

Biography

A life choice was given to me at the tender age of eight by the local Catholic Priest. Having missed my first three rostered weeks as an altar boy he called me out after school. Letting him know it was either trout fishing or God on Sundays he forced me into a decision I've never looked back on.

From a youngster, while emptying my fathers Wheatly of Blue Duns, gifting most to the willows of the lower Mataura, I was enamored with fly fishing.

My adolescence and early adulthood were dedicated to the deepest, darkest and most wild places of Fiordland National Park in search of waters that were seldom if at all fished, all the time honing skills that would eventually lead to my starting a Guiding business out of Te Anau in 1994.

Having experienced most of what is on offer in the fly fishing world from Size 22 Trico's on Idaho's famed Silver Creek to tandem hooked Billfish flies off the coast of Panama there are two destinations that keep the eternal fires burning. Spey casting for British Colombian Steelhead and sight fishing for New Zealand's South Island Wilderness Trout.

Text

Having seen thousands of trout caught and released and just as importantly, as many if not more rejections over the years both in guiding and as an angler you get a sense of what flies work and when and where they perform at their best. As a fly tier, the analysis of streamside experiences manifests itself in creations, some dubious in the ability to perform but others that are absolute crackers. These I've developed into my "Go To" flies. First and foremost they need to catch fish and secondly they have to be simple to tie because when I'm churning out a couple of hundred the last thing I want is some time consuming creation. The six flies I've chosen fit the criteria, three I've created the others are that good I wish they were my own.

As a dedication to the Priest who let me out of the clutches of the Catholic church to pursue things piscatorially I've tied for many years under the pseudonym of "The Reverend".

The Reverends Green

Hook: Tiemco 777SP or similar long shanked Stonefly hook, #8-12.

Bead: 3mm brite black.

Thread: Dark Green

Tail: Green Goose Biots

Body: Dark Olive Antron

Rib: Green Vinyl Rib

Thorax: Dark olive Antron with 3 green goose biots either side.

Wing case: Green Stretch flex.

Many large early season browns have fallen victim to the Reverends Green when the rivers are full and the flows swift. Its size and weight if using Tungsten in the bead will get the fly into what I like to refer as the bite zone. When trout swing showing little or no elevation in the water column while feeding I find it imperative to get the fly to the fish rather than hoping the fish will come to the fly. I can recall countless times having to lead trout with the Reverends Green 10,15 and on occasion 20 meters in the deepest and heaviest of waters to induce a take.

My initial intention when tying this was as an imitation of the stonefly *Stenoperla*. Flawed in many ways, the colour is wrong to start with, it can only be labeled a generic pattern encompassing all things big and green from the *Stenoperla* to the Dobson Fly (Creeper). I've tinkered with this pattern over the years but continue to go back to this original tie simply because it produces results. The more use it has the better it gets with the antron in the thorax hanging off like a great beard.

The Reverend's Black Winged Black

Hook: Tiemco 9300 #12-16 or similar dry fly hook.

Tail: Moose Mane

Body: Peacock Eye

Hackle: Black

Wings: Black Quill Tips

Norman Marsh was an inspiration in his writings to many youthful New Zealanders and in his book *Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand* he told of a unique Mayfly he'd only seen in Fiordland. He called it the Black Winged Black. While many might think they were just oversized Sandflies he'd seen, these small dark mayflies exist and I thought it fitting to honor Norman Marsh in the naming of this dry fly the Black Winged Black. A devilishly difficult fly to see under normal conditions it comes into its own at dusk on reflected silky smooth water during a rise. Seldom do I use it when guiding as I'm bombarded with the same complaint about visibility or more importantly lack of it but when alone and with a rising fish in front of me it's the first fly I look for.

Somewhat similar in appearance to a Black Gnat the subtle differences stand it alone. I'm a firm believer in Peacock, both herl and eye as body material and use it in a number of terrestrials, mayflies and nymphs I tie. Peacock underwater comes alive so to speak and the Moose mane adds a stiffness to the tail that always keeps the fly sitting perfectly upright.

River Spider.

Hook: Tiemco 9300 #12-14

Thread: Black

Legs: Fine rubber

Body: 4mm Black closed cell foam

Thorax: Black Squirrel dubbing.

Wing: Single post of white McFlylon

Originally created by Canadian David Lambroughton as a waking dry fly for British Colombian Steelhead I've adapted and shrunk the River Spider for New Zealand conditions and in the process lost the original tail and added in squirrel dubbing as well as a white post for visibility.

First tie in the front rubber legs, looking like long antennae around 25mm in length. Then about a quarter of the distance down the shank from the eye secure a piece of cell foam, about 5mm in width and 15mm long so a third sits forward and two thirds to the rear of the securing point. Taper the tail so it finishes in a 'V' shape.

From there add two more lengths of rubber across the top of where the foam was secured in essence providing four legs of around 20mm. Yes, only a six legged spider. Dub over the legs with the Squirrel and finish with on top of that with the white post indicator.

The River Spider is not a subtle fly so I don't present it to free rising fish sipping mayflies from the surface. Its strongest point is its ability to lift fish from depth that would otherwise not come to the surface in mid summer. I've seen it account for over 20 large browns on a single day in mid March on the Upper Ahuriri pulling every fish from the bottom. This lifting power alone stands this fly as my number one terrestrial pattern.

The real acid test for any fly whether it be a dry or nymph is how it performs on what are considered the most difficult fish in mid summer. Those trout that have been fished over on an almost daily basis for a month or more. I know of no other fly that can get those fish to eat off the surface as freely as the River Spider.

The Reverends Hare and Pheasant

Hook: Tiemco 2488H #14-16

Bead: Black Tungsten 2mm

Tail: Brown hackle fibres

Body: Pheasant tail

Rib: Fine Copper

Collar: Hare mask

Most represented in my fly boxes is the little gem, The Reverends Hare and Pheasant which year after year continues to take trout from season's start to finish. When tied in a # 16 the proportions to the natural Mayfly aquatics of most streams is near on perfect and the additional weight of the tungsten bead gets the fly where it needs to go. Tandem rigged as a lead fly with a #16 or #18 Pheasant tail trailing it is a simple yet delightful combination that even the most discerning trout fail to ignore.

Using Tiemco's 2488H hook on small beaded nymphs helps as it has a great bite with its 3X wide gape and with the Short curved 2X heavy shank will not open up like many straight shanked hooks in #16.

Variations in color from the standard brown to green and black allow all bases to be covered when trout are feeding on small mayfly nymphs.

Klinkhammer Adams

Hook: Tiemco 200R #14-16

Wing: Posted white McFlylon

Body: Grey Fly Rite Dubbing

Rib: Fine silver wire

Thorax: Peacock herl

Hackle: Brown

Very popular in Europe since its introduction in the 1980's by Dutchman Hans van Klinken the

Klinkhammer Special has made its way across the globe and is a mainstay in many a New Zealand anglers fly box. Originally tied with tan dubbing and a Blue dun hackle the Klinkhammer Special's most appealing factor is the long curved hook allowing the Dubbing and Peacock to sit suspended in the surface water column in true emerger fashion.

Many versions have been created based on the standard mainframe and the one I prefer over all others is the Klinhammer Adams. The addition of a fine silver wire rib segments the body whilst giving the fly longevity. I like wrapping the herl around the thread and winding both to the hook to aid against the fragility of the peacock. Partridge make a specific Klinkhammer hook but I favor the lighter wired Tiemco 200R as I can dress lighter bodies and in doing so are not forced to heavily hackle the Posted Wing. In this case I go with the adage less is better and fish it confidently to actively feeding fish everywhere.

Wingcased Hare and Copper

Hook: Tiemco 3769, 3761 #12-14

Thread: Brown

Weight: Lead wrap

Tail: Brown hackle fibres

Body: Hare's Mask

Rib: Medium Copper wire

Wingcase: Brown stretch flex

Basic and beauty merge with the Wingcased Hare and Copper nymph. It never ceases to amaze me the smallest things, whether it be a difference in size or small change in the appearance of a fly can turn a trout that would show no interest in previous offerings into the hungriest beast in the river. The addition of a simple Stretch Flex wingcase transforms this nymph by flattening the often bulbous head producing a sleek trout attracting morsel. The guard hairs all protrude out from underneath as opposed to a full 360 degrees. This fly continues throughout the season long after trout have lost interest in beaded nymphs and many successful guided days chasing trophy sized fish can be thankful for this fly alone. It is a must have in my box.