly rival when the water is strongly coloured, or when the hatches of fly are blown and frozen off the water in conditions of snow squalls or high winds and driving rain. During the peak time of a really exciting rise, however, he will often have to endure a frustrating period when nothing will look at him. He will either waste his time in changing his flies or wait until the hatch has thinned out, and such trout as have not eaten their fill have become less selective.

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Of course, the same thing can happen to the dry-fly expert. He may have chosen the wrong fly or the wrong size of fly, or the water may be so alive with fish mopping up flotillas of duns, that he hardly knows which one to go for, while the odds against any trout selecting his particular fly become astronomical. He, too, may have to decide whether to change fly with chilled fingers fumbling in haste, or to go on to reap his reward when the hatch is fading. But usually he will collect two or three times as many fish during the main rise as his wet-fly rivals.

It depends on a number of factors. In high water and cold, overcast conditions, it pays to fish the water down with wet fly, until and unless the fish are feeding freely on the surface. The size of the fish caught at random on wet fly is slightly larger on average in the early part of the year, and the excitement of a good trout hooked on a long line downstream in the strongest part of the current is most rewarding. But as soon as they start to rise, change to dry.

In sunshine and low water, and in average conditions, I would start off with a small dry Greenwell, with a Blue Dun or Wickham's Fancy in reserve. If one knows where the trout lie, one will pick up one or two before and after they have started to rise, although one will usually be wasting one's time if, before May, one goes to the river before 11 and after five. You will catch fish even in the east wind, and you will tempt the bigger trout in the slower water which are not at home to the wet-fly fisherman. There is just as good a chance of sea-trout: one day I hooked three sea-trout almost in succession on a tiny dry Greenwell.

The halcyon days for the dry-fly man can come when the slime is on the rocks, and the water is low and clear and lifeless. The salmon-fishers have gone home and the wet-fly men are in despair . . . only the clear-water wormers carry on with their skilled but ruthless massacre. Then the big trout come in close to the bank and suck in flies from the little swirls and eddies. The first spring sun heats the waterproof material stretched over your shoulders, and warmth steals into your heart and mind as you enjoy the most delicate of fisherman's joys, the selection and pursuit of trout seen and stalked.

Nevertheless, the biggest bags have come on days of average water, and warm, overcast conditions. If you have two rods, it can save time to have one made up dry and the other wet. Failing that, a reel of greased line and a reel of sinking line serve the purpose nearly as swiftly.

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Two last warnings. In bright conditions it is tempting to become obsessed with one or two fish rising in still water and offering a particular challenge. You could often do better to give up and move on to broken water, if you are not quickly successful. The other warning is that, even if the Border sun is not Provençal in its intensity, the strain of watching a small fly on the dancing waters of a big river, when you are fishing into the glow of the sun is a real danger to the eyes.

And may the Lord long preserve the best readily available poor man's fishing in Britain from pollution, Sassenachs with spinners and mass murderers of all kinds. I, for one, shall keep my line greased.

Logie Bruce Lockhart

Trout fishing's changing face

PENELOPE TURING reports on the Salmon and Trout Association Conference

RESERVOIR FISHING, of ever-growing importance to the trout angler during the last two decades, was the subject of the first session of the Salmon and Trout Association Annual Conference, held this time at Drapers' Hall in London on November 26 and 27. The speaker was David Fleming-Jones, well-known to all those who have enjoyed sport at Grafham Water, and now Fisheries Officer of the Grafham Water Area, Anglian Water Authority.

His paper, 'Trout Fishing on Reservoirs', was of particular interest to fishermen because it dealt not with the technicalities of fishery management, but with angling methods and habits which have developed as a direct result of anglers fishing on large sheets of water.

Many of those who fish at Grafham are new recruits to trout angling. Having graduated from coarse fishing, they are undismayed by numbers, and may enjoy the nearness of their fellows. They have accepted, to a great extent, the static angler's pitch, sometimes even bringing the coarse-fisher's traditional green umbrella. Less bound by fly-fishing conventions, and accustomed to precision fishing of a different kind, they have developed their own techniques to lengthen casting range under these circumstances. The tournament caster's shooting-head method has been adopted with the reservoir angler's own addition of the line tray to minimise the tendency for the monofilament backing to snarl up. With light glass-fibre rods of 8ft 6in to 9ft 6in, a 10-15 yard shooting-head and 20 lb b.s. monofilament, the reservoir experts maintain a high standard of distance-casting, more than 30 yds being achieved consistently.

