

The Flame

It's a beautiful top-dropper, but tricky to tie, writes Rob Denson



TYING TIPS

Practice makes perfect. Only basic skills are required, but make every turn of thread count. Use a little less of everything than you think, otherwise you'll overdo it.

Hook Size 10-12 Kamasan B175
Thread Red UTC **Tail** Golden pheasant tippets, dyed red **Rib** Oval gold or gold wire **Body** Golden-olive seal fur **Body hackle** Cock or hen, dyed West of Ireland golden olive **Wing** Roe, dyed Orkney peach **Head hackle** Blue jay over orange hen

I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR THE skill level needed to tie this month's fly. Thankfully, I've never had to attempt one myself, but then I've never needed to - the originator responds well to flattery and, fingers crossed, this article will secure another lovingly-crafted consignment from the man himself. Think of this fly as a challenge, and if you manage to create something that even vaguely resembles what you see here then your efforts will be well rewarded.

The man is Greg White from Carrickfergus. Greg not only ties a mean fly, he wields it well, too. His Irish squad won gold at this year's Spring International on Lough Mask. Greg was the second-placed Irish rod and fourth overall. A huge well done, and congratulations to Greg and the Irish squad.

Perhaps Greg's greatest piscatorial achievement, though, is his ability to cram more materials on to a hook than most of us own, without it looking overdressed.

The Flame caught my attention about ten years ago. Waxing lyrical had elicited the desired response in the shape of a first consignment. I remember stressing to Greg after seeing one in the flesh that it was no everyday fly, and that I hadn't the foggiest notion when it would excel. If memory serves, Greg had no idea, either, but we agreed The Flame would burn brightly on the right day. If that sounds like a case of the fly catching the angler, then you're

probably right, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. If a fly, for whatever reason, tickles your fancy, you simply must tie it or buy it, and then try it. If it works, that's all that matters. As Andrew Marr once said, when commenting on Gracie Fields' meteoric rise to fame: "Not everything in life can be explained."

As you've no doubt figured out, we're not imitating a hatching buzzer here, or a sedge pupae, or a heather fly. With The Flame, we're in the business of provoking a response from the trout. Whether that's a feeding response or an aggressive response, it matters not. It's probably a combination of both. No doubt you've also figured out that this is an out-and-out top-dropper pattern, designed to cause a breach of the peace in the surface layers, drawing trout from below for a closer look.

The Flame has done much good work on my travels, turning many a hard, slow day into a rewarding one. