

complete
Waterman extra

THE FISHING GAZETTE. British Weekly Tabloid Newspaper dedicated to angling. Established in 1877 and owned and edited by R. B. Marston, and later by his daughter, Patricia Marston. Publication discontinued in 1966.

Syl Marston

This was some fishing journal! Many famous British authors wrote for it including many who are included in this work. Theodore Gordon, the American writer who never published a book on fly fishing, was published in the Gazette for many years until his death in 1915. (See the chapter on Gordon, pages---- to ---.) And the Gazette is a tremendous source of information on the soft-hackled fly. One of the writers who touted the fly in the Gazette was Francis M. Walbran, who edited "British Trout Flies," (page 00), and who wrote a column in the Gazette, dubbed "Monthly Notes on North-Country Trout Flies. August." I can't say how long these 'notes' continued but here are some samples from Saturday, August 15, 1885, September 12, 1885, October 10, 1885, and November, 21, 1885.

"There are many anglers--and good ones, too,--among my acquaintances who seem to think that because they cannot kill fish with fly so easily during June and July as they can in March and April, or August and September, they need not trouble themselves to go out at all to the river's side, forgetting that during the two middle months of the year the trout are in the height of condition, and that one fish taken then is worth three basketed at any other time, both in point of sport and culinary value." The article continues in much the same uninteresting manner. Famous angling writers are mentioned and quoted along with the titles of their books on angling. And finally, the writer's list of flies for August.

"No. 1. THE AUGUST BROWN.--Body: Light brown silk, dubbed sparingly with hare's face, and ribbed with yellow silk, dressed hacklewise with grouse's feather.

No. 2. CINNAMON FLY.--Body: Fawn-coloured floss silk, made hacklewise, with feather from brown owl's wing. Hook No. 1. For Evening fishing I know of no better fly than this.

No. 3. BLUEBOTTLE.--Body: Black ostrich harl and blue tinsel twisted together, and tied at the shoulder with fawn-coloured floss silk; dressed hacklewise with a dark dun hackle. Hook No. 1.

No. 4. ORANGE STINGER.--Body: Head portion brown silk. Tail: Orange floss silk, tied in small at the middle. Wings: Feather from a starling's quill. Legs: Furnace hackle. Hook No. 1.

No. 5. PALE EVENING BLOA.--Body: Pale blue fur and a small portion of yellow mohair, well mixed; made hacklewise with feather from a sea swallow. (Light Starling). Hook No. 1.

No. 6. SMOKE FLY.--Body: Bronzy-brown peacock's harl, hackled with feather from

a *young* grouse.

The writer's list of North Country Flies for September.

No. 1. HONEY DUN BUMBLE.--Body, Peacock harl, ribbed with orange floss silk; hackled with a pure honey dun hen's hackle; tying silk, yellow. Hook: No. 1.

No. 2. THE MULBERRY BUMBLE.--Body, peacock's jar; robbed wotj, i; berru-coloured silk; hackled with a dun hen's hackle; tying silk, claret. Hook: No. 1.

No. 3. THE GREY PALMER.--Hackled with a cock's hackles, having a black center and whitish-grey edge, ribbed with fine round silver tinsel; tying silk, black. Hook: No. 1.

No. 4. THE FOG BLACK.--Body, dark purple silk, dubbed very sparingly with black ostrich harl; wings, from a bullfinch's wing, (starling), legs,, from a starling's neck. Hook: No. 0.

No. 5. THE FURNACE HACKLE.--Body, ruddy brown silk; wings, from the dark part of a waterhen's wing, set well up and divided: legs, honey dun hackle. Hook No. 1.

The writer's list of North Country Flies for October.

No. 1. THE RED TAG.--Body, green peacock's harl, hackled with a red cock's hackle, and a tag of crimson wool at the tail; tying silk, crimson. Hook No. 1.

No. 2. The Waterhen Bloa.--Body, yellow silk, dubbed with water-rat's fur, hackled with feather from inside waterhen's (starling) wing. Hook No. 1.

No. 3. THE DARK NEEDLE FLY.--Body:, orange silk, hackled with a feather from the darkest part of a brown owl's wing, a turn of peacock harl to form the head. Hook No. 1.

No. 4. BRADSHAW'S FANCY.--Body, peacock's harl, tied with crimson silk to show at the head, with a single turn of harl over it, hackled or winged with a feather from a Norwegian crow, (starling), and a tag of crimson wool at the tai. Hook No. 1.

No. 5. THE BLUE MIDGE.--Body, lead-coloured silk, wings, set upright from waterhen's neck; legs, grizzled hackle. Hook No. 0.

No. 6. SMALL OLIVE BLOA.--Body, yellow silk, waxed; wings, starling's quill feather, dyed in onion dye, legs, olive stained hackle; tail, two strands of the same. Hook No. 1

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THE ART OF TYING THE WET FLY. James E. Leisenring. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1946. Fourth Printing. Copyright 1941.

The one American book I always felt was the most akin to the soft-hackled fly was THE ART OF TYING THE WET FLY by James E. Leisenring, published by Dodd, Mead & Company in New York, in 1946. All of the material in the book is 'As told to V. S. Hidy', who apparently had to "convince 'Big Jim' that his knowledge should be put into book form for American anglers and posterity." I often felt a kinship with 'Big Jim' because he probably stumbled on to the soft-hackled fly by accident (he does not divulge any previous sources) pretty much as I did when I went to Detroit to write ad copy for Oldsmobile in the fifties, and found my first soft-hackled flies, partridge and orange, partridge and yellow and partridge and green at the Paul H. Young fly and rod shop on West Eight Mile.

Leisenring and Hidy's book appeared in several different forms. I have two of them, THE ART OF TYING THE WET FLY, 1941, fourth printing, and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF WET-FLY FISHING, By the Editors of Sports Illustrated, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1961, with Text by Vernon S. Hidy with Coles Phinizy. This book is voluminously illustrated with line drawings, one of which shows how to perform the Leisenring Lift by casting the fly upstream, letting it sink on the way down, then raising the rod and the line so that the fly lifts 'naturally through the currents' supposedly resembling a hatching nymph.

Leisenring explains the process in more detail in the first book, "I cast my fly up and across about fifteen feet or more above where the big trout is located...The fly sinks to the bottom, progressing along naturally as I follow it with my rod, allowing no slack in the line but being very careful not to pull against it and cause it to move unnaturally." Before the fly gets to where the fish is supposed to be, Leisenring checks the movement of his rod, "and the pressure of the water against the stationary line and leader is slowly lifting the fly. Now the fly becomes slightly efficient or animated and deadly, and the trout notices it. The hackles or legs start to work, opening and closing, and our trout is backing down stream in order to watch the fly a little more, because he is not quite persuaded as yet. Now you can see the fly become even more deadly. As more water flows against the line, the fly rises higher off the bottom and the hackle is working in every fiber. It will jump out of the water in a minute, now, and the trout is coming for it. Bang!. He's got it."

Leisenring continues with sound advice fishing soft hackles. "...allow the fly to advance naturally with the current...check it's progress gently by ceasing to follow it with my rod...the water will do all that is necessary to make a fly deadly if it is properly tied."

THE ART OF TYING THE WET FLY is also a very nice primer on tying the soft-hackled fly. The author recommends Pearsall's Gossamer thread, well-waxed before tying, and

writes, "The color of tying silk should be chosen to harmonize with the body materials you intend to use in imitating a particular insect, keeping in mind the *undercolor* which you wish to show out through and reflect from the dubbing or body of your completed fly."

Dubbings were not available in the thirties and forties to the degree they are now and Leisenring suggests the reader makes his own from seal, mole, red fox, Australian opossum, marten, squirrel, bear, muskrat, field mouse and English hares mask. The furs were spun on waxed threads on the author's thigh and knee and stretched across celluloid cards with notches cut into them, until needed for one fly or the other. "The cards are cut from the old-fashioned automobile curtains which can be found in automobile graveyards."

Hackles were chosen according to the water where the completed fly was going to be fished. "To make a fly appear alive and kicking it is necessary to select a stiff, medium or soft hackle according to the water to be fished--that is, hackles of stiff fibers for swift, fast water; hackles of medium quality for slower water; and hackles of soft quality for slow water."

From poultry, the author used cochybondu, yellow furnace pale or white furnace, badger, ginger, grizzly, black, blue dun, honey dun, and dyed olive. Of course, he also tied many of his flies with the traditional, north country bird hackles, such as waterhen, coot, grouse, jackdaw, partridge, plover, snipe and, of course, starling. And he tied and fished winged patterns as well as the more traditional hackle-only patterns.

His manner of tying is entirely different from mine. I start all my soft hackles at the back of the fly, while he starts his at the front. His first step is to tie in the hackle at the eye of the hook, run the tying thread clear to the back of it, then add the subsequent parts; tail, ribbing, dubbing, thorax, if required, to it as he comes forward with the tying thread, winding the hackle its designated times at the front of the fly, then tying off with a whip finish.

Here are the author's favorite dressings.

Brown or Red Hackle

Hook: 12, 13, 14

Silk: Crimson or claret.

Hackle: Red furnace.

Rib: Narrow gold tinsel.

Body: Bronze-colored peacock herl.

Gray Hackle

Hook: 12, 13, 14

Hackle: Yellow or white creamy furnace.

Rib: Narrow gold tinsel.

Body: Bronze-colored peacock herl.

Old Blue Dun:

Hook: 12, 13, 14

Silk: Primrose.

Hackle: Blue dun hen hackle.

Tail: Two or three glassy fibres from a rusty blue dun cock's hackle.

Body: Muskrat under fur spun on primrose silk, a little of the silk showing through dubbing at the tail.

Wings: Starling optional.

Blue Dun Hackle:

Hook: 12, 13, 14.

Hackle: Light blue dun hen hackle of good quality.

Tail: Two or three blue dun fibres optional.

Rib: Very narrow flat gold tinsel.

Body: Mole fur spun on primrose yellow silk, a little of the silk exposed at the tail.

Coachman:

Hook: 12, 13.

Silk: Orange.

Hackle: Bright red cock hackle.

Body: Bronze colored peacock herl.

Wings: Landrail, primary or secondary.

Black Gnat:

Hook: 14, 15.

Silk: Crimson or claret.

Hackle: Purplish black feather from the shoulder of a starling.

Body: Black silk or two or three fibres from a Crow's secondary wing feather.

Wings: Dark starling optional.

Hare's Ear:

Hook: 13, 14.

Silk: Primrose.

Hackle: None: a few fibres of the dubbing picked out for legs.

Tail: Two or three fibres of the fine mottled feather of a wood duck.

Rib: Very narrow flat gold tinsel.

Body: Fur from the lobe or base of a hare's ear spun on primrose silk.

Wings: English woodcock secondaries with buff tips.

Iron Blue Wingless

Hook: 14, 15.

Silk: Crimson or claret.

Hackle: Honey dun hen hackle with red points, or a very dark honey dun.

Tail: Two short dark honey dun cock fibres.

Rib: Fine gold wire.

Body: Dark mole furn spun on crimson silk; very thin at tail to expose crimson.

Light Snipe and Yellow:

Hook: 13, 14.

Silk: Snipe from the under covert feathers.

Hackle: Snipe from the undercovert feathers or less cover feathers.

Rib: Fine gold wire.

Body: Primrose.

Pale Watery Dun Wingless:

Hook: 12, 13, 14.

Silk: Primrose.

Hackle: Pale honey dun.

Tail: Two or three pale honey dun cock fibres.

Body: Natural raffia grass.

Tup's Nymph:

Hook: 13, 14.

Silk: Primrose.

Hackle: Small, light blue hen hackle.

Body: Rear half primrose yellow silk. Front half yellow and claret seal fur.

Iron Blue Nymph:

Hook: 14, 15

Silk: Crimson.

Hackle: Two turns of a Jackdaw throat hackle.

Tail: Two or three soft white fibres tied very short.

Body: Dark mole fur with two or three turns of the tying silk exposed at tail.

Leisenring designed and fished his flies on the trout streams of Pennsylvania. It's quite obvious most of his patterns have a decided Yorkshire, or North Country accent and I wouldn't doubt he had seen and possibly owned the books of Pritt, Edmunds and Lee, and G. E. M. Skues, the last of whom wrote convincingly of the soft-hackled fly. That term apparently didn't mean much to Leisenring because he never used it once in THE ART OF TYING THE WET FLY.

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1841. Wright and Co., Printers, 76 Fleet Street, London.

The outstanding feature of this book in addition to its frequent reference to 'hackle flies', is the contribution to it of more than 40 black and white drawings of trout streams and lakes and plates of flies by the author, himself, which add charm and distinction to the book. He also invented the fly, 'Hofland's Fancy,' which was tied commercially for some time. The imitation is as follows:

Body. Reddish dark brown silk.

Legs. Red hackle.

Wings. Woodcock's wing.

Tail. Two or three strands of a red hackle.

Hook. No. 10.

The black and white drawing of the fly on one of the plates shows a typical wet fly design of a few years ago with slim, sloping wings, a small head, sparse hackle and slim, tapered body. I don't doubt the fly could still be used today with reasonable success as a general wet fly. There are also excellent drawings of the grayling, pike, perch, and other coarse fish along with descriptions of them. Hofland certainly admired the trout, "The trout is a fish of prey, and a voracious feeder, but is also shy and cautious; and though he affords excellent diversion to the skilful angler, he is not easily lured to destruction by the novice. He is also, a strong, active fish, is thoroughly game; and a good sized trout will try the angler's skill before he make him his own."

On fishing upstream or down, Hofland writes, "For my own part (after much experience), whenever I can do so with convenience, I cast my fly a little above me, and across the stream, drawing it gently towards me." Lines, made of twisted hairs, were tapered as were leaders, which were made of silk worm gut. "When you fish with only two flies, the second (or drop-fly) should be at a distance of thirty-six or forty inches from the bottom, or stretcher-fly; but if you use three flies, the first drop should only be thirty-four inches from the stretcher, and the second drop thirty inches from the first. These drop-flies are attached to the line by loops, and should not be more than three inches long; and, by having the gut rather stronger than for the end-fly, they will stand nearly at a right angle from the line."

There is a lengthy section in the book on tying flies, and since there was no mention of a vice, we can assume the flies were tied by hand. Hooks were also made without eyes and had to be joined to gut before the fly was tied. But Hofland's list of tying materials is not much different from an average one of today: "Cocks' and hens' hackles, of all colours; those chiefly in

use, are red, ginger, coch-a-bonddu, black, dun olive, grizzle, and white; the latter for dying yellow, &c. Peacock's herl, coppery coloured, green, and brown. Black ostrich's herl. Gallino fowls' spotted feathers. The feathers of the turkey, the grouse, ptarmigan, pheasant (cock and hen), woodcock, snipe, dotteril, landrail, starling, golden plover or peewit, wild mallard, bustard, sea swallow, wren, jay, plackbird, throstle, blue pigeon, argus and silver pheasant.

"Water rat's fur, moles fur, and hare's ear. Mohair, dyed, of all colours. Fine French sewing silk of all colours. Flos silk, of all colours, German wool, of all colours. Gold and silver twist. Silk twist; cobblers' and bees' wax," and the usual tying tools, as well as "lengths of the white and sorrel hairs of stallions' tails."

Hofland's soft-hackled flies are called 'hackled flies', and his method of tying them is much the same as today, except he didn't use a vice. "The making of the palmer, or hackle-fly with the cock or hen's feathers, is simply as described in the fore-named methods, by twisiting on the legs and body, taking care that the hackle has fibres as long as or rather longer than, the hook it is to be twisted upon.

"But in making hackle-flies with birds' feathers, such as those of the snipe, dotteril, &c., the feather is prepared by stippling off the superfluous parts at the but-end, then drawing back a sufficient quantity of fibre to make the fly: take the feather by the root and point, with both hands (having its outside uppermost), and put the whole of the fibres into your mouth, and wet them, that they may adhere together, back to back. When the gut is fastened to the hook, you must tie on the feather near to the head of the hook, and the feather may be tied either at the but-end or the point; then twist the feather twice or thrice round the hook, and fasten it by one or more loops; the fibres of the feather will then lie the reverse way. Cut off the superfluous part of the feather that remains after tying, and twist on the body, of the required length; fasten by two loops, draw down the fibres of the feather to the bend, and the fly is finished. The fashion of the day is to call this kind of hackle, buzz."

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Cosy Mote

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"Water rat's fur, moles fur, and hare's ear. Mohair, dyed, of all colours. Fine French sewing silk of all colours. Flos silk, of all colours, German wool, of all colours. Gold and silver twist. Silk twist; cobblers' and bees' wax," and the usual tying tools, as well as "lengths of the white and sorrel hairs of stallions' tails."

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"But in making hackle-flies with birds' feathers, such as those of the snipe, dotteril, &c., the feather is prepared by stripping off the superfluous parts at the but-end, then drawing back a sufficient quantity of fibre to make the fly: take the feather by the root and point, with both hands (having its outside uppermost), and put the whole of the fibres into your mouth, and wet them, that they may adhere together, back to back. When the gut is fastened to the hook, you must tie on the feather near to the head of the hook, and the feather may be tied either at the but-end or the point; then twist the feather twice or thrice round the hook, and fasten it by one or more loops; the fibres of the feather will then lie the reverse way. Cut off the superfluous part of the feather that remains after tying, and twist on the body, of the required length; fasten by two loops, draw down the fibres of the feather to the bend, and the fly is finished. The fashion of the day is to call this kind of hackle, buzz."

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Complete

The British Angler's Manual. T. C. Hofland. How and Parsons, 132 Fleet Street, 1841. Wright and Co., Printers, 76 Fleet Street, London.

The outstanding feature of this book in addition to its frequent reference to 'hackle flies', is the contribution to it of more than 40 black and white drawings of trout streams and lakes and plates of flies by the author, himself, which add charm and distinction to the book. He also invented the fly, 'Hofland's Fancy,' which was tied commercially for some time. The imitation is as follows:

Body. Reddish dark brown silk.

Legs. Red hackle.

Wings. Woodcock's wing.

Tail. Two or three strands of a red hackle.

Hook. No. 10.

The black and white drawing of the fly on one of the plates shows a typical wet fly design of a few years ago with slim, sloping wings, a small head, sparse hackle and slim, tapered body. I don't doubt the fly could still be used today with reasonable success as a general wet fly. There are also excellent drawings of the grayling, pike, perch, and other coarse fish along with descriptions of them. Hofland certainly admired the trout, "The trout is a fish of prey, and a voracious feeder, but is also shy and cautious; and though he affords excellent diversion to the skilful angler, he is not easily lured to destruction by the novice. He is also, a strong, active fish, is thoroughly game; and a good sized trout will try the angler's skill before he make him his own."

On fishing upstream or down, Hofland writes, "For my own part (after much experience), whenever I can do so with convenience, I cast my fly a little above me, and across the stream, drawing it gently towards me." Lines, made of twisted hairs, were tapered as were leaders, which were made of silk worm gut. "When you fish with only two flies, the second (or drop-fly) should be at a distance of thirty-six or forty inches from the bottom, or stretcher-fly; but if you use three flies, the first drop should only be thirty-four inches from the stretcher, and the second drop thirty inches from the first. These drop-flies are attached to the line by loops, and should not be more than three inches long; and, by having the gut rather stronger than for the end-fly, they will stand nearly at a right angle from the line."

There is a lengthy section in the book on tying flies, and since there was no mention of a vice, we can assume the flies were tied by hand. Hooks were also made without eyes and had to be joined to gut before the fly was tied. But Hofland's list of tying materials is not much different from an average one of today: "Cocks' and hens' hackles, of all colours; those chiefly in use, are red, ginger, coch-a-bonddu, black, dun olive, grizzle, and white; the latter for dying

yellow, &c. Peacock's herl, coppery coloured, green, and brown. Black ostrich's herl. Gallino fowls' spotted feathers. The feathers of the turkey, the grouse, ptarmigan, pheasant (cock and hen), woodcock, snipe, dotteril, landrail, starling, golden plover or peewit, wild mallard, bustard, sea swallow, wren, jay, plackbird, throstle, blue pigeon, argus and silver pheasant.

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The Angler's Guide. T. F. Salter. Fifth Edition 1823. Printed for the Author, London, By R. Carpenter and Son, London.

I'm using at least two books as goal posts and side lines in this present work: "The Fishing in Print" by Arnold Gingrich, Winchester Press, New York, 1974; and "A History of Fly Fishing for Trout" by John Waller Hills, Freshet Press, New York, 1971. We find a five or six page mention of Salter in Gingrich, but narry a word about him in Hills. From Gingrich we learn that *The Angler's Guide* was first published in 1814, which indicates a brisk sale for the book in the nine years from the first to my fifth edition.

Salter's book is divided into three major parts, Bottom Fishing, Trolling and Fly Fishing. The last is illustrated with black and white drawings of an ant fly, a green drake and a palmer, (above), and the green drake looks surprisingly like a gray drake soft-hackled pattern I used with outstanding success just a few days ago (1999) on a local river.

The author never says such nice things about the other kinds of fishing as he does about fly fishing, "Fishing with an artificial fly is certainly a very pleasant and gentlemanly way of angling, and is attended with much less labour and trouble than bottom fishing. The fly fisherman has but little to carry either in bulk or weight, nor has he the dirty work of digging clay, making ground baits, &c. &c. He may travel for miles with a book of flies in his pocket, and a light rod in his hand, and cast in his bait as he roves on the banks of a river, without soiling his fingers, it is therefore preferred by many to every other way of angling."

He recommends, "the young fly fisherman in the first instance to purchase his artificial flies; but after some experience in the art, to make his own;...the Angler will then be enabled to imitate any fly that may be a killing one, where they are not to be purchased; this sometimes occurs when far from home...Before the young artist tries his skill at dressing or making a fly, he should carefully take an artificial one to pieces, and observe how it is formed...Be particular in imitating the belly of the fly, as that part is most in the fish's sight."

Salter's tying instructions are difficult to understand. There are no step by step illustrations. Tying is done by hand, yet he suggests the tyer secure, "a little portable vice as necessary to fix on the table, to which you may occasionally fasten your hook while dressing a fly." Many of the instructions also pertain to fixing the eyeless hook to the gut before making the fly.

He also gives the reader a list of the 'hot' flies of the early nineteenth century in England, "...red and black hackles, grouse [a soft-hackle fly giveaway], red and black ant flies, the yellow may fly or green drake, stone fly, small black gnat flies, the red spinner and white moth...Note, make it an invariable rule to try a red or black palmer, first in the morning and last in the evening when whipping for Trout, the other part of the day winged flies." Also mentioned are

the grey drake, stone fly, and green peacock hackle.

All in all, THE ANGLER'S GUIDE includes no more than 25 or 30 patterns, which must represent a good portion of the total number in use in England at the time. "There are upwards of a hundred different kinds of flies made for fly-fishing; a selection of which I shall describe suitable for every month during the season; and which may be purchased at a small expense at the tackle shops, should the Angler decline making them himself."

But let's see if Salter tied a soft-hackled fly, without him knowing it so many years before anyone put the two words together. In "A List of Palmers or Hackle flies, with and without wings, for Fly-Fishing in every Month during the Season, beginning with April," we come across, "Artificial flies are called dub flies when the body is principally made of wool or mohair, when chiefly made of feathers, hackle flies, with and without wings..." In the same list we find the "Pismire fly. The body of a cock-pheasant's tail, a peacock's herl to be twisted with it, and warp [wound] with ruddy silk; wings the light part of a starling's feather, and to be made longer than the body."

I have never heard of the Pismire fly (American Heritage Dictionary: ant...piss...from the urinous smell of an anthill.) and I have never heard of using peacock herl together with the barb or barbs of a pheasant's tail for a body of a trout fly or soft-hackled fly. Each fly tying item is very effective by itself in the many patterns calling for it. Wound together in one pattern, they might be dynamite. Here are two suggested patterns:

1. Body: Two strands peacock herl and two barbs from rooster pheasant tail, wound together. Hackle: Starling feather including the lighter, dun colored barbs at the bottom of the feather.

2. Body: Two strands peacock herl and two barbs from rooster pheasant tail, wound together. Hackle: Gray partridge breast feather or brown towned feather from the back of the bird.

THE FLY-FISHER'S ENTOMOLOGY. Alfred Ronalds. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London. 1856.

This could easily be one of the longest lasting books in the history of fly fishing. It first saw the light of day in 1837 and continued with edition after edition until just recently (1999) when it came out as a modern printed book. In all but the last edition, the insects and their imitations were colored by hand, (not necessarily the author's own hand. The coloring of the fly etchings could have been done by young ladies and children), and no two copies (even of the same edition) look exactly the same. A special eleventh edition appeared in 1913 consisting of two items; the book with the text, including the hand colored plates, and another volume displaying the 48 artificial flies in nine sunken mounts. This special edition was available in Judith Bowman's catalog 40, during the year 2000, when it was offered for \$1500.

My copy is the fifth edition, 1856, which is so used and dirty, it could have been owned by a garage mechanic who never washed his hands. The coloring of the insects and their fly counterparts, however, is still quite vivid. There are two prefaces, one for the first edition and one for the fifth edition. In the first we find the author living in or visiting Australia and the editors urging the reader to find a sunny window, "with all his tools about him, first make his *droppers*, hackle-wise, and point his lash [leader] with the best he can purchase, till study and practice have perfected him sufficiently to make a *Winged* fly also, *well put together*,--the hackle just covering the point and bend of the hook, and no more; and the wing the exact length of the fly, from head to tail, and neither too full in the feather, nor too scanty."

The preface suggests a winged fly is more difficult or will take longer to tie than a hackled one, and the winged fly should be the point fly while the hackled fly should be fished as the dropper. (Many early authors used the term *hackled fly* but it was E. M. Tod who first wrote the phrase, *soft-hackled fly*, in his book, WET FLY FISHING. See page 00.) The reader will also notice that fly fishing and fly tying nomenclature was the more similar from one writer to another when their two books were published close in time to one another. And the reader browsing through this book can also witness the changes which, perforce, took place, not only of styles of flies, but also those of tying and fishing along with those of rods and reels, and lines and leaders.

Take the words, *buzz*, and *hackled* for example. They both are verbs meaning the same thing: to wind a feather on a hook shank, the only difference being in degree. According to Ronalds, *buzz* is a lot of winding all down the length of the hook, perhaps expending the whole feather in the process, which gives one a *palmered* fly while *hackled* is a little winding, perhaps two or three wraps only at the head of the fly, which gives one a *hackled* fly. Ronalds' art work

of the insects and the artificials verify these meanings, and he expands it in writing, "Some fishermen generally prefer their flies made *buzz*, (*i. e.*) representing probably flies with their wings fluttering, or in rapid motion; whilst others succeed best with their flies made with the wings to represent the appropriate natural wings *at comparative rest*)."

FLY FISHER'S ENTOMOLOGY lasted so long not only because of its colored drawings of trout insects and their imitations, but also because of its information on all aspects of fly fishing for trout. The book starts out with a colored drawing of a section of a trout stream showing the *haunts* or likely spots where the fish might be found, as, "The head and tail of a stream, in other words, the ends of a rapid, as A. 2ndly. The eddies formed by water passing round an obstruction in the current, as B. 3rdly. Such tracts as C, where a chain of bubbles or little floating objects indicate the course of the principal current; etc."

Then comes the section in the book named the *observatory* which was the inspiration for IN THE RING OF THE RISE, by Vincent Marinaro, 1976. Here's Ronalds. "...I built a little fishing Hut, or Observatory, of heath, overhanging a part of the river Blythe, near Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire,...Its form was octagonal, and it had three windows, which being situated only four feet and a half above the surface of the water, allowed a very close view of it...The curtains of the windows were provided with peepholes, so that the fish could see his observer, and a bank was thrown up, or order to prevent a person approaching the entrance of the hut from alarming the fish...

"The stream was regularly fished, and nothing more was done to interfere with the natural state of its finny occupants..."

Ronalds continues in a section called "*Taste and Smell*. It seemed almost impossible to devise experiments relative to the sense of smell in fishes, which would offer the prospect of satisfactory results, without depriving the animal of sight; the cruelty of which operation deterred me from prosecuting the inquiry.

"Observatuions on the taste of fishes are involved in still greater difficulty. I once threw upon the water, from my hut (by blowing them through a tin tube), successively, ten dead house-flies, towards a Trout known to me by a white mark upon the nose, all of which he took. Thirty more, with *Cayenne pepper and mustard* plastered on the least conspicuous parts of them, were then administered in the same manner. These he also seized, twenty of them at the instant they touched the water, and not allowing time for the dressing to be dispersed; but the other ten remained a second or two upon the surface before he swallowed them, and a small portion of the dressing parted and sank. The next morning several exactly similar doses were taken by the same fish, who probably remembered the previous day's repast, and seemed to enjoy them heartily. From these and similar experiments, such as getting trout to take flies dipped in honey,

oil, vinegar, &c., I concluded that if the animal has taste, his palate is not peculiarly sensitive.

"My experience goes to prove, contrary to the opinion of some who say that the Trout will take *every* insect, that he does not feed upon the Honey Bee, (*Apis mellifica*) or Wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*), and that he very rarely takes the Humble Bee (*Bombus*).

"It seemed to be a common practice with those who plied for food near the hut, to make a very strict inspection of almost every little object which floated down the stream, taking it into the mouth, sometimes with avidity, sometimes more slowly, or cautiously, as if to ascertain its fitness, or unfitness, for food, and frequently to eject it instantly."

Marinaro did not build an *observatory* but concealed himself in a natural blind from which he could shoot the impressive color photos of feeding trout, for his book, IN THE RING OF THE RISE. He also reprinted a diagram of Ronalds' refraction studies, which illustrates the trout's vision. Marinaro's observations of the trout's eating habits, called riseforms are a little more romantic, a little more modern. "Actually, the riseform is only the final act in what may be, many times, a very complicated process of acquiring a tiny bit of food.

"A trout does not eat in the manner of humans, or even as animals do. Humans have worked out a very satisfactory way of eating. We sit in a comfortable chair before a solidly positioned table on which are displayed, within easy reach, all the food that we may need for a full meal, and we do not need to spend much time at our eating. It is usually a very relaxing and pleasant affair. We do not go rushing about the dining room for endless hours, plucking a little bit here and there, tasting some, inspecting some, eating some, sometimes spitting out some that we do not like.

"A trout does all this and more. He is forever sorting out things, constantly bringing all possible food under close scrutiny; and he questions every bit that he gets. Eating, for him, is not a simple matter. His dinner table is always in motion, sometimes very fast, and heaving violently. The bits of food coming his way are moving just as fast as the table. Then there is the endless exertion to hold his place at that table..."

It's not until chapter 4 that we actually start tying the Ronalds fly imitations. And except for every eyeless hook first having to be 'whipped' to 'very fine round gut' and the use of feathers from landrails and blackbirds, the instructions seem quite modern. "Aim first at *neatness*, not at strength. Adjust the hackle to the size of the hook, by observing that the fibre, or *half* the feather, is the *exact length* of the hook from head to bend. The same of the feather for the wing. As a rule, make the wing *exactly* the length of the hook."

Ronalds then mixes tying with entomology. "The *Duns* are the small Ephemeridae (or dayflies) in the *Imago* or winged state, but *imperfect*, and preparing to cast off a fine skin that envelopes them (wings and all) and to become *Spinners*. In the former state they are less

transparent, and their wings best imitated by the upper surface of a starling's feather; but in the latter they are bright and glossy, and the *under* surface of the feather used for the wings should be shown.

"The bodies of these delicate insects are sometimes beautifully imitated by stained hair and gut; but a fly should be made *as soft as silk, and softer*, if it is to be retained in the mouth of a fish many seconds. This is the chief reason why wings stiffened with varnish and gut bodies cannot supplant the old-fashioned furs and feathers." I tried to describe the molt from dun to spinner in my book, "SPINNERS," and I think Ronalds did it better and quicker.

Of the 47 flies in the book, several of them are suggested to be tied hackled, or as legs and wings. The one most resembling today's soft-hackled flies is No. 17. "THE JENNY SPINNER. This is the name given to the Iron Blue (No. 16.) in his new dress, and it lives four or five days after the metamorphosis, sporting in the still summer atmosphere. The Iron Blue is, however, found on the water chiefly on cold days, from the end of April until the middle of June. IMITATION.

BODY. White floss silk wound round the shank of the hook, and tied on at the head and tail with brown silk, which must be shown.

TAIL. A whisk or two of a light dun hackle.

WINGS AND LEGS are best imitated by making them buzz; for which purpose the lightest dun hackle that can be procured should be used."

There are not very many examples of modern soft-hackled flies in this book, but Ronalds, every now and then, tells the reader how to make an imitation in that style. "REMARKS. The small woodcock and *grouse feathers* (which can be used indifferently) make very neat hackle flies; and the beginner will find a pleasure in making the Oak fly of various sizes in the following easy manner:--BODY, orange floss silk, ribbed with fine black silk, which may be slightly waxed. Then form the head of your fly with your arming silk (brown), and choosing a woodcock or grouse feather, *whose fibres are the exact length of the hook*, stroke it back, and tie it (upside down) by the tip to the arming of your hook, just clear of the head, and wind the feather round as a hackle, holding it by the quill, and fasten off under the shoulder."

And for my fishing buddies on the Henry's Fork, I would like to include Ronald's hackled pattern for the green drake. "This fly, proceeding from a water nymph, lives three or four days as shown. Its season depends greatly upon the state of the weather; and it will be found earlier upon the slowly running parts of the stream (such as mill dams) than on the rapid places.

IMITATION.

BODY. The middle part is of pale straw-coloured floss silk, ribbed with silver twist. The extremities are of a brown peacock's herl, tied with light brown silk thread.

TAIL. Three rabbit's whiskers.

WINGS AND LEGS. Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a pale greenish yellow. MADE BUZZ FROM A MOTTLED FEATHER OF THE MALLARD, STAINED A PALE GREENISH YELLOW.

Here are Ronalds' description and tying instructions. "This fly, proceeding from a water nymph, lives three or four days as shown; then the female changes to the Grey Drake and the male to the Black Drake. The Green Drake cannot be said to be in season quite three weeks on an average. Its season depends greatly upon the state of the weather; and it will be found, earlier upon the slowly running parts of the stream (such as mill dams) than on the rapid places.

IMITATION.

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WINGS AND LEGS. Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a pale greenish yellow."

We don't know if Ronalds made much money with the publication of so many editions of his book, but he is just as modern as any author of today in trying to spread the news of his effort and possibly profit from it in any way he can. "It will be a great assistance to procure a set of flies dressed according to the directions of this book, which can be had of Mr. Eaton, Nos. 6, and 7. Crooked-lane, London, long commissioned by the author to sell his flies." Or the reader can learn how to fish them, himself, "Mr. Edward Moore, of Stanton Ford, Baslow, Derbyshire, kindly permits a reference to be made to himself, as willing to afford assistance to the beginner, either by letter, or by receiving a visitor into his house on the Derwent, and imparting a few practical instructions by the water-side."

complete extra

1947 THE BOOK OF THE ROUGH STREAM NYMPH William H. Lawrie. Oliver And Boyd, Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court. London: Great Russel Street, W.C.

This book was ready to be published in 1939, but was shelved, according to the author for several years because of world war II. It is a slim volume, but important here, because it helps to tell why soft-hackled flies are effective in many different kinds of rivers, big or small, or 'waters', even though Lawrie preferred to name his soft hackles 'rough stream nymphs' and 'hatching duns.' The words, 'soft hackle' had been in use for at least 50 or 60 years when the book was published and Lawrie cannot help but rely on that phrase to make the reader understand what he is writing about. "What the soft-hackle fly was intended to represent is much more problematical but the discovery that a small, soft feather wound round the hook shank made a killing type of fly may, or may not have been accidental. Yet if one considers the quite creditable attempts made to represent the dun by means of a winged dressing, which indicated ability to copy the features of the natural insect, it is not easy to accept the view that the origin of the hackle pattern was fortuitous. And if the element of accidental discovery be ruled out, one is tempted to think that the soft North Country hackle dressing may have been the outcome of deliberate attempt to represent either the hatching dun or the nymph itself, and, certainly the dressings forming the body of these flies, and even the deliberate representation of the usually dark and opaque thorax, seem to lend support to the view that these flies were intended to represent the Ephemeroptera in the nymphal stage. The method of fishing such flies, as will be seen, also has a bearing on the matter."

Lawrie gives three soft-hackled fly design elements for dressing his nymphs and hatching duns: "...dressing materials should be very sparsely applied...the softer the fibre of the hackle feather employed the better will be the finished nymph...and that if the angler uses a few sound *general* patterns he need not despair of first-class sport."

There are only 14 patterns in the book, (I had the same number of soft-hackled flies in my first book); nine of which represent nymphs and five of which represent hatching duns, or emergers. A color plate, as the frontspiece, does not show much difference in the patterns, but from the dressings given, one gathers the hackle barbs are kept a little longer in the hatching duns than the nymphs. I don't think anybody really knows at what speed legs or wings of duns might grow in their ascent to the surface, but the idea of the longer barbs on the hatching duns might appear to be worthwhile. The author also suggests that two hackles are used on the dun patterns, with all the hackles on the underside of the pattern cut away, so as to leave only fibres on the upper side or back of the fly. The pattern term, "blue cat's fur" means natural muskrat or light mole fur. Lawrie gives two hackles per fly in the hatching dun group: a wing hackle and a leg hackle. I used only the wing hackle on my patterns in the photos. Lawrie's

tying threads were meant to be Pearsall's Gossamer threads which measure 4/0. The patterns can be tied with other tying threads in the designated colors. "Whisks" of course, means tails. I have substituted some dubbings and hackles for acid dyed furs and feathers, and have 'modernized' the patterns, whenever deemed necessary.

OLIVE NYMPHS:

(1) Olive Nymph. Hook No. 14.

Hackle: Furnace hackle.

Body: Yellow tying silk waxed with brown cobbler's wax, and dubbed lightly with blue cat fur, (muskrat), the whole ribbed with fine gold wire.

Whisks: Three strands of olive hen feather fibres.

Thorax: Light olive. (Author's note: This pattern is simply a variant of the wet Greenwell's Glory.)

(2) Olive Nymph. Hook No. 14.

Hackle: Dark blue hen hackle dyed a deep olive shade.

Body: Dark hare-lug (hare's ear) and muskrat fur spun on primrose tying silk, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Whisks: Three fibres soft rusty hen feather.

Thorax: Dark muskrat spun on to tying silk below hackle.

(3) Olive Nymph. Hook No. 14.

Hackle: Dark blue hen.

Body: Olive dyed peacock quill. (Or olive thread or floss.)

Whisks: Three strands of dark blue hen.

Thorax: Dark muskrat.

MARCH BROWN NYMPHS:

(4) March Brown Nymph. Hook No. 12.

Hackle: Dark Partridge.

Body: Hare's ear spun on orange tying thread, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Whisks: Three strands cock pheasant tail.

Thorax: Dark hare's ear spun on tying silk just below hackle.

(5) March Brown Nymph. Hook No. 12.

Hackle: Dark partridge.

Body: Orange tying silk.

Whisks: Three strands cock pheasant tail.

Thorax: Dark hare's face.

IRON BLUE NYMPHS:

(6) Iron Blue Nymph. Hook No. 16.

Hackle: Very dark blue hen.

Body: Mole fur spun over red tying thread.

Whisks: Three strands soft, greyish white feather fibres.

Thorax: Muskrat fur spun on tying thread below hackle.

(7) Iron Blue Nymph. Hook No. 16.

Hackle: Very dark blue hen.

Body: Stripped peacock quill dyed purplish, or purple tying thread or floss.

Whisks: Greyish white feather fibres.

Thorax: Muskrat or mole fur.

PALE WATERY NYMPHS:

(8) Pale Watery Nymph. Hook 15 or 16.

Hackle: Light blue hen.

Body: Muskrat mixed with yellow wool. A rib of fine silver wire may be added.

Whisks: Three fibres pale blue hen.

Thorax: Heron herl or muskrat.

(9) Pale Watery Nymph. Hook 15 or 16.

Hackle: Pale ginger hen.

Body: Pale olive dubbing spun on yellow tying thread and ribbed with fine gold wire.

Whisks: Three fibres pale brown hen feather.

HATCHING DUNS: (Author's Note: "At this point, all the blue hackle fibres on the underside of the patterns are cut away with fine-pointed scissors, so as to leave only fibres on the upper side or back of the presentation...The main point to be kept in mind is to apply dressing materials very sparsely, and there should only be put on sufficient hackle to float the presentation.

Bodies can be made of quill, floss silk and tying silk, as well as fur dubbing."

(10) March Brown. Hook No. 12.

Wing Hackle: Dark Partridge.

Leg Hackle: Dark red cock.

Body: Medium hare's face on orange tying thread, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Thorax: Reddish dubbing.

Whisks: Three fibres cock pheasant tail.

(11) Olive. Hook No. 14.

Wing Hackle: Medium blue cock.

Leg Hackle: Dark-center cock with olive tips.

Body: Light olive dubbing spun on yellow tying thread, ribbed with fine gold wire.

Thorax: Hare's face mixed with yellow wool.

Whisks: Three fibres dingy olive-brown hen feather.

(12) Pale Watery. Hook No. 16.

Wing Hackle: Pale blue cock.

Leg Hackle: Grey cock.

Body: Medium muskrat fur thinly spun on yellow tying silk and ribbed with fine gold wire.

Thorax: Muskrat mixed with yellow wool.

Whisks: Three fibres blue hen feather.

(13) Large Pale Watery. Hook No. 14.

Wing Hackle: Pale smoke-grey cock.

Leg Hackle: Medium ginger cock.

Body: Pale muskrat fur spun on yellow tying thread and ribbed with gold wire.

Thorax: Yellow dubbing.

Whisks: Three fibres ginger hen feather.

(14) Iron Blue. Hook No. 16.

Wing Hackle: Medium slate blue cock.

Leg Hackle: Very dark blue cock.

Body: Mole fur spun on claret tying silk.

Thorax: Muskrat fur dyed purplish, or purple dubbing.

Whisks: Three fibres soft white hen feather.

complete extra

THE FLY FISHER'S LEGACY. George Scotcher, Chepstow, England. 1800

A few years ago when I was finishing my book on spinners, I was guided down the Bitter Root River, not too far south of Missoula by John Foust who had a fly shop near Hamilton, where he tied his own flies including some of the most beautiful parachute styled flies I ever saw. One of the first things I noticed when we started down the river was John's loud and urgent instructions for me to keep throwing my fly into the "foam line." "Follow the foam line," he would shout. I doubt if John ever read THE FLY FISHER'S LEGACY, because the same, almost exact instructions are on one of the first pages of this book, published around 200 years ago. "If you are accustomed to sport on one particular river, you may always know where to raise fish, for wherever you have rose or taken one before, in the same places you will find others, provided the weather and water are nearly the same.--Always throw near where froth lies, and also on the current it swims down in; also, just below where any rivulet falls into another, or where a mill water comes in, or just below a wear, and never neglect to throw in difficult places, which fearful anglers pass, for there always lie good fish."

My copy of the LEGACY is a copy of the original loaned to me by Vernon and Joan Gallup, which may have been shown to them as a mimeographed copy of the original which could have been too rare and expensive to ship from one continent to another. The book is set up simply in a "Description of the natural fly", with the season for its appearance followed by "The directions for making the artificial fly." There are 24 named flies and 3 general flies. Before I got the copy to use in this work, someone had pencilled 'hackled' or 'winged' at the end of each pattern and the tally shows seventeen flies tied as a hackled fly and 10 tied as a winged fly!

Here are some of the descriptions of the natural insects followed by "Directions for making the artificial fly."

"THE BLUE DUN.

SEASON--The Middle of February to the Middle of April and likewise in October. *Natural*--It has two wings, which are upright on the back, like the butterfly's and when it first appears early in February, they are of a smoky blue colour...At the beginning of March the wings are lighter, the body of an ash-colour, and the legs more yellow; and in April the wings are still lighter, and body quite yellow, etc.

Artificial--In February and March, till the weather gets warmer, make the wings of any weak feather from about the rump of a blue dun hen, which is the same colour inside and out; or from the inner part of a wing feather of a starling. For the body use the under blue dun fur of a fox, or, in want of that, light lead-coloured shaloon (A lightweight wool or worsted twill fabric.); tie on with split primrose silk and rib up with it; pick out the dubbing so that the ribs may appear. Legs a dun hackle, yellowish at the points.

"The March Brown. Season--Middle of March to the middle of April. Natural. In shape like the blue dun, but a larger and bolder fly, and the wings more a-slant. The color of the wings is a blue dun, with a yellow cast in it, and spotted with dark brown. The under part of the body, at the first coming of the fly, is of a redish chocolate, and striped or ribbed with aple yellow; the back is of a deeper chocolate...As the weather gets warmer, the whole flyu gets lighter and smaller, till the body at last becomes a light reddish buff, ribbed with yellow. During this rise you can scarcely take any fish, however naturally made may be your fly, but just before the flight come on, and between them, is the principal time.

"Artificial. --The wings may be made from the spotted tail feathers of a young partridge, or indeed more satisfactorily from some of the long fibred body feather, as also the whiskers at the tail of the fly; for the body use some of the dark fur which has yellow tips, from off a hare's ear, and tie it on with redish buff silk; if you are inclined to use a hackle for legs, let it be a dun cock's or a small partridge's feather.

"THE DROP FLY." Apparently there were flies designed to be used as a dropper only. When I fish a dropper, I don't give it the same high expectation I give to the tail or end fly, because as Scotcher writes, "...the use of the drop fly is attended with much inconvenience, you cannot throw with that exactness and lightness with it as you can without it.' Here is his dressing for "the only one I use, and can affirm it will take fish all the season: I make it of a full red cock's hackle, whose root is of a jet black for more than a third of its length, the body of black ostrich herl, ribbed with silver thread, with the hackle ruffed down over it, between the ribs, and let your hook be always a size less than your end fly, loop it on to your gut boom, near a yard above your end fly, do not let the gut be more than three inches in length, or it will twist round the line when wet, and let it be rather stout gut to hold it stiffly off.

"GENERAL FLIES...Or those suited to Anglers who have not opportunity to attend to the Seasons of the Natural flies. I shall here mention an easy mode which I have formerly used, and that I know many others now follow, who have not leisure or opportunity to remark the different seasons of the natural flies; it is to use only three sorts of flies, (with now and then the red dropper) the whole season:...try occasionally a light blue hackle, with a pale yellow body, or the same hackle, with a peacocks' herl body, or a dark blue or dun, with a peacock's herl body, you will find by this method tolerable good sport, if it is what anglers call a good fishing day, or full water; but in bright calm weather, with low water, a neat copy of the natural fly in season, can then only be depended on."

THE ART OF TROUT FISHING ON RAPID STREAMS. H. C. Cutcliffe, South Molton, Tucker Printer Square. 1863.

This is a reprint of the above produced in Barnstaple, North Devon, in 1970. It may well be the most southern book published in England and included in this work on the soft-hackled fly. Not surprisingly the author, Cutcliffe, too, believed in soft hackles, which makes it quite safe to say the fly was not confined to Yorkshire, and the north part of England, but was used on the clear and rapid trout streams all over the country, including those in North Devon.

A recent tourist guidebook, "North Devon and Exmoor," calls it a "country full of musical names, Clovelly, Appledore, Stockleigh Pomeroy, Withypool, Cheriton Fitzpaine, with a whole host of them ending in '-combe', which means a valley." Where one finds valleys, he finds rivers such as the Exe, the Culm, the Taw and the Torridge, all of which were fished by the author when he wrote the book. There were salmon, too. "Not only would the waters be speedily filled with large trout, but salmon would abound, and soon might the Devonians again realize the times, as of yore, when the farmer was bound by a special clause in his indentures with his apprentices, not to feed them on salmon more than three days a-week. This is a traditional story in North Devon, and is commonly believed to be true, at any rate it is certain that salmon used to be very abundant in North Devon rivers, and that they are now very scarce."

Cutcliffe, like many other nineteenth century fly tyers, kept their fly-tying materials in 'books', one for hackles, winging feathers, hooks, silkworm leaders, and for furs. He tells how to shave a rabbit to obtain his fur. "Take a very sharp razor and shave him downwards, only over the back; you do not of course lather or even wet his hair, but shave him dry, and when you have removed all the cut hair, you will find the remaining stumps looking black and below this the fur is light fawn colour, or almost white; you have indeed removed all that portion of the flax which gives the hare its peculiar colour, which you are requiring, and have left the less desirable part or roots of the hair attached to the skin." Cutcliffe didn't say whether the rabbit was alive or dead.

"As regards feathers, we have for making winged flies, (which I however seldom or never use in snall rapid streams,) the woodcock, the starling, the wren, the pheasant wing, and tail of cock and hen, blackbird and thrush, snipe partridge, lark and the tail feather of a peacock, a large supply of which should be obtained, as a great variation in colour may be observed in the feathers of this bird; some have a greenish tinge and are little used by me; some are copperish, and less frequently employed, but others have a bright golden lustre, sobering down to a rich red black, and these of all others I prefer."

Cutcliffe is finicky about his hackles too, "A hackle then should be of brilliant lustre, reflecting and sparkling in the light, when moved about in the finger. If the colour of the shining

part of the hackle be red, the root or that part nearest the insertion of the feathers be black or nearly so, and the under side of the feather should be dark; also if blue, (or what the fisherman calls blue, the natural living colour of such feathers,) the root should be nearly black.

"I object to the winged fly on rapid streams, because the wings are so soon washed down upon the shank of the hook, and therefore lose the appearance which they have when dry, and because they are so soon worn out; and in themselves, even supposing they did in the water look precisely as they do out, they are not one jot superior in their power of exciting the trout, to the simple hackle fly."

Cutcliffe now begins to write about the position of his flies on the leader. "I use generally a red or brown for stretcher (tail fly), --the former made with peacock body ribbed with gold twist, and a dark blood-red hackle, black towards the head and tips, and the latter made with hare's flax, ribbed with twist and a dark-red, or very rusty-red hackle. I like something very gaudy as a stretcher for upstream fishing, and that is why I put on the twist (gold ribbing).

"The bob (dropper) I generally make a quieter fly--this fly has to depend more on deceptions than attraction--his work more nearly approaches the duty of the fly on the quiet and large stream, viz., so to resemble a living insect as to deceive the trout into the belief that he is one, for the reason that his work is quieter, and he is kept floating on the top of the water, and often is used even on small brooks, just as a bob fly is used on a large stream, to go into little places under banks and under bushes where the stretcher cannot be worked as he should be worked to do his duty. Each fly, then, has a separate office to perform, the stretcher to be cast almost into the mouth of the trout and tease him out, by attracting him to his impudence; the bob to act the more deceptive and quieter part, so I make the latter like one of the many flies every fisherman has plenty of, a blue dun, a hare's flax, cow-dung, any indeed which happen to be about the water at that time.

"I never use a winged fly on a rapid stream for a bob, excepting the March brown I have described, and this only in March. A winged fly washed by the water looks more like a little roll of the dung of a rat than a fly;--for the force of the current washes the wings close round the hook. For a stretcher, as I have said, always select a smart gaudy hackle fly. The brighter the weather the more gaudy the stretcher fly; and in June or July, sometimes I use a fly made with a body of orange-coloured worsted, ribbed down with yellow silk, to make it last the longer, and a hackle of a light yellow red, such as one can only get from a smart little bantam cock. This fly I have found very destructive."

Mr. Cutcliffe, after telling us how to fish the soft-hackled fly in North Devon in 1863, also names a few of the rivers he thinks we ought to try if we might be lucky enough to find ourselves there. "I know of no stream in the North of Devon which may be so surely relied on



for affording sport with the rod and line, as the Bray; and though the trout in it are small, they are nevertheless most wonderfully active and strong.

"The little stream, commonly called the Nymph, which crosses the Turnpike Road at Bish Mill, is a beautiful stream for sport in the early months, or in the autumn after rain when it is of a more than ordinary size.

"The upper part of the Mole, above South Molton is admirably suited for bright water fishing, and I know of no water on which a beginner could better learn the art of up-stream fishing as I have practised it, and endeavoured to teach it, that this little stream. Indeed that portion of it above and immediately below North Molton, will be found to be exactly the kind of water I have been so particularly writing of."

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"Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream", 1914. "The Way of A Trout with a Fly", 1921. "Side-Lines, Side-Lights & Reflections", J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, American edition, 1932. "Nymph fishing for Chalk Stream Trout", London, 1939. Author: G. E. M. Skues. Publisher: Adam & Charles Black, London.

No author of fly fishing did as much for the continuance and life of the soft-hackled fly as George Edward Mackenzie Skues. True, he came after NORTH-COUNTRY FLIES by T. E. Pritt and BROOK AND RIVER TROUTING by Edmonds and Lee (the two landmark publications), but there were so few copies of both books printed (two hundred of Edmonds and Lee and a thousand of Pritt), that it's doubtful their instructions and commendations would have been enough to keep soft hackles alive in any other fishing location except Yorkshire, where those two books were written. It was not Skues' altruism which expanded the use of the soft-hackled fly. It was his love of fishing the other wet fly, the nymph, on the hoity-toity chalk streams on the other end of the British island.

It's a complex and confusing picture one gets now of the angling regulations regarding the use of wet flies and dry flies on such rivers as the Test, Itchen, Avon, Nadder, and other chalk streams in the south of England, where Skues fished at one time or another. The general belief today is that it was dry fly only, and we do know that Skues had to give up fishing one 'dry fly' river after another because of his continued use of the wet fly or nymph. But in one famous book of that time, RIVER KEEPER, about Alfred Lunn, river keeper of the Houghton Club on the Test, by John Waller Hills, (See page 00), we find the author writing, "The Partridge hackle of one kind or another is much the best under-water fly at Stockbridge, [home of the Test] better than any other sunk fly or nymph. In fact, I believe it kills more than all under-water patterns put together. It has one immense advantage: being small and composed of a soft feather, it is easy to suck in." Then, in A SUMMER ON THE TEST, by the same author, first published in 1924, we find, "Wherever it [the dry fly] was introduced, it conquered. The sunk fly was swept away, beaten and ridiculed...everyone thought it [the dry fly] would rule for ever...If you had told any enthusiast of the 'eighties that within a generation the sunk fly would be back on the Test he would have laughed.

"And yet it [the wet fly] has returned, and the underwater fly or nymph is used more and more. Nymph fishing is no new thing...and moreover many of the old flies, particularly hackle ones, are no doubt taken for them...and it was not until Mr. G. E. M. Skues produced *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream* in 1910 that under-water fishing was again systematised."