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Boat angling has produced some new techniques also. Trolling, especially under power, is not acceptable to many anglers, and forbidden or restricted on a number of reservoirs. In his paper Mr. Fleming-Jones writes:

"The most significant recent contribution to reservoir fishing has been the evolvement on the large reservoirs of methods of controlling direction of drift . . . Various forms of controllers have been devised, the simplest probably being the oar lashed over the stern of the boat in the manner of a steering oar. The traditional form of lee-board has also been tried as a method of reducing a boat's drift to leeward, and achieving some measure of across wind movement. The greatest control, however, has been found to result from the mounting of a specially designed elongated rudder. With this 'rudder' a very high degree of across-wind movement can be obtained, and quick alterations in setting made which are not possible with a lee-board."

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In his introductory talk, in his paper and during the discussion which followed, many other points were made. The reservoir fisherman tends to be more 'big-fish orientated' and more catch-conscious. He is also more co-operative about making catch returns, this varying from 70 to 100 per cent on different waters. There was a good deal of talk about standards of behaviour and etiquette among anglers. Mr. Fleming-Jones felt that as even the largest reservoirs come under increasing fishing pressure, there may be a case for some degree of limitation by qualification.

A high-powered panel of experts took the platform that afternoon to answer questions on *Taking Stock,* the report on netting of migratory fish made for the then existing Association of River Authorities. In the chair was Lord Chelwood (formerly Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish, M.P.), and the panel members were: Mr. George Gawthorn, who was chairman of the Working Party responsible for the report, and who is now chairman of the South-west Water Authority; Mr. G. H. Bielby, Director of Fisheries and Recreation, South-west Water Authority; Mr. Neil Graesser, chairman of the Council of the Association of Scottish Salmon Fishery Boards; and Dr. Leslie Stewart, fisheries consultant to the Salmon and Trout Association.

Lord Balfour of Inchrye opened with a number of forthright questions which the panel took up enthusiastically. He questioned whether successive British governments had done all they could to combat Danish depredations on salmon stocks at sea, on which the panel's feeling seemed to be that they had, but that there was need to "put our own house in order".

Secondly, he asked if the Salmon and Trout Association should not proudly accept the role of a pressure group, a view expressed by other speakers from the floor. Here there was a clear-cut answer from Messrs Bielby and Gawthorn that they thought the association does in fact fill that role in its own manner, Mr. Gawthorn adding that it does so more effectively behind the scenes, the tactics being political manoeuvring rather than banner waving.

The discussion ranged over monofilament nets, the question of part-time netsmen, the financial outlay of rods v netsmen and their relative value to fisheries. Mr. Wilfred M. Carter, of the International Atlantic Salmon Foundation, in Canada, remarked that he felt very much at home — the same views were expressed in Canada.

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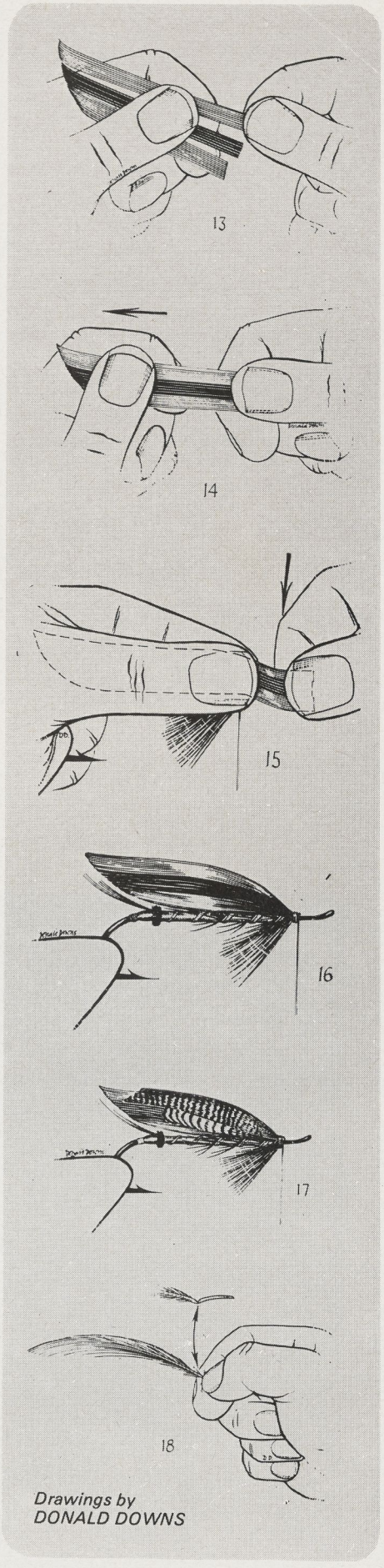
Summing up, Lord Chelwood said that Private Members' Bills may well prove the method of getting legislative action taken in dealing with netting and other problems. He also reminded anglers of the importance of the European Parliament as regards conservation measures. We should keep in close touch with our delegation — "if we stay in the E.E.C.!"

Turning to more scientific subjects — but with an eye to the economic side of maintaining salmon stocks — the third and last Conference session, on November 27, was devoted to 'Foodstuffs of young hatchery-reared salmon'.

The speaker was Dr. Eva Bergström of the Salmon Research Institute at Alvkarleby, Sweden. Presenting her printed paper, Dr. Bergström explained the situation in Sweden where most rivers are used for hydro-electric power production, and spawning areas and feeding grounds of young salmon thereby diminished or completely lost. Smolt stocking has been carried out on a large scale for a number of years. Dr. Bergström has been working on the development of pellet foods of maximum nutritional value and economic cost. She explained in detail the requirements, and the experiments which have led to a highly successful feed. The work of further experiment and development continues.

PUTTING THE 'ROOF' ON THE DOCTOR

JOHN VENIARD completes the dressing started last month and suggests some substitutes for hard-to-get feathers



Drawings by DONALD DOWNS

LAST MONTH I described the first steps in tying a salmon fly — a Blue Doctor. The next stage is putting on the wings. Basically there is no difference between putting on salmon-fly wings and putting on wet-trout-fly wings, so anyone who can manage the operation on a trout fly should not be deterred merely because a salmon wing is bigger.

First of all, however, the various strips that go to make the multi-coloured wing must be 'married' together, which should present no problem provided one or two simple rules are followed.

Select the necessary feathers and cut sections from each side of each one, laying them on one side until all the slips are ready. One simple rule has to be observed: The slips going into any one of the wings must all come from the same side of the feathers. The best way to ensure this is done is to name the wings 'left' and 'right', taking all the slips in the 'left' wing from the left-hand side of each feather, and all those in the 'right' wing from the right-hand side.

You now have to build up the wings by placing the strips edge to edge as shown in Fig. 13. Another simple rule should be followed here in that one should try to have lighter strips at the bottom, finishing up with the darkest at the top. So start with the dyed goose or swan fibres at the bottom, finishing up with darker turkey fibres at the top.

'Marrying' feather-fibres is another technique that looks much harder than it actually is. It is done by placing the bottom strip in the thumb and forefinger of the left hand (Fig. 13) and laying the next one alongside it, stroking gently to the left (Fig. 14). You will find that most feathers used in wings lend themselves easily to this process, although one or two, such as golden pheasant-tail fibres and hen pheasant-tail fibres, need a more delicate touch. A simple but effective method the beginner can use to practise wing 'marrying' is to take a fairly wide section from any wing or tail feather, split it longways into several sections, and then join or 'marry' them together again.

One little trick you may find useful once all the strips are alongside each other is to hold the wing section by its extremities in the thumbs and forefingers of both hands and then to work them gently in opposite directions. This has the effect of ensuring that all the little hooks which run along the edge of every feather fibre are firmly interlocked.

Treat both wings in this manner, and you are now ready to tie them on to your hook. To ensure that they will lie nice and low over the body, first

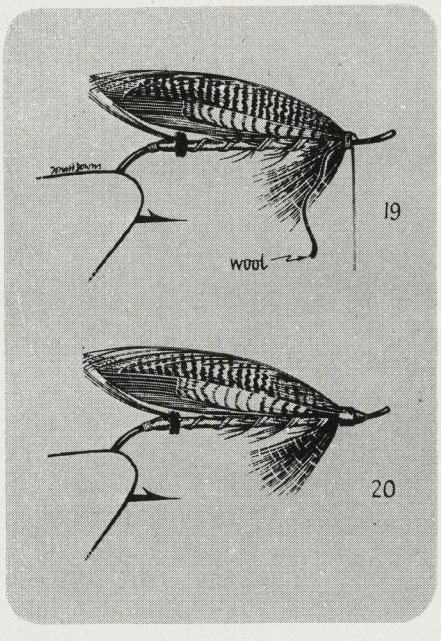
build up their bed by winding on layers of tying silk until it is level with the front of the body or shoulder of the fly. Failure to do this results in the wing being pushed firmly up against this shoulder, forcing the wing into an upright position.

Both wing sections are put on at the same time, tips pointing inwards as for any wet fly, and with the sweep upwards (Fig. 16). There is a reason for this which I shall explain later.

To further ensure that the wings have a low profile, use one of two methods. The first (Fig. 15) is called 'humping'. The wing is held on top of the hook-shank in the finger and thumb of the left hand, which also grips the hook shank very firmly. What will become the surplus roots of the wings are drawn down by the finger and thumb of the right hand, pushing slightly to the left as you do so. This forms the hump you can see just inside the finger and thumb of the left hand. Maintaining the hump, wind the tying silk round the wing and hook in the usual manner, using the pinch-and-loop method, drawing the front of the wing firmly down on to its bed. The result should be as in Fig. 16.

The second method used to keep the wing low is the one Freddy Riley uses. Instead of 'humping' the fibres he grips the wings very firmly at the point shown in Fig. 15 and then squeezes the protruding fibres down on to the hook-shank with the finger and thumb of the right hand. This, in effect, is what happens to them when the tying silk is pulled tight, but it does ensure that the wing fibres are not be pulled out of alignment during the tying.

You now come to the stage where the 'cheeks' and 'roof' of the wing are added. In the exotic dressings of earlier times we had a wide variety of feathers to use for cheeks, such as barred summer duck, Lady Amherst pheasant tails, kingfisher feathers, and, of course, jungle cock. Fortunately, we can still obtain teal feathers, and a strip of these is shown added in Fig. 17. These strips, which are each side of the fly, are put in separately, placing each one alongside the wing and tying in with the pinch-and-loop at the wing roots. It is most important that the turns of tying silk are placed only on top of those already holding the main wings. Any taken to the left will distort the wing, and destroy the symmetry you have tried so hard to attain.



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The last stage as far as feather slips are concerned is putting on the brown mallard 'roof', and I was very pleased to see that Freddy uses the same method as myself for this purpose. This entails the folding of the strips of brown mallard over the top of the wing instead of placing strips at either side of its top section, and is carried out as follows: Cut a left- and a right-hand strip from two brown mallard feathers, both double the width required each side of the wing, leaving the quills on. Stroke out the fibres so that they stand at right-angles to the quills. Now place the two strips on top of one another in the same curve, so that their tips are together, leaving a flat double-wing section. Cut off the quills. The flat pieces of feather are then placed on top of the wing, and folded in half so that they envelop the top of it (Fig. 17). You will see that the tying silk is still being wound in the same place, and this is how the 'bullet-head' of every well-dressed salmon fly is achieved.

I hope it will now be apparent why the main wing is tied with the tips upswept. By tying in the roof with a downsweep you get a much more cohesive whole than if it swept up in the same way. The two sets of fibres seem to adhere much closer by tying them in this way, and the wing maintains its graceful contours even after it has been well fished.

The final stage of winging is the golden pheasant topping, which, of course, gets its name from the position it has on the fly. These can be tricky feathers to tie on, but one or two tips may help. One is shown in Fig. 18, which illustrates how the main quill can be nicked by the thumb nail. This ensures that when the quill is tied in, the main part of the feather will slope over the wing as shown in Fig. 19.

Unfortunately, not all toppings come with the correct curve, usually because of the way the feathers have been packed. This can be easily rectified by moistening the feather and laying it on its side on a piece of hardboard and imparting the desired shape to it. When it dries out the imparted shape will remain, and all you need do is brush out the fibres if they are sticking together.

All the 'Doctor' flies have red butts and heads, and the former can be wool or ostrich herl (dyed), and the latter wool or red varnish. Fig. 19 shows a piece of wool tied in, and Fig. 20 shows the completed fly after the wool has been wound and the final turns of tying silk added.

As with all fly-tying procedures, practice is most important, and you will find that all the little tips an instructor gives will gradually become incorporated into a natural sequence as your tying improves. One I would like to add here concerns the strips of fibres which go into the married wings. Donald's drawings show these in greatly exaggerated form for clarity, whereas in fact they would be much narrower than this. One learns to gauge the widths, and, of course, they vary according to the size of fly being tied and the number of items in the wing. I generally set a minimum of three fibres to each slip, as I find that if one reduces the number to two or one, the marrying becomes almost impossible due to the fibres twisting when being stroked. However, do not make the mistake of using over-wide strips, as the result is much less pleasing to the eye.

Substitute feathers

If you have established the dressings you wish to tie, do not be put off by the fact that some of the feathers required are no longer obtainable. One can always find a reasonable substitute. Here are some.

Red (Indian) crow: Dyed orange hen hackle tips.

Toucan: Dyed light orange or deep yellow hen hackle tips.

Bustard: Speckled turkey tail or wing feathers.

Peacock wing: Mottled turkey wing or tail feathers (grey).

Lady Amherst pheasant tail: As above.

Blue chatterer: Blue kingfisher, or if they are not available, again dyed hen hackle tips.

Jungle cock: Many alternatives have been suggested in the columns of *Trout and Salmon,* some of them very good, and the absence of these feathers is not the serious problem it was.

Regretfully I know of no really good substitute for barred summer duck feathers.

A question of marriage

IT IS PLEASING that the re-introduction of the Forum has sparked off such a keen reaction among fly-tyers, one of the best suggestions I have received so far (stemming from the descriptions of Fred Riley's methods of salmon fly-tying) being from William Iveson, of Brampton, Huntingdon. His contribution concerns the marrying of the wing slips and their storage against the time they are needed for a fly.

The marrying idea is most ingenious (and simple), the principle being to use the whole feather that supplies the base slip as a host for the remaining slips which form the wing. Donald's drawings illustrate the idea quite clearly, but the procedure is as follows:

First, take the host feather — the one which will supply the slip at the bottom of the wing — and, if it has not been used previously, remove all the soft, fluffy fibres from the base end of the quill so that the fibres for the slip are ready for removal. But do not cut off the slip at this juncture.

However, the slip for the next section of the wing is cut off and offered up to the base of the whole feather (Fig 1). The base of the slip is held close to the feather with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, while the thumb and finger of the left hand gently stroke the slip to the left and upwards so that it adheres to the feather (Fig 2).

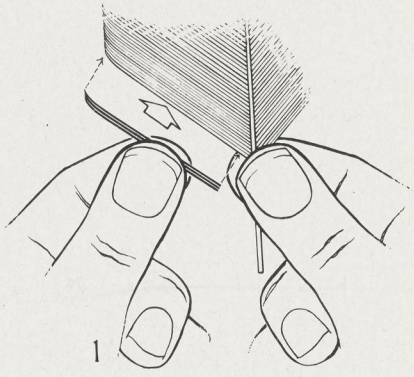
Further coloured slips are added (Fig 3), until the whole wing is completed. Then it can be cut off (Figs 4 and 5).

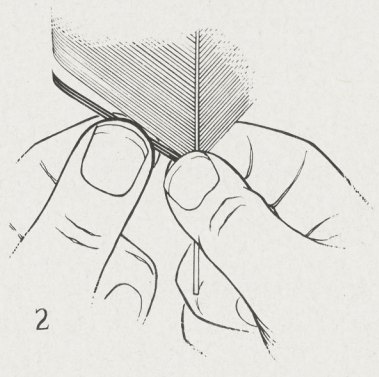
As a general guide to the sequence to follow when forming married wings, the colour mixture should shade from light at the base to dark at the top, usually with the dyed slips in the bottom section. A contrasting pair of slips somewhere near the middle can look effective, especially among natural feather slips such as turkey, bustard and golden pheasant tail, which form the upper section. The procedure is repeated with the other wing of the pair.

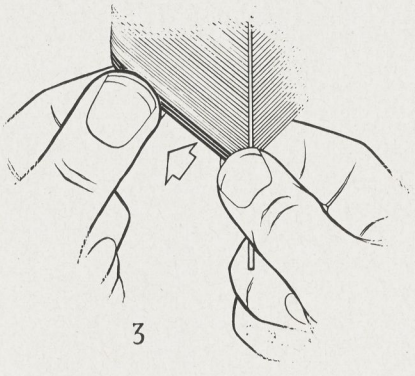
It will be seen that by marrying the wings in this fashion, one ensures that all the slips are from the same side of the feathers. It bears repeating that fibres taken from opposite sides of a quill will not marry, even if they are left and right fibres from the same feather.

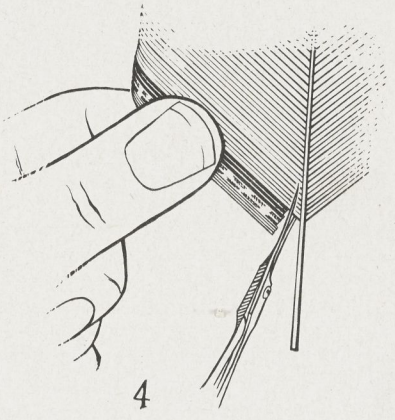
With the wings completed (Fig 5), we can now appreciate the usefulness of Bill Iveson's other idea. This is an ingenious 'wing storer' made from a sheet of cardboard 6 in to 8 in. long and about twice as thick as an ordinary postcard. A postcard itself is not really suitable as, being rather thin, it tends to nip the wing. The folds are made by scoring the cardboard three times along its length, once in the middle on one side, and twice on the opposite side. The middle ridge, after folding, can be fixed permanently by stapling. The vertical cuts should be very narrow Vs, as shown.

John Veniard

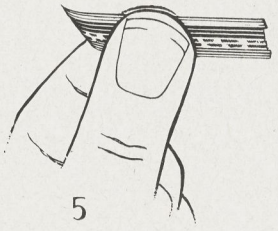


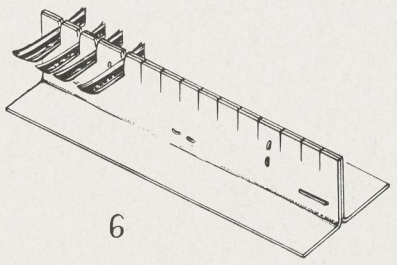


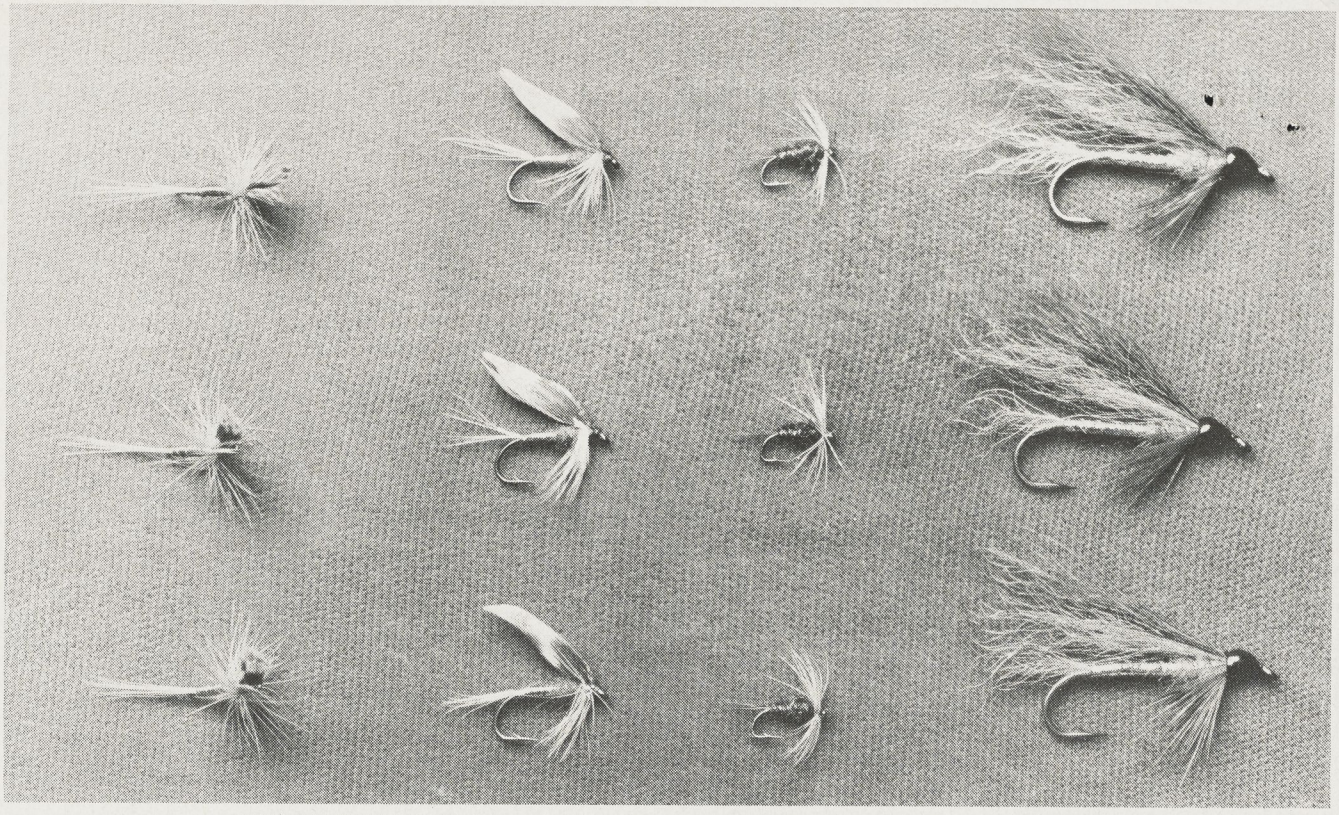




Drawings by DONALD DOWNS







THE WINNING ENTRY: Three dry flies, three wet, three nymphs, and three reservoir lures.

on three long tables, the judges working individually from table to table and marking each entry out of ten. They were meticulous in their scrutiny of every box of flies, and when they had completed their quite tedious job, entries with the highest combined total marks were then judged again. By this process they got their last selection down to six, and it was from these six that they made their final choice. For the purpose of judging, each entry was given a number, names of entrants corresponding to the numbers being withheld until the judging was completed.

When the final marks were added up there was found to be remarkable unanimity among the judges. The first six awards were marked highest by all three.

☆ ☆ ☆

Many entries failed in one of the four different classes of fly and had the judges been instructed to ignore each contestant's worst class, the result might have been very different. They found a lot of entries where, for example, the dry-flies, standard wet-flies and reservoir lures were splendid, but the nymphs were of a lower standard. In other cases the dry-flies, or the lures, let down what might otherwise have been a winning entry.

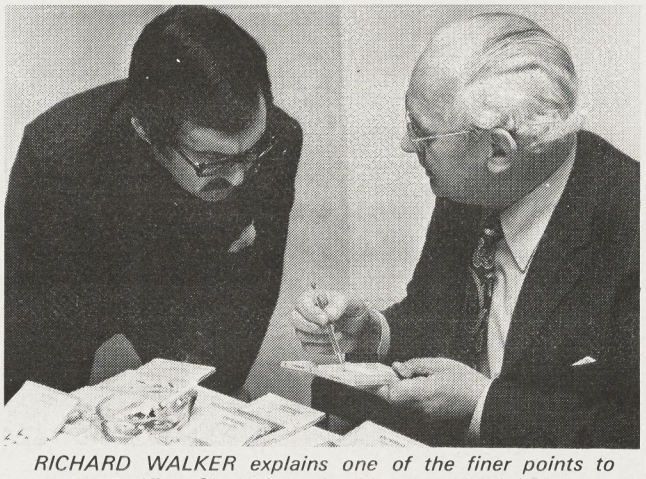
Among the more common faults were poor heads, uneven ribbing, and lack of uniformity among patterns that should have been identical. The judges all decided to be tolerant of crumpled wings on the dry-flies, some of which had suffered in transit through no fault of their tyers.

One entrant used cigar leaf, suitably varnished, in the dressing of all his flies, and his novel entry, including the gold cigar band, brought him a commendation from the judges.

Consideration is now being given by John Player to mounting a travelling display of the award-winning flies. The sponsors are also discussing a suggestion that all the other entries might be auctioned at a later date, with the proceeds going to a suitable angling charity.

DEREK BRADBURY gets to grips with his first table of entries.

DONALD OVERFIELD wasn't going to miss anything.



RICHARD WALKER explains one of the finer points to Trevor King, Cigar Marketing Manager of John Player.