

A List of Roger Fogg's Flies

Handbook of North Country Flies

Woodcock Spiders:

1. Woodcock and Hare's Lug:

Hook: 14
Thread: well-waxed primrose silk
Body: well-waxed primrose tying silk with a thorax only of hare's ear fur. Pick the fibers of the fur with a dubbing needle so that they merge with the hackle.
Hackle: a feather from the under coverts or marginal coverts of the woodcock.

Note: this particular spider is good in spring and early summer fly and presents a fair imitation of the dark olives but is a good general pattern all season.

2. Brown Woodcock:

Hook: 16-8. Smaller sizes for streams and larger sizes for stillwaters where this pattern can do surprisingly well.
Thread: brown silk
Body: either fiery brown seal's fur with fibers picked out to merge with the hackle, or brown tying silk or floss silk with a thorax of bronze peacock hurl, red fox or hare's ear
Hackle: well-marked red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock

Note: the seal's fur version produces a particularly attractive stillwater fly if the underlying silk is hot orange. It has a 'sedge-like' (caddis-like) looking appearance. A small version (brown silk) is good for river fishing and provides a fair copy of the small brown stoneflies, which frequent rough streams.

3. Olive Woodcock:

Hook: 14-8.
Thread: olive silk
Hackle: red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock wing
Body: either green-olive seal's fur with fibers picked out to merge with the hackle or olive floss silk with a thorax of hare's ear, again with fibers picked out to merge with the hackle.

Note: this version seems to do little on rivers yet achieves a great success on stillwaters where it probably suggests a sedge (caddis) pupae or hatching sedge (caddis). It may also be used as a leaded nymph.

4. Emerald Green Woodcock:

Hook: 18-14.
Thread: green silk
Hackle: a small red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock wing.
Body: seal's fur or floss silk may be used, but (Fogg says) 'in this case, use emerald green wool which is teased onto the thread as a dubbing rather than wound on.'

Note: though reasonable successful on stillwaters, this is essentially a river fly. Particularly on small rivers, when the conditions are low and clear.

5. Yellow Woodcock:

Hook: 14-8.
Thread: yellow silk
Hackle: well-marked red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock.
Body: either seal's fur or yellow floss silk with a thorax of hare's ear fur or peacock hurl.

Note: this is a good imitation of a sedge (caddis) pupae and may be fished on rivers and stillwaters alike. On stillwaters retrieve the fly slowly just under the surface film or fish it deep as a weighted pattern when sport is somewhat slow.

6. Crimson Woodcock:

Hook: 18-14.
Thread: crimson silk
Hackle: well-marked red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock
Body: crimson tying silk, floss silk or wool. A thorax or peacock hurl or red fox fur produces an attractive fly.

Note: the Crimson Woodcock may be regarded as a general river pattern and is particularly useful as an imitation of early stoneflies including the February red.

7. Orange Woodcock:

Hook: 18-14.
Thread: hot orange
Hackle: well-marked red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock
Body: hot orange tying silk or floss silk with a small thorax of green peacock hurl close up against the hackle.

Note: the Orange Woodcock may be dressed with any of the body materials previously specified. However the following prescription offers by far the best dressing. It was once thought of as a stonefly imitation yet the Orange Woodcock ought to have been regarded as one of the most effective general river patterns and the best of all the woodcock series. It will also fish very well in any position on the stillwater cast.

Despite the fame of the Orange Partridge, I (Fogg) much prefer the Orange Woodcock which in times past was a much more popular fly. The Orange Woodcock undoubtedly suggests a wide variety of natural creatures and is one of those flies which, as soon as you have dressed it, looks very likely to kill fish.

There have been many variations on the Orange Woodcock them including the Orange Brown which certainly merits attention:

8. Orange Brown:

Hook: 18-14.
Thread: well-waxed hot orange silk
Hackle: well-marked red-brown feather from the marginal coverts of a woodcock
Body: waxed hot orange silk very lightly dubbed with red-brown squirrel fur. The tying silk must clearly shine through the dubbing. The dubbing may be a little heavier just behind the hackle.

Note: our indigenous squirrel (European Red) now being rare, a substitute fur must be found. A version called the Early Brown using an under-covert feather.

9. Early Brown

Hook: 18 -14.
Thread: waxed orange silk
Hackle: a small barred under-covert feather from the Woodcock
Body: waxed orange silk very lightly dubbed with red-brown wool
Head: Peacock hurl

Note: as a stonefly imitation, this pale-hackled version enjoyed tremendous success and popularity. Often it is referred to as the Light Woodcock, while Edmonds and Lee lists it as the Winter Brown.

The Old Master is a fly which eventually appeared in T. E. Pritt's Yorkshire Trout Flies of 1885 yet was certainly in existence well before that date.

10. The Old Master

Hook: 16 or 14.
Thread: ash-colored or pale grey.
Hackle: a small pale Woodcock under-covert feather.
Body: ash-colored tying silk (Pearsall's No.10) wrapped over with open turns of Heron hurl. You will probably have to use a substitute hurl.

Note: whatever the truth about the name and origins of this fly, it remains a pattern worthy of our attention and as Pritt states, it is a "capital killer from April to the end of August, on warm days and evenings"

Starling Hackles.

11. Baillie's Black Spider:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Thread: brown silk, very heavily waxed until it appears almost black
Hackle: a glossy purple-black or green-black from the neck of a cock starling. The hackle must be wound half way down the body in palmer-style
Body: same as tying silk

Note: Baillie's Black Spider is an excellent top-dropper fly for upstream fishing and when dabbled near to the surface suggests struggling and emerging insects.

12. Little Black:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14
Thread: purple silk
Hackle: a dark glossy black feather from a starling's neck
Body: purple tying silk dubbed sparingly with magpie hurl. Scrape the hurl gently with the fingernails to raise the flue before tying in. The hurl should not be along the body but twisted with the tying silk when the body is being fashioned.

13. Starling Bloa:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14
Thread: primrose or straw-colored
Hackle: palest Starling feather from the under-coverts.
Body: as tying silk although a white tying silk is sometimes used.
The fly is much improved with a small thorax of the palest hare's ear fur dubbed behind the hackle.
Head: an optional peacock hurl head may be included
Note: the Starling Bloa is best regarded as a spring and summer stream fly suggestive of pale insects, including the Pale Watery and various spinners.

Golden Plover Hackles.

14. Dotterel Dun:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14.
Thread: pale yellow silk.
Hackle: a light mottled starling feather with a brownish tinge. Under-wing or Golden Plover.
Body: pale yellow silk very lightly dubbed with light hare's ear fur. (Touch-dubbed?) Dub a little more heavily behind the hackle to form a thorax.

15. Golden Hackle

Hook: 16 or 14.
Thread: yellow, only lightly waxed.
Hackle: a golden plover feather from the marginal coverts. Choose a feather with the largest and most distinctive yellow blotches on it.
Body: yellow silk with an extremely light dubbing of fur combed from the black ear of a spaniel, or a substitute fur, of a very soft texture and appear blue-black.

Black Mole.

Hook: 18 or 16 for rivers and 14 or 12 for stillwaters:
Thread: primrose yellow, very lightly waxed.
Hackle: a well marked golden plover feather from the marginal coverts. (Sometimes Stewart style)
Body: primrose yellow silk with the very lightest dubbing of pale hare's ear fur. The silk should be exposed at the tail end to form a tag and the fur built up a little behind the hackle to form a thorax. Pick out thorax with a dubbing needle so that it merges with the hackle.

16. Plover Dun:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Thread: copper-colored silk
Hackle: a yellow freckled feather from the marginal coverts of a Golden Plover
Body: copper silk very lightly dubbed with blue Water Rat fur. Alternatively blue rabbit under-fur with a pinch of brown fur mixed in. The dubbing should be very sparse indeed. (Theakston-silk only 'tinged' with fur).

Poultry Hackles.

17. Black & Peacock Spider:

Hook: 16 or 14
Tying Thread: lead colored (Pearsall's No. 9A slate)
Hackle: a sooty-black hen hackle feather, short fibred and wound sparingly.
Body: bronze peacock hurl dressed rather short and plump.

18. Black Spider:

Hook: 18, 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: black
Hackle: black hen
Body: black tying silk, floss silk, wool or seal's fur.

19. Butcher Spider:

Hook: 16 or 14
Tying Thread: black
Hackle: black hen
Body: silver tinsel
Rib: fine silver wire
Tail: red wool or red ibis substitute

20. Bluebottle & Greenbottle:

Hook: 18, 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: black
Hackle: black hen dressed conventionally or wound half way down body
Body: metallic blue or green tinsel accordingly or pearlescent over black thread

21. Blue Dun Spider:

Hook: 18, 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: primrose silk (Pearsall's No. 3) either lightly waxed or heavily waxed depending on the intended shade of the dressing
Hackle: natural or dyed blue dun hen from a powdery blue to an iron blue shade
Body: very sparse dubbing of 'blue dun' (Rabbit under fur etc.) over yellow silk Form a thorax by dubbing more heavily behind the hackle, but make sure the yellow silk shines through the dubbing for the rest of the body.

22. Blue Hen & Yellow:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14
Tying Thread: primrose silk (Pearsall's No. 3)
Hackle: blue dun hen, sparse
Body: tying silk, short

23. Brown Owl:

Hook: 16, 14, 12 or 10
Tying Thread: orange silk (Pearsall's No. 6A) waxed to a rather dull shade
Hackle: Brown owl substitute. Either a coarse-fibred red-brown hen hackle or a French partridge marginal covert feather dyed to the appropriate shade
Body: as tying silk although you may choose to use dull orange floss silk
Head: bronze peacock hurl

24. Dark Spanish Needle:

Hook: 16 or 14
Tying Thread: well waxed orange silk (Pearsall's No 6A), almost brown
Hackle: a very dark brown hen feather
Body: as tying silk
Head: peacock hurl

25. Greenwell Spider & variations:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: primrose yellow silk (Pearsall's No. 3)
Hackle: greenwell hen, which is ginger with a black centre. a darker Furnace hackle may also be used. Two turns only.
Rib: Fine gold wire
Body: primrose tying silk heavily waxed so that it achieves an olive-yellow shade

Note: wind the tying silk down the body in close turns and then back again. a dark hare's ear thorax (kept small) can be added.

26. Silver Greenwell:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: same as above
Body: flat silver tinsel, ribbed with silver wire.
Hackle: gold furnace. furnace hen.

27. Pheasant Tail Spider & variations:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Tying Thread: brown or orange (Pearsall's No. 17 or 6A)
Hackle: blue dun, ginger, Coch-y-Bondhu, honey dun, furnace or dark brown. Game bird hackles such as woodcock may also be used.
Body: three pheasant tail hurls twisted together and wound as a rope
Rib: fine gold wire

28. Yellow Legged Bloa:

Hook: 14 or 12.
Tying Thread: primrose yellow or deeper yellow (Pearsall's No. 3 or 5)
Hackle: pale yellow hen or yellow hen with a greenish tinge
Body: well waxed yellow silk; it should achieve a greenish yellow shade

Note: the fly may also be given a little dubbing of pale olive seal's fur behind the hackle.

Waterhen Hackles.

29. Waterhen Bloa:

Hook: 18 to 12
Thread: primrose yellow silk lightly waxed
Hackle: a feather from the marginal coverts of a waterhen's wing
Body: primrose yellow tying silk sparsely dubbed with blue water rat fur, or a mix of blue rabbit underfur and mole. leave a tiny tag of yellow tying silk and dub a thorax of fur behind the hackle. Make sure that the yellow silk shines through the dubbed fur when wet.

30. Waterhen and Red:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14
Thread: crimson silk
Hackle: a feather from the marginal coverts of a waterhen's wing
Body: a single layer of scarlet or crimson floss silk or plain tying silk
Head: an optional peacock hurl head may be added if required.

31. Dark Drake:

Hook: 18, 16 or 14
Thread: orange silk
Hackle: a dark feather from the marginal coverts of a waterhen's wing. Select a small feather from the bow of the wing
Body: waxed orange tying silk, not too dark, dubbed lightly with mole fur so that the silk shines through when wet. Dub a small thorax behind the hackle.

Coot Hackles.

32. Black Spider:

Hook: 16 to 12
Thread: black silk, waxed so that it possesses a rather glossy appearance. You may even varnish the body
Hackle: a dark charcoal grey feather from the bow of a coot's wing
Body: black tying silk with a thorax of peacock hurl or black ostrich hurl. If ostrich hurl is used trim the flue a little shorter.

33. Iron Blue:

Hook: 18 or 16.
Thread: crimson silk.
Hackle: the smallest coot feather available from the marginal coverts of the wing.
Body: Mole fur dubbed lightly over crimson tying silk with a tag of crimson exposed at the rear. Make sure that the crimson silk may be seen through the dubbing.

34. Water Cricket:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Thread: orange silk
Hackle: a dark and soft-fibred hackle from the marginal coverts of a coot's wing.
Body: amber or orange floss silk ribbed with a single of black marabou floss silk.

Note: the body may be extended a little further along the shank than in normal North-country dressings but must remain slim and neatly tapered.

Jackdaw Hackles.

35. Dark Watchet:

Hook: 18 or 16 for most purposes. on really windy days a size 14 may be feasible.
Thread: orange or purple silk.
Hackle: a smallish, dark, smoke-grey feather from a Jackdaw's neck. a Coot feather may be used as a substitute.
Body: orange and purple tying silk twisted together and dubbed with down from a water rat or mole fur.
Head: varnished orange tying silk

Note: it is actually simpler to construct a purple silk underbody and then wind fur dubbed sparsely on orange silk in open turns along the underbody. Make sure that the purple silk is clearly visible between the ribbings and that the fur does not mask the orange silk upon which it is dubbed. Both orange and purple must shine through.

36. Dark Bloa:

Hook: 14 or 12
Thread: dark claret, mulberry or wine colored silk
Hackle: a dark charcoal jackdaw throat feather
Body: claret floss silk

Grouse Hackles.

There are two species of grouse in Britain, the common red grouse, *Lagopus scoticus*, and the black grouse or 'Black Game', *Lyrurus tetrix britannicus* also referred to as 'Black Cock', which can be confusing when reading old fly recipes.

37. Blackgame:

Hook: 18 or 16
Thread: well waxed purple silk
Hackle: a small marginal covert from the male black grouse in its prime winter plumage. The correct feather should be almost black but possessing a bluish tinge.

Body: purple tying silk waxed until it darkens to almost black
Note: add a small thorax of green peacock hurl behind the hackle this is an excellent variation on the black spider theme and succeeds when any black flies are around although it will take fish at most times, especially on lakes becalmed by the dour dog days of July.

38. Grouse Quill:

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: brown silk
Hackle: a small orange-freckled, dark feather from the marginal coverts of a very dark male red grouse
Body: stripped and un-dyed peacock quill with a dubbing of dark hare's ear fur close up against the hackle

Note: intended essentially as a river pattern, the Grouse Quill offers a good imitation of small stoneflies, including the willow fly, but also stillwater chironomids.

39. Dark Grouse:

More or less the same fly as Grouse Quill but without the quill. The hackle is the same but it is given a body of brown tying silk waxed until almost black. Fished close to the surface, it may be used when any small black insects are in evidence.

40. Dark Moor Game: (Red Grouse)

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: orange silk waxed to a dark shade
Hackle: dark freckled feather from the 'knuckle' of a dark cock Red Grouse wing one of the 'black' sub-species of the Red Grouse is an ideal bird for this pattern
Body: a slim body of orange silk tinged with blue Water Rat** fur
Head: Peacock hurl

Note: perhaps the most neglected grouse feathers are the small spoon-shaped under-covert feathers which are blue grey on a Red Grouse or a darker grey on the wing of a Black Grouse.

The darker Grouse under-coverts make very suitable substitutes for the traditional snipe feathers used in such flies as the Snipe and Purple and occur in greater numbers than on a Snipe wing.

However, the paler under-coverts are used in the hackling of one of the most famous North-country flies, the Poult Bloa (Only from young birds).

41. Poult Bloa:

Hook: 16
Thread: primrose yellow silk
Hackle: a slaty-blue or 'bloa' feather from the under-coverts of a young Black Grouse
Body: waxed yellow tying silk very lightly dubbed with squirrel fur
Note: mix in a little hare's ear to tone the color down a little. The yellow silk should clearly shine through the dubbing although the fur may be a little heavier behind the hackle to form a thorax.

You may also pick a little fur out to merge with the hackle. (Assume red squirrel, as otherwise there would be no need to "tone down" the colour).

The word ' bloa' is a dialect word referring to the color of blue-grey clouds on a day when rain threatens; whenever it is used it refers to the color of the hackle.

Using the marginal covert feathers of male or female red grouse, the following series may be produced: Green Grouse, Orange Grouse, Red Grouse and Yellow Grouse. The only distinguishing difference between the patterns is that of the body color and for that reason I will reduce the series to a single dressing prescription:

42. Grouse Spiders:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12
Thread: green, orange, crimson, or primrose yellow silk
Hackle: a small mottled red-brown, marginal covert feather from the wing of a Red Grouse

Body: insect green, hot orange, crimson or yellow floss silk
Note: a thorax of peacock hurl or hare's ear may be added. These simple and easily tied flies are well worth a place in any fisherman's fly-box.

The Orange Grouse offers yet another alternative to the more famous Orange Partridge and along with the Red Grouse suggests, in particular, a variety of stoneflies including early season insects such as the February Red. In addition the Orange Grouse achieves success as a stillwater sedge pattern even when the natural flies do not possess orange bodies. Nevertheless, as suggestions of sedges, particularly the pupae, the green and yellow-bodied varieties are best.

One of the most neglected books of fishing literature is John Turton's *The Angler's Manual* of 1836. However, I suppose that its very scarcity now makes it understandably neglected. It is a significant work because many of the standard North-country flies, often erroneously accredited to Pritt, appear for the first time in print within its pages. Here are a couple of the less well known patterns from his book.

43. Yellow Spider:

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: light yellow silk
Hackle: light brown mottled moorgame's feather. I would suggest a feather taken from the marginal coverts of a female Red Grouse
Body: light yellow silk with a light dubbing of yellow Marten's fur taken from the throat (Virtually impossible to obtain, and very rarely used anyway! Suggest light hare fur, the almost white fur from the ear, dyed with a yellow marker)

44. Brown Shiner:

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: light orange silk
Hackle: a light brown mottled Moorgame's feather (Grouse) from the bottom of the neck
Body: light orange silk at the tail with a peacock hurl thorax
Head: Peacock hurl

Snipe Hackles.

45. March Brown:

Hook: 14 or 12
Thread: orange silk, Pearsall's shade 6a, which is a light orange (On their chart it is called Gold.)
Hackle: a mottled brown feather from a Snipe's rump
Body: orange silk dubbed with fur from the nape of a rabbit's neck (Pale straw mottled fur) lightly tinged with a red spinner shade.
Rib: fine gold wire or narrow gold tinsel

46. Snipe & Purple:

Hook: 18 to 14
Thread: un-waxed purple silk. Pearsall's shade 8
Hackle: a dark marginal covert feather from the Snipe, or Jack Snipe for preference. Choose a spoon-shape feather.
Body: purple tying silk or floss silk

47. Snipe & Orange:

Hook: 16 or 14.
Thread: orange silk
Hackle: a dark marginal covert feather from the Snipe, or Jack Snipe for preference. Choose a spoon-shape feather
Body: well waxed orange tying silk

48. Snipe & Yellow:

Hook: 16 or 14.
Thread: primrose yellow silk.
Hackle: a rather lighter colored marginal covert Snipe feather. Look for a feather with a pale blotch at the tips and a distinct buff-brown color over all.
Body: a single layer of bright primrose floss silk over the tying silk underbody. Theakston added a thorax of brown wool; you may also use peacock hurl, optional.

49. Black Snipe:

Body: 18 to 8. Small for river, larger for lake
Thread: black
Hackle: two turns of a rather longer-fibred Snipe feather than those used in the previous dressings choose one of the darkest feathers available on the topside of the wing
Body: a very short body of green Peacock hurl, which should appear little more than a thorax behind the hackle.

50. Needle Brown.

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: well waxed orange silk
Hackle: a small dark Snipe feather from the marginal coverts. The hackle should be wound sparsely.
Body: waxed orange silk which should assume almost a brown shade, with a thorax of grizzled hare's ear fur. Pick a few fibers out to merge with the hackle.

51. Light Spanish Needle.

Hook: 16 or 14.
Thread: crimson, Fogg recommends 'Cobweb', as it is no longer available, Pearsall or a more modern thread will do.
Hackle: a light bloa feather from the under-coverts of a snipe's wing.
Body: crimson 'Cobweb' tying thread. Make sure that it is neat and slim.
Head: Peacock hurl. do not make the head too large and conspicuous.

Partridge & Hen Pheasant Hackles.

52. Orange Partridge:

Hook: 16 to 12
Thread: hot orange silk
Hackle: brown speckled partridge back feather, not too long in the fiber. One and a half turns of hackle will suffice.
Body: a single layer of orange floss over the tying silk underbody.
Note: I prefer a rather dull orange floss although hot orange floss may be used. For this fly, a floss silk body is to be preferred as it adds a further impression of translucence when wet.

In Yorkshire, the fly is often given a rib of narrow gold or silver tinsel which adds extra attraction especially for grayling.

A further variation on the basic theme was developed by E.M. Todd, a great fly fisherman who published *Wet-Fly Fishing* in 1903. Todd added a rib of stripped peacock hurl to produce a very beautiful and effective fly. This variation is an excellent artificial for stillwater nymph fishing. Unfortunately, the stripped hurl is rather delicate and a single trout may well reduce the ribbing to unsightly shreds.

For stillwater work, Todd's version may also be given a dubbed body of orange seal's fur which creates a very sedge-like appearance and is to be recommended.

53. Crimson Partridge:

Hook: 16 to 12.
Thread: crimson silk.
Hackle: a well-speckled partridge back feather.
Body: a slim and short body of crimson wool.
Note: this provides a good imitation of the February red stonefly and does well when the river is discolored. It also seems to fish well in peaty little lochs and may be used on a traditional loch styled cast when boat fishing.

54. Green Partridge;

Hook: 16 to 12.
Thread: green silk.
Hackle: a brown speckled partridge back feather.
Body: an insect green wool body ribbed with fine gold wire. I may be given a roughly dubbed thorax of hare's ear fur if you wish, but this is optional.
Note: in larger sizes this is a good stillwater pattern and provides an excellent imitation of many sedge pupae. However, in very small sizes, especially when dressed on size 16 hooks, it can ease a frustrating day on the stream. It has a habit of moving fish in stale summer rivers when every other fly seems to send shock waves of fear throughout the entire pool.

55. Copper King:

Hook: 14 or 12.
Thread: brown silk.
Hackle: A brown speckled partridge back feather.
Body: copper foil or tinsel. This may now be purchased in adhesive sheet form.

Note: if you use copper tinsel for the body of this fly it may be buffed up to a nice shiny appearance with chamois leather. Generally regarded as a grayling fly, it may be leaded so that it will fish deep in pools where winter grayling hug the bottom in shoals.

56. March Brown Spider:

Hook: 14 or 12.
Thread: light orange silk.
Hackle: a well-speckled partridge back feather.
Body: a mixture of various shades of hare's ear fur dubbed on pale orange silk and ribbed with yellow silk.

Note: this may seem quite a simple dressing but it is really quite sophisticated in that its obscure inventor a couple of centuries ago perhaps, realized the value of harmonizing various colors of silk and fur. They blend superbly when wet.

57. Orl Fly:

Hook: 12 or 10
Thread: dark red or wine colored
Hackle: a dark brown speckled partridge back feather
Body: bronze peacock hurl over dark red tying silk. A tag of tying silk may be left at the end of the body.

Note: while the Orl Fly will catch its quota of river trout, it is a good 'sedgely' stillwater fly and probably suggests other succulent items of food including beetles and various larvae.

58. Welsh Partridge:

Hook: 14 to 10
Thread: claret or wine colored
Hackle: a mixed hackle of brown partridge back feather and dark crimson hen
Body: roughly dubbed purple seal's fur ribbed with fine oval gold tinsel
Tails: pheasant tippets

Note: a pattern which undoubtedly falls into the 'fancy' fly category is my version of the Welsh Partridge, the standard dressing being given in Courtney Williams invaluable *'Dictionary'*.

59. Grey Watchet:

Hook: 16 or 14
Thread: pale yellow or straw colored silk
Hackle: a grayish speckled feather from a partridge breast
Body: as tying silk. I like to add a little thorax of green peacock hurl behind the hackle.

Note: Pritt recommended the Grey Watchet for “cold days, and in the evenings during June and July” while Edmonds and Lee believed it best from May to the middle of June.

60. Knop Fly:

Hook: 14
Thread: black silk
Hackle: a grey, speckled feather from a partridge breast
Body: a dubbing of mole fur on black silk and ribbed with a single strand of peacock hurl.

Again this fly is included out of historical interest for I cannot guess the natural insect originally imitated by it. The word ‘knop’ is a Lancashire word for ‘knob’ but was also used to refer to the bud of a flower.

French Partridge Hackle.

Before ending this chapter, I must not neglect the importance of hackle feathers from the wing of the French partridge,

Alectoris rufa, is often known as the red-legged partridge. It is an extremely colorful bird yet possesses an oddly drab wing. In some areas of the country it has been introduced for sporting reasons and may be quite abundant.

Larger than the common partridge, the French partridge has white cheeks and throat bordered by a black band, and beautifully marked flanks barred with black, white and chestnut. The bill and legs are both red.

The fanciest feathers are sometimes used as hackles for wet mayflies on Irish laughs and Scottish lochs. In contrast to this beautiful flank feather, all the wing feathers are a dirty olive grey in color.

Nevertheless, the marginal coverts are very useful indeed and there are many small feathers just right for hackling trout flies. They may be used for any flies needing an olive-grey hackle; they may be used as substitutes for the scarce hackles of other birds, or they may be dyed to a variety of olive and brown shades using waterproof Pantone pens.

In addition, French partridge feathers are quite durable which makes them easy to tie in and wind. Coloring French partridge marginal coverts to various shades of green-olive and brown-olive is really simplicity itself. The Pantone pen is stroked gently along the feather fibers, from stalk to tip, until the correct shade is achieved. The feather must be placed on a firm surface

during this process and I usually hold the stalk with a pair of tweezers. Make sure that you color both sides of the feather to achieve an even color.

At first, the fibers of the feather will tend to clog together, but when the ink has dried thoroughly, the feather may be fluffed out gently to its original shape.

For such patterns as the Olive Bloa there are no better feathers in existence and they are certainly much better hackles than dyed hen feathers.

61. Olive Bloa I:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12.
Thread: yellow silk well-waxed so that achieves a yellow-olive shade.
Hackle: a French partridge marginal covert feather dyed with a Pantone pen, shade 396, or used un-dyed.
Body: well-waxed yellow silk, or yellow silk wrapped with open turns of heron hurl (substitute) dyed olive.

Note: I particularly like to dress a version of the Olive Bloa in semi-palmered Stewart style which makes it an excellent top dropper fly and suggests ‘hatching’ up-winged olives.

62. Olive Bloa II:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12.
Thread: well-waxed primrose silk.
Hackle: a French partridge marginal covert feather dyed with a Pantone pen, shade 396.
Body: well-waxed primrose tying silk very lightly dubbed with hare’s ear fur tinged with the same olive shade as the hackle. The fur is dubbed a little more heavily behind the hackle to form a thorax.

An alternative to the first pattern and a particularly good river nymph.

63. Olive Bloa III:

Hook: 16, 14 or 12.
Thread: olive silk waxed to a dark shade.
Hackle: a French partridge marginal covert feather dyed with a Pantone pen, shade 104. This is a darker shade than that used in the earlier dressings.
Body: dark waxed olive green tying silk dubbed with the darkest shade of hare’s ear fur.

Note: the dubbing should be sparse although a dubbed thorax may be included behind the hackle.