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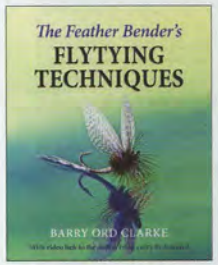

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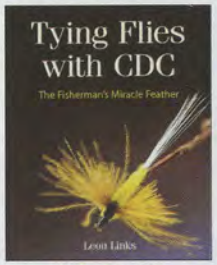

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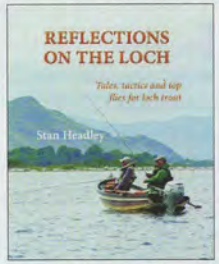

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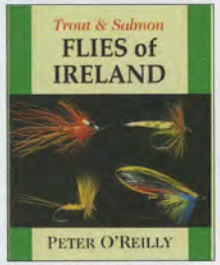

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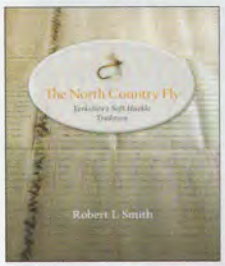

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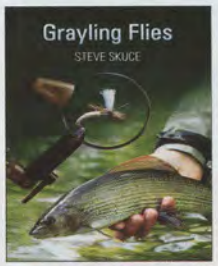

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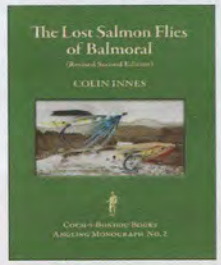

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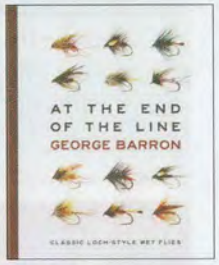

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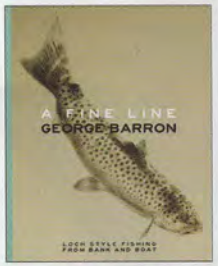

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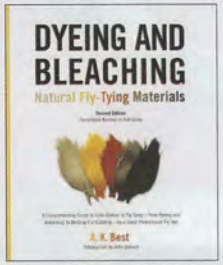

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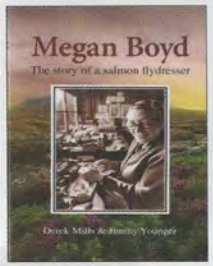

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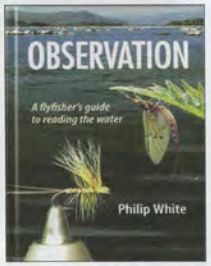

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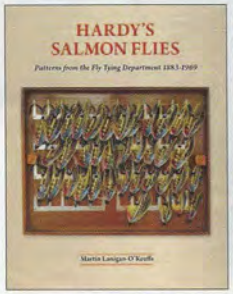

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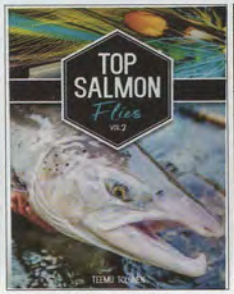

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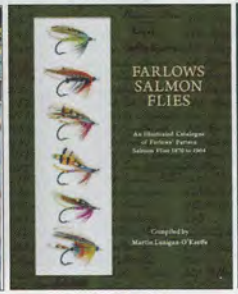

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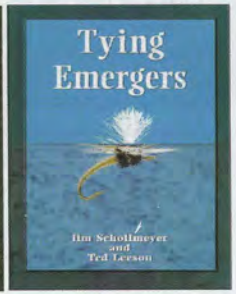

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Stuart McTeare's
Silver Dabbler

Melvyn Wood

I recently did a question and answer live talk on Facebook with Paul Proctor. One of the audience asked us 'What was the fly we would not be without?' For me that was the easiest question of the night - Stuart McTeare's Silver Dabbler was my reply without hesitation. Why you may ask? Because it catches big fish! Stuart held the Lough Sheelin brown trout record at 11lbs 7oz on his Silver Dabbler. In 2007 I caught a wild brown trout on Lough Corrib that was exactly a pound heavier at 12lbs 7oz. I have since caught salmon on Loch Hope to 12lbs, sea trout to 6lbs 2oz on Lough Currane and in 2017, the biggest recorded brown trout on Malham Tarn at 9lbs 2oz, all on this fly. And it caught me one of the largest wild browns of the year to be caught on South Uist's West Olly at 5lbs 3oz.

It also catches rainbows! The only variation to the original pattern is that my version is tied with red thread where the original calls for black. I remember catching fish after fish one spring on Carsington Water, fishing it on a short line, just as it was intended to be fished. It is worth noting that fishing a short line is missing from many modern fly angler's repertoires which is a big shame as short lining can be a deadly method for rainbows.

I always fish this pattern on the point in a team of three - even though its name suggests a top dropper fly. Its usual partners are bushy patterns - a Kate Mac or a bumble (usually claret) in the middle and a Sedgehog or a Muddler on the top dropper.

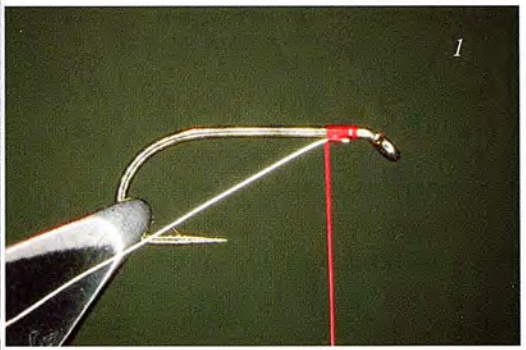
I first came across this pattern in 2001 before my first ever fly-fishing trip to Ireland. I was not accustomed to fishing for wild browns, having been brought into the fly-fishing world fishing for still water rainbows. I needed some Irish

style flies and found all I needed to tie in Peter O'Reilly's book *Trout and Salmon Flies of Ireland*. The flies in the book changed my life. I immediately fell in love with not only the flies, but the fishing, the way of life, the Irish people and Ireland. I now fish in Ireland at least once a year, and when I am there, I never want to come home. For me it is truly a magical place.

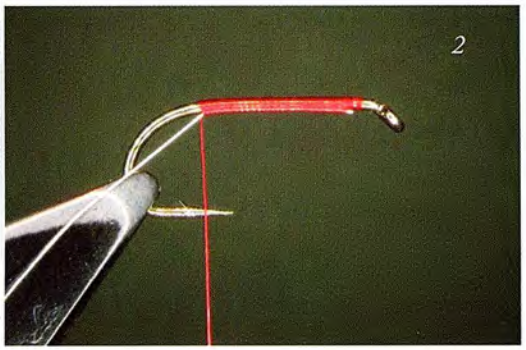
Dabblers come in many guises: Pearly, Gold, Claret, Fiery Brown and Dale-head (Rob Denson) to name a few, but the one that stands out in the crowd for me is the McTeare Silver Dabbler.

Dressing

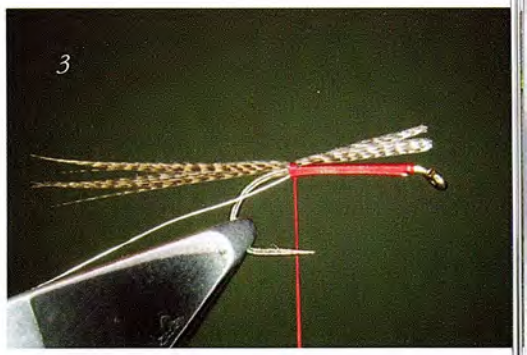
Hook: Wet fly, #8 to 12.
Thread: Red 8/0 tying thread.
Rib: Silver wire.
Tail: Bronze mallard.
Body: Claret seal's fur over-ribbed with flat silver tinsel.
Body hackle: Ginger cock hackle.
Wing: Bronze Mallard, cloaked.



1 Start the thread on the hook and tie in the silver wire rib at the front of the hook.



2 Tie down the rib along the length of the hook shank.

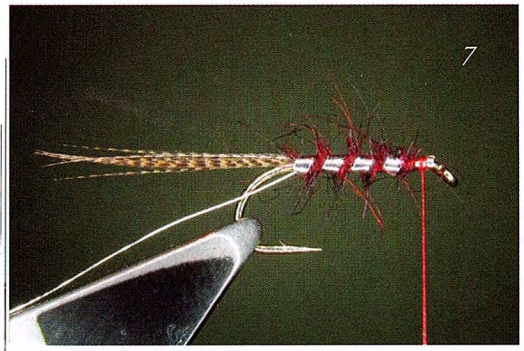


3 Tie in the bronze mallard fibres for the tail at a point mid-way between the barb and the point of the hook.

4 Tie down the waste ends along the length of the hook shank and trim off the remainder. Tie in the tinsel at the front end of the body.

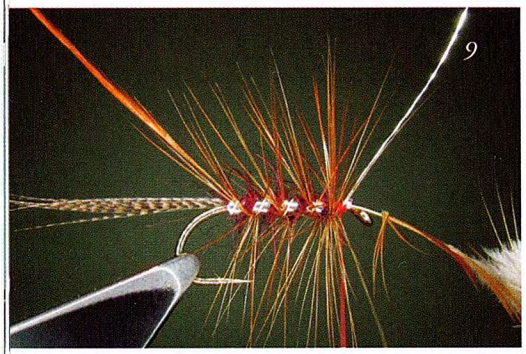
5 Secure the tinsel along the length of the hook shank, to the tail.

6 Dub the thread with seal's fur and wrap in open turns, leaving gaps equal to the tinsels width, so that once the tinsel is wrapped, the body is 50% seal's fur and 50% tinsel.



7 Wrap the tinsel in between the seal's fur.

8 Tie in the cock hackle at the front of the body. Wind two turns at the shoulder, then palmer down the body. Pick out the seal's fur well after the body hackle has been wound on.



9 Wrap the silver wire to trap down the hackle. The wire needs to be placed on top of the silver tinsel, not on the seal's fur.

10 Bind down and remove the waste ends.

11 Loosely tie in a bunch of bronze mallard on top of the fly. Spread the bunch to cloak the top of the fly before tightening the thread. Repeat on the bottom of the fly.

12 Trim off the waste ends, form a neat head with the tying thread, whip finish and tie off. Then varnish the head.

Fly tied and photographed by Melvyn Wood.

The fly-fishing and fly-tying bug engulfed Melvyn about the same time, some 25 years ago, when he was in his mid-thirties. Melvyn ties all types of flies. From classic salmon flies – which he has a love hate relationship with – to the simplest of lures. His passion is for tying lough flies in the Irish style. He is also a member of the Pendle and Leeds branches of the FDG.