Skues was a lawyer working in London, who found it possible to take the 5:10 train from Waterloo station and be in Winchester near the Itchen, some 75 miles away in time to fish the evening rise. (It's doubtful today's trains can duplicate the same schedule.) On the way, in his

seat in the railroad car, he tied his wet flies and nymphs with a special, hand vice. From Skues four books on nymph fishing these classic waters, one gets the feeling he was in hot water most of the time. He knew he wasn't popular with the regular members of these fishings, yet he taunted them with clever book titles, and other terms and phases. His first book was "MINOR TACTICS OF THE CHALK STREAM," which might cause an angler to ask, who wants to read about minor tactics? The book is dedicated "To my friend the dry-fly purist, and to my enemies, if I have any." He tells the reader how he started fishing the nymph or wet fly in 1892 on the Itchen, following closely the dry fly instructions in "DRY-FLY FISHING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE" by F. M. Halford, the author, father of the dry fly, who Skues liked to call 'the prophet'.

Skues got into fishing the wet fly or nymph quite by accident when a poorly tied dark olive quill dry fly he was fishing suddenly sank and became enticing to several trout in the vicinity. The same thing happened again, when "I began to speculate seriously upon the possibility of a systematic use of the wet fly in aid of the dry fly upon chalk streams." He wrote that duns and other aquatic insects drown, that as spinners, some mayflies descend to the bottom to lay their eggs, that nymphs, caddis pupae and other larvae spend much of their lives under water, and that, "It has often been the subject of admiring comment that, before ever the angler can see a single fly in air or upon water, the trout will have lined up under the banks, and settled at the tails of weed-beds and have begun to take toll of insect life; and many have commented on the startling unanimity with which trout begin to feed all at once all over a river or length."

Skues was hooked on wet fly fishing, but that name was blasphemous and he would call it nymph fishing from then on. Many of Skues' underwater fly patterns were north country flies, not nymphs. And it's not accidental that the frontpiece of the first book, included more winged wet fly patterns than nymph patterns while the frontpiece of the last book, NYMPH FISHING FOR CHALK STREAM TROUT included only nymphs and no winged flies whatsoever.

In all of his four books, Skues tries to avoid words and phrases which might irk the dry fly only angler, or lead the fishing club's management to ask for his resignation. "I began to speculate seriously upon the possibility of a systematic use of the wet fly in aid of the dry fly upon chalk streams...if I were to succeed, it must be a wet-fly modification of the dry-fly method of upstream casting to individual fish." Skues was telling his readers his brand of nymph fishing was not 'chuck and chance it', a slogan commonly used by the dry fly angler describing wet fly fishing.

Skues' nymphs and wet flies were also good "medicine for bulgers," bulgers being those trout feeding near the surface on rising nymphs, causing them to ignore the members' dry flies

on the surface. One medicinal fly had "slim upright wings standing well apart," with the "body spare, consisting of the waxed primrose tying silk only, closely ribbed with fine gold wire, and one or at most two turns of a furnace hen's hackle with ginger points, no whisk (whisks only help flotation), and a rather rank hook to take the fly under." Skues was hopelessly doomed to the wet fly or nymph. "In my experience the trout which takes underwater is generally very soundly hooked. A trout taking floaters on the surface frequently sips them in through a narrowly-opened slit of mouth, but an under-water feeder draws in the fly by an extension of the gills which carries it in with a full gulp of water.

"In the effort to divine the indications which call for striking with the wet fly I confess I find a subtle fascination and charm, and, when success attends me, a satisfaction beside which the successful hooking of a fish which rises to my floating fly seems second-rate in its sameness and comparative obviousness and monotony of achievement."

The key words for inclusion of an author's book in this history, of course, are 'soft' and 'hackled' or 'soft-hackled', and no other book used these terms as often and as freely as the four written by Skues. In the first, "Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream," He defined the soft-hackled fly like no other author. "...dubbed bodies in place of quills, hen hackles in place of cock's, and of these a minimum of turns in place of a maximum; and if whisks are used, they too, must be soft and foppy...the bulk of material in proportion to the hook metal must be reduced as far as possible...so we are limited to the systems which dress their flies with upright wings like the Tweed and Clyde types, and to the soft hackled Yorkshire style...and the supply of tiny soft absorbent hackles from birds other than poultry, sufficiently small to leave the body well exposed."

Further definitions, "First there is the spare body, dressed with tying silk only, with or without wire ribbing, or lightly dubbed with soft fur, making an absorbent dubbing; then a small and lightly dressed soft hackle, two turns at the outside...."

It is amazing how much practical information we can get from Skues about tying and fishing soft hackled flies nearly one hundred years after he wrote his wonderful books about them. From "The Way of a Trout With A Fly", "It is a commonplace of fly dressing that, in translating a winged pattern into its hackled correlative, you select a hackle combining as far as possible the colour of wings and legs, and, so long as you keep the colours, their relative position is of little consequence."

"Kick. This is a quality which every hackled wet fly, for use in rough water, should invariably have. Without it, it is a dead thing; with it, it is alive and struggling; and the fly which is alive and struggling has a fascination for the trout which no dead thing has. How is this quality to be attained? It is a very simple matter. Finish behind the hackle." Skues takes nearly a page

to tell the reader how to do this but quite simply you whip finish behind the wound hackle and "push back the hackle over the bend," and coat both heads or wraps with head cement, in back of and in front of the wound hackle.

In *Theories of Wet-Fly Dressing of Trout Flies* we get more useful information and find that Skues talks the language of the angler of the soft hackled fly. "The hackled North-Country pattern does not necessarily represent a submerged fly, but one in process of hatching or hatched out, and caught by the current and tumbled. Again, the trout, busy in making the most of his meal time, does not make fine distinctions. Often, too, no doubt, the dishing (moving up and down) dropper attracts by suggesting some thing alive and in difficulties.

"It is my belief that the artificial nymph lightly hackled with a soft hackle (whether a small bird's or hen's) is taken for the natural nymph in the act of hatching.

"A soft-hackled fly adjusts itself easily to the action of the water, but a fly with stiff, staring upright wings or hackles may easily cause such a disturbance in the water as to give proof of a bad entry. The lines, therefore, on which an artificial wet fly that is to be fished against the stream in any way is built ought to be fine, like the lines of a yacht or swift boat, or high class motor, sloping backwards, so as to offer the least possible resistance to the current, and such resistance as there is should be elastic. The fly ought to be equal on both sides, so as to balance accurately and to swim smoothly, and any excess of bulk is to be deprecated."

Skues is perhaps the finest fly fishing writer of all time. He wrote with clarity, poeticism, spicy modernism, and a twinkle of humour which no other author of fly fishing comes close to. Here are some random examples. "The hackle was a hen's, and the dye only accentuated its natural inclination to sop up water." "A moment later I became aware of a sort of crinkling little swirl in the water, ascending from the place where I conceived my fly might be." "...mole's-fur-bodied, snipe winged Blue Dun." "I changed to a Tup's Indispensable dressed to sink, and, fishing upstream wet in likely runs and places, I made up my five brace before I knocked off for lunch." "When this fly is thoroughly soaked it has a wonderfully soft and translucent, insect-like effect." "Presently it was located--such a tiny, infinitesimal, dancelike dimple, hinting rather than proving the movement of a trout." "I thus satisfied myself that Tup's Indispensable could be used as a wet fly; and, indeed, when soaked its colours merge and blend so beautifully that it is hardly singular; and it was a remarkable imitation of a nymph I got from a trout's mouth." "There was no rise of fly after ten o'clock, and a strong rise of water-rats." "And after all, a fly that is flush with the water is perilously close to the edge of wet." "The American angler seldom uses the term "rise." He has "a strike." And it may be believed that the term is just. A book of American trout flies shows a large majority of them to be fancy flies, appealing to curiosity, rapacity, tyranny, or jealousy, rather than to hunger." "It is a commonplace of fly dressing

that, in translating a winged pattern into its hackled correlative, you select a hackle combining as far as possible the colour of wings and legs, and, so long as you keep the colours, their relative position is of little consequence." "It is a remarkable fact that, until the sun's rim dips, the evening rise does not begin." "The underwater feeding is the beef and mutton, the floating fly is caviare to the trout." "I was wrong, for as my spinner was taken, and my fish went off downstream with a slam, there was a huge boil as the two-pounder flounced off the exact spot where I had expected to find him." "It might be supposed, again, that a hackled pattern would better suggest the nymph stage than a winged pattern."

I wrote earlier that Skues frequently travelled by train between London and Winchester and that frequently he tied flies during the trip of less than an hour or so. In "The Way of a Trout with a Fly," he wrote the following vignette, called, "A Travelling Companion." "I had secured a window seat, back to engine, on the sunny side of the two o'clock train for Winchester, had extracted from my kit-bag my little travelling wallet of fly-dressing materials, and had settled into my corner, when I became aware that I was not to travel alone. A passenger who had already come up from somewhere down the line---Winchfield or Old Basing, or farther south---was to go down again with me. It was a mid-July day, and my companion was no less a personage than a dark sherry spinner. He had placed himself obligingly on the lower ledge of my window-pane, and had disabled himself from flight by the loss of his setae. He therefor offered himself most conveniently as a model for imitation, and as soon as the other companions of my journey were seated, and the train was moving out of the station, I fixed a Limerick hook of the correct length in my little hand-vice, selected a little batch of ruddy-brown seal's fur dubbing, matched it against the model in the sunlight, waxed a length of hot orange tying silk, selected a rusty blue-dun cock's hackle of appropriate size, and whipped it on to the hook, broke off the waste end, whipped to the tail, tied in three bright honey-dun whisks and a length of fine gold wire, spun on a tapered length of the dubbing, wound it to the shoulder, wound on the wire at nice intervals, secured it at the shoulder, broke off the waste end, nipped my hackle-point in the pliers, wound the hackle some six turns, wound the tying silk through it, pushed back the hackle fibres, and finished with a whip finish on the neck of the hook. Twice the process was repeated before the train ran through Farnborough, when the wallet was tucked away."

Fishing his spinners, made from the model live spinner or travelling companion in the train, on the river that same evening, Skues hooked three big browns and a grayling all of which he lost, but landed another brown. Having the fish weighed by the river keeper, Skues writes, "The keeper's balance, however, said two pounds four ounces; and I am sure he wasn't a patch on the first fish I lost on the simulacrum of my traveling companion."

---30---

THE FLY-FISHER'S ENTOMOLOGY. Alfred Ronalds. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London. 1856.

This could easily be one of the longest lasting books in the history of fly fishing. It first saw the light of day in 1837 and continued with edition after edition until just recently (1999) when it came out as a modern printed book. In all but the last edition, the insects and their imitations were colored by hand, (not necessarily the author's own hand. The coloring of the fly etchings could have been done by young ladies and children), and no two copies (even of the same edition) look exactly the same. A special eleventh edition appeared in 1913 consisting of two items; the book with the text, including the hand colored plates, and another volume displaying the 48 artificial flies in nine sunken mounts. This special edition was available in Judith Bowman's catalog 40, during the year 2000, when it was offered for \$1500.

My copy is the fifth edition, 1856, which is so used and dirty, it could have been owned by a garage mechanic who never washed his hands. The coloring of the insects and their fly counterparts, however, is still quite vivid. There are two prefaces, one for the first edition and one for the fifth edition. In the first we find the author living in or visiting Australia and the editors urging the reader to find a sunny window, "with all his tools about him, first make his *droppers*, hackle-wise, and point his lash [leader] with the best he can purchase, till study and practice have perfected him sufficiently to make a *Winged* fly also, *well put together*,--the hackle just covering the point and bend of the hook, and no more; and the wing the exact length of the fly, from head to tail, and neither too full in the feather, nor too scanty."

The preface suggests a winged fly is more difficult or will take longer to tie than a hackled one, and the winged fly should be the point fly while the hackled fly should be fished as the dropper. (Many early authors used the term *hackled fly* but it was E. M. Tod who first wrote the phrase, *soft-hackled fly*, in his book, WET FLY FISHING. See page 00.) The reader will also notice that fly fishing and fly tying nomenclature was the more similar from one writer to another when their two books were published close in time to one another. And the reader browsing through this book can also witness the changes which, perforce, took place, not only of styles of flies, but also those of tying and fishing along with those of rods and reels, and lines and leaders.

Take the words, *buzz*, and *hackled* for example. They both are verbs meaning the same thing: to wind a feather on a hook shank, the only difference being in degree. According to Ronalds, *buzz* is a lot of winding all down the length of the hook, perhaps expending the whole feather in the process, which gives one a *palmered* fly while *hackled* is a little winding, perhaps two or three wraps only at the head of the fly, which gives one a *hackled* fly. Ronalds' art work

of the insects and the artificials verify these meanings, and he expands it in writing, "Some fishermen generally prefer their flies made *buzz*, (*i. e.*) representing probably flies with their wings fluttering, or in rapid motion; whilst others succeed best with their flies made with the wings to represent the appropriate natural wings *at comparative rest*)."

FLY FISHER'S ENTOMOLOGY lasted so long not only because of its colored drawings of trout insects and their imitations, but also because of its information on all aspects of fly fishing for trout. The book starts out with a colored drawing of a section of a trout stream showing the *haunts* or likely spots where the fish might be found, as, "The head and tail of a stream, in other words, the ends of a rapid, as A. 2ndly. The eddies formed by water passing round an obstruction in the current, as B. 3rdly. Such tracts as C, where a chain of bubbles or little floating objects indicate the course of the principal current; etc."

Then comes the section in the book named the *observatory* which was the inspiration for IN THE RING OF THE RISE, by Vincent Marinaro, 1976. Here's Ronalds. "...I built a little fishing Hut, or Observatory, of heath, overhanging a part of the river Blythe, near Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire,...Its form was octagonal, and it had three windows, which being situated only four feet and a half above the surface of the water, allowed a very close view of it...The curtains of the windows were provided with peepholes, so that the fish could see his observer, and a bank was thrown up, or order to prevent a person approaching the entrance of the hut from alarming the fish...

"The stream was regularly fished, and nothing more was done to interfere with the natural state of its finny occupants..."

Ronalds continues in a section called "*Taste and Smell*. It seemed almost impossible to devise experiments relative to the sense of smell in fishes, which would offer the prospect of satisfactory results, without depriving the animal of sight; the cruelty of which operation deterred me from prosecuting the inquiry.

"Observatuions on the taste of fishes are involved in still greater difficulty. I once threw upon the water, from my hut (by blowing them through a tin tube), successively, ten dead house-flies, towards a Trout known to me by a white mark upon the nose, all of which he took. Thirty more, with *Cayenne pepper and mustard* plastered on the least conspicuous parts of them, were then administered in the same manner. These he also seized, twenty of them at the instant they touched the water, and not allowing time for the dressing to be dispersed; but the other ten remained a second or two upon the surface before he swallowed them, and a small portion of the dressing parted and sank. The next morning several exactly similar doses were taken by the same fish, who probably remembered the previous day's repast, and seemed to enjoy them heartily. From these and similar experiments, such as getting trout to take flies dipped in honey,

oil, vinegar, &c., I concluded that if the animal has taste, his palate is not peculiarly sensitive.

"My experience goes to prove, contrary to the opinion of some who say that the Trout will take *every* insect, that he does not feed upon the Honey Bee, (*Apis mellifica*) or Wasp (*Vespa vulgaris*), and that he very rarely takes the Humble Bee (*Bombus*).

"It seemed to be a common practice with those who plied for food near the hut, to make a very strict inspection of almost every little object which floated down the stream, taking it into the mouth, sometimes with avidity, sometimes more slowly, or cautiously, as if to ascertain its fitness, or unfitness, for food, and frequently to eject it instantly."

Marinero did not build an *observatory* but concealed himself in a natural blind from which he could shoot the impressive color photos of feeding trout, for his book, IN THE RING OF THE RISE. He also reprinted a diagram of Ronalds' refraction studies, which illustrates the trout's vision. Marinero's observations of the trout's eating habits, called riseforms are a little more romantic, a little more modern. "Actually, the riseform is only the final act in what may be, many times, a very complicated process of acquiring a tiny bit of food.

"A trout does not eat in the manner of humans, or even as animals do. Humans have worked out a very satisfactory way of eating. We sit in a comfortable chair before a solidly positioned table on which are displayed, within easy reach, all the food that we may need for a full meal, and we do not need to spend much time at our eating. It is usually a very relaxing and pleasant affair. We do not go rushing about the dining room for endless hours, plucking a little bit here and there, tasting some, inspecting some, eating some, sometimes spitting out some that we do not like.

"A trout does all this and more. He is forever sorting out things, constantly bringing all possible food under close scrutiny; and he questions every bit that he gets. Eating, for him, is not a simple matter. His dinner table is always in motion, sometimes very fast, and heaving violently. The bits of food coming his way are moving just as fast as the table. Then there is the endless exertion to hold his place at that table..."

It's not until chapter 4 that we actually start tying the Ronalds fly imitations. And except for every eyeless hook first having to be 'whipped' to 'very fine round gut' and the use of feathers from landrails and blackbirds, the instructions seem quite modern. "Aim first at *neatness*, not at strength. Adjust the hackle to the size of the hook, by observing that the fibre, or *half* the feather, is the *exact length* of the hook from head to bend. The same of the feather for the wing. As a rule, make the wing *exactly* the length of the hook."

Ronalds then mixes tying with entomology. "The *Duns* are the small Ephemeroidea (or dayflies) in the *Imago* or winged state, but *imperfect*, and prepping to cast off a fine skin that envelopes them (wings and all) and to become *Spinners*. In the former state they are less

transparent, and their wings best imitated by the upper surface of a starling's feather; but in the latter they are bright and glossy, and the *under* surface of the feather used for the wings should be shown.

"The bodies of these delicate insects are sometimes beautifully imitated by stained hair and gut; but a fly should be made *as soft as silk, and softer*, if it is to be retained in the mouth of a fish many seconds. This is the chief reason why wings stiffened with varnish and gut bodies cannot supplant the old-fashioned furs and feathers." I tried to describe the molt from dun to spinner in my book, "SPINNERS," and I think Ronalds did it better and quicker.

Of the 47 flies in the book, several of them are suggested to be tied hackled, or as legs and wings. The one most resembling today's soft-hackled flies is No. 17. "THE JENNY SPINNER. This is the name given to the Iron Blue (No. 16.) in his new dress, and it lives four or five days after the metamorphosis, sporting in the still summer atmosphere. The Iron Blue is, however, found on the water chiefly on cold days, from the end of April until the middle of June. IMITATION.

BODY. White floss silk wound round the shank of the hook, and tied on at the head and tail with brown silk, which must be shown.

TAIL. A whisk or two of a light dun hackle.

WINGS AND LEGS are best imitated by making them buzz; for which purpose the lightest dun hackle that can be procured should be used."

There are not very many examples of modern soft-hackled flies in this book, but Ronalds, every now and then, tells the reader how to make an imitation in that style. "REMARKS. The small woodcock and *grouse feathers* (which can be used indifferently) make very neat hackle flies; and the beginner will find a pleasure in making the Oak fly of various sizes in the following easy manner:--BODY, orange floss silk, ribbed with fine black silk, which may be slightly waxed. Then form the head of your fly with your arming silk (brown), and choosing a woodcock or grouse feather, *whose fibres are the exact length of the hook*, stroke it back, and tie it (upside down) by the tip to the arming of your hook, just clear of the head, and wind the feather round as a hackle, holding it by the quill, and fasten off under the shoulder."

And for my fishing buddies on the Henry's Fork, I would like to include Ronald's hackled pattern for the green drake. "This fly, proceeding from a water nymph, lives three or four days as shown. Its season depends greatly upon the state of the weather; and it will be found earlier upon the slowly running parts of the stream (such as mill dams) than on the rapid places.

IMITATION.

BODY. The middle part is of pale straw-coloured floss silk, ribbed with silver twist. The extremities are of a brown peacock's herl, tied with light brown silk thread.

TAIL. Three rabbit's whiskers.

WINGS AND LEGS. Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a pale greenish yellow. MADE BUZZ FROM A MOTTLED FEATHER OF THE MALLARD, STAINED A PALE GREENISH YELLOW.

Here are Ronalds' description and tying instructions. "This fly, proceeding from a water nymph, lives three or four days as shown; then the female changes to the Grey Drake and the male to the Black Drake. The Green Drake cannot be said to be in season quite three weeks on an average. Its season depends greatly upon the state of the weather; and it will be found, earlier upon the slowly running parts of the stream (such as mill dams) than on the rapid places.

IMITATION.

BODY. The middle part is of pale straw-coloured floss silk, ribbed with silver twist. The extremities are of a brown peacock's herl, tied with light brown silk thread.

TAIL. Three Rabbit's Whiskers.

WINGS AND LEGS. Made buzz from a mottled feather of the mallard, stained a pale greenish yellow."

We don't know if Ronalds made much money with the publication of so many editions of his book, but he is just as modern as any author of today in trying to spread the news of his effort and possibly profit from it in any way he can. "It will be a great assistance to procure a set of flies dressed according to the directions of this book, which can be had of Mr. Eaton, Nos. 6, and 7. Crooked-lane, London, long commissioned by the author to sell his flies." Or the reader can learn how to fish them, himself, "Mr. Edward Moore, of Stanton Ford, Baslow, Derbyshire, kindly permits a reference to be made to himself, as willing to afford assistance to the beginner, either by letter, or by receiving a visitor into his house on the Derwent, and imparting a few practical instructions by the water-side."

SCOTTISH TROUT FLIES, W. H. LAWRIE, An Analysis and Compendium. Frederick Muller Limited, London, 1966.

The aim of fly fishermen in Scotland, according to Lawrie, in this book was "to simulate living insects - hatching flies, drowning flies, nymphs and larvae - in form, colour and size, and to do so in such a way that the representations would be readily submersible and swim well in the tumbling waters of fast-flowing rivers. It is the quality of submersibility which has governed trout - fly design in Scotland as far back as can be traced.

"Submersibility, together with what is known as 'good entry', established a general preference for fly-dressing materials that would readily absorb water and also spare applications of those materials in dressing a wet fly. Such is the explanation of the short, sparse hackles, the delicate wings, and the care with which both hackles and wings were given the correct 'set'. All these factors resulted in a trout fly sinking immediately it touched the water, swimming correctly and 'working' in a life-suggesting manner under water, and thereby proving an effective representation of a natural insect or insects.

"This quality of submersibility may well explain - partly at least - variations in wet-fly design in different parts of the country and even in the case of different rivers in the same area or district. If a bare fly-hook be taken, for example, the preferred length of body of a wet fly for making the Tweed, Clyde and the Tummel respectively may be clearly indicated."

Here, the author shows a standard hook shank with the various body lengths of three major river systems, the Tweed, Clyde and Tummel, indicated in the drawing. The Tweed hook is the longest, with the body of the fly ending at the beginning of the bend which would be average for American soft hackles; the Clyde is next near the middle of the hook and the Tummel is the shortest, barely one eighth of an inch away from the eye of the hook. There are two color plates in the book of typical Scottish wet flies and dry flies which are reproduced here because it is near impossible to describe them. Some patterns were also tied by the author and are included in the photo section of this book.

Not surprisingly, some of the fishing methods given in the book are just as unusual and 'scanty' as the tyings of the flies, and are illustrated with two black and white drawings included

here. The first is captioned, "The cast up-and-across on the Tweed." which apparently is the largest river fished by Scottish anglers, and the second, "Casting upstream on small and medium rivers." In both drawings the line and the fly or flies are not permitted to travel downstream below the line of the angler which means there is rarely any drag on the line or the fly or flies, and that there must be considerable more casting and movement of the angler fishing those rivers than we fish soft-hackled flies in American rivers today.

There are many soft-hackled fly patterns given in the book which the reader may like to try out in the various Scottish styles described and photographed in this book.

"TWEED FLIES--THOMAS TOD STODDART'S FLIES

Of all the Scottish rivers, The Tweed possesses a glory and glamour unmatched by any other. Its historical associations, its legends, its loveliness and its fishing blend into an appeal such as holds men thrall. Thomas Tod Stoddart seems to be the earliest Tweed fisherman to have set pen to paper by writing his *Art of Angling*, which was published in 1835."

Here are three of his patterns. Substitutes are required for feathers listed from song and domestic birds.

1. The Professor

Wing: Brown Mallard wing - feather.

Body: Yellow floss silk, rather longish.

Hackle: Fine red or black hackle.

2. Wing: Woodcock, snipe or lark feather.

Body: Light or dark hare's ear, as desired.

3. Wing: Starling or fieldfare (Thrush).

Body: Mouse or water-rat (muskrat.)

JOHN YOUNGER'S TWEED FLIES, MARCH and APRIL

1. Wing: Woodcock wing feather, or, for variety, either a starling wing, a bunting, or a lark.

2. Body: Yellowish gray water-rat fur taken near the belly mixed with an equal proportion of yellow worsted wool or mohair or preferably dyed pig's wool if fine enough.

APRIL AND MAY

1. Wing: Transparent feather from the wing of the bunting or that of a full-grown cock sparrow.

Body: Blue water-rat fur mixed with equal proportion pale yellow, including to white wool, mohair or fine dyed pig's wool.

3. Hackle: Small body feather from, say, the grouse, of a lightish fine freckle striped on each side.

Body: Same as pattern 2.

MIDDLE TO END OF MAY

4. Wing: Cock sparrow wing-feather.

Body: Dark Gray hare's ear fur, tied with dark blue silk.

JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

5. Wing: Cock sparrow wing-feather.

Body: Peacock herl.

AUTUMN

6. Wing: Hen Blackbird or water-coot's wing.

Body: Darkish brown or dusky fur.

BORDER FLIES

"In contrast with the old, general preference for winged wet flies for fishing a larger river such as the Tweed, the hackled fly has always been preferred for the effective fishing of the smaller Scottish Border waters. This preference is not one of mere idle fashion; it arises out of much practical experience. For the lightly dressed hackled fly has long proved to be a consistently better killer of trout than the winged fly on such consistently better killer of trout than the winged fly on such waters, and nearly all of the old professional fishermen and skilled

fishers of Border streams, including W. C. Stewart, were of this opinion. for the fishing of smaller rivers today there is no question of the hackled fly's superiority. (Please note: W. C. Stewarts 'spiders' are included on page 00.)"

BORDER HACKLED FLIES

Waterhen Blae

Hackle: Spoon-shaped feather with glossy underside from inside of a water-hen wing, summer plumage.

Body: Yellow tying silk waxed with colourless wax and very lightly dubbed with the fur of a water-rat, or mole. (This is the famous Water-Hen Bloa of the North of England, used to imitate the nymphs of the Dark Olive and Iron Blue Dun. It is a very effective spring and autumn fly for all Border streams and rivers.

Blae Hen and Yellow

Hackle: Blue Hen.

Body: Yellow worsted teased and spun on yellow tying-silk. A very killing fly on most of the Border streams in spring and early summer. A paler yellow body is used on the Tweed.

Stank Hen Spider

Hackle: Same as that for Patterns No. 1.

Body: Yellow silk waxed with cobbler's wax.

Dark Partridge Spider

Hackle: Feather from the back of a partridge, mottled.

Body: Orange or yellow tying-silk.

A standard Border pattern representing nymphs and, probably, the february Red. A reliable fly all season, and particularly useful in the early part of the trouting season.

Grey Partridge Spider

Hackle: Grey feather from the back of the partridge.

Body: Yellow or pprimrose silk.

Useful for evening fishing in late April, May and June.

Golden Plover Spider

Hackle: Small gold-spangled feather from the Golden Plover.

Body: Yellow tying-silk, sometimes with gold tip. A killing fly on smaller waters in early summer.

Grouse Spider

Hackle: Small freckled feather from a hen grouse.

Body: Yellow or orange tying silk.

Waterhen and Red:

Hackle: As in the Waterhen Blae

Body: Orange or dark red tying-silk.

Black Spider:

Hackle: Soft black hen hackle.

Body: Orange or dark red tying silk.

Snipe Blae:

Hackle: Small feather from inside the wing of the snipe.

Body: Pale straw-coloured tying silk.

Snipe and Purple:

Hackle: Small feather from the outside marginal coverts of the wing of the snipe.

Body: Purple floss or tying silk.

A good old north-country pattern for Iron Blue Duns, especially in spring and again in summer.

CLYDE FLIES

The most unusual trout flies in the history of fly fishing are the Clyde flies, fished almost exclusively on only one river, the Clyde, in Scotland. A book, *THE ANGLER AND THE LOOP ROD*, by David Webster, 1885, and *CLYDE STYLE FLIES* are included in this history.

---30---

chronology

*complete
none required*

THE ANGLER'S COMPANION, Thomas Stoddart, J. B. Lippincott Company.
Philadelphia, 1923.

It's a lot easier to tie flies now than it was when Thomas Stoddart was alive and fished in Scotland in the middle of the 19th century. Just his list of "Feathers for Trout Flies" could stop a beginner in his tracks. Here are the wings one needed: "Woodcock. Landrail. Snipe. Thrush. Lark. Starling. Blackbird. Dotterel. Wren. Redwing. Bunting. Grouse." And here are the feathers one needed. "Grey-Hen. Pheasant. Partridge. Mallard. Teal. Starling. Golden Plover. Lapwing. Wren. Ostrich. And hackles of the barn-door cock."

The angler to-be in 1850 also had to have a degree in chemistry so he could dye his own wool and feathers. "In dyeing wool or feathers, use an earthen vessel or crucible, as metallic pans have a tendency, especially when metallic or earthy mordants are employed, to injure the quality of the colour. Make use also, of soft river-water, and stir with a piece of clean wood."

Stoddart follows with instructions on how to make blue dye, yellow dye, red dye, black dye, and brown dye, but writes in a footnote that new "Judson's dyes, supplied in convenient little bottles," makes it a lot easier to color fly making materials than mixing your own dye"

After writing in such length about all those feathers and dyes, Stoddart dissapoints the reader by limiting the fly stock of the average trout fisher to, "1. The red or brown hackle, with or without wings. 2. The black hackle, with or without wings. 3. The hair-lug or water-mouse (muskrat) body, with wings." Then gives the reader the following reasons for the predominant hackled fly.

"Indeed, I may safely affirm that, on every Scottish stream and loch, one or other of the flies above specified may, in the absence of others, be employed with a fair measure of success; the sizes, of couse, as before observed, being regulated by the condition of the water, the state of the season, weather, and other influences... And as to the wings which, at option--for they are not absolutely necessary--may be used as appendages to the hackle flies, I would recommend them, in the case of the brown or red hackle, to be taken from the snipe, starling or brown-speckled feather found on the back of the mallard..."

Stoddart likes rabbit, "A very killing lure for trout may also be fabricated, by surmounting a twitch of the hare's ear with the hackle of the partridge or grouse, taking care that the fibres of the latter be of moderate length, just exceeding that of the hook itself. This, by some anglers, is termed the spider-fly, and should be used as a stretcher at the extremity of the line. On gleamy days at the commencement of June, when trout, in our southern rivers, are apt to prove lazy, I have found it very successful, especially on the lower parts of Tweed, near Kelso.

"A good hare-lug will provide body-material for several dozens of flies, and that of various shades and complexions, from a swarthy black on to a dingy white. The back or furry part of the ear, however, is that which, in point of colour, is most acceptable to the fly-dresser."

Stoddart continues with instructions "On Trouting with the Fly," and has included a diagram of a typical leader, showing the three flies, the stretcher or lowermost fly, indicated by the letter A; and the two bobs, or droppers, indicated by the letters B and C, with a distance varying from three and half to five feet between the two droppers. From two other books, A "Book on Angling", by Francis Francis, and from "Fisherman's Knots & Wrinkles", by W. A. Hunter, I am including copies of their handling of droppers, because of the wrong, killing way which has developed in American trout fishing where the 'dropper' is tied to a piece of leader material, which is then tied to the back bend of the main fly. This style of 'dropper' permits the fly to swing quite violently in the current becoming quite a snagging machine.

Working for a couple of years on this book on the use of the soft-hackled fly, I have repeatedly found passages which tell of the joys of fly fishing---but which I never seemed to have the space or inclination to write about, or copy until now, from Stoddart's, "Angler's Companion." "Fly-fishing, considered as a branch of the angler's art, possesses peculiar advantages. As an exercise, it is healthy, and just to the proper degree exciting. It braces the muscles, enlivens the spirits, gives rise to an agreeable alternation of hopes and fears; calls into activity the judgment as well as the fancy, the good taste and discrimination of the artist, not less than his ideal and creative powers. It affords room, also, as has often been remarked, for the display of elegant moitions and gracefull atrtitudes--impersonations of earnestness and intense enthusiasm, of hope, of anxiety, of joy, of disappointment, of admiration of pity, of content, of love, of holy feeling, and of crowning felicity."

Wow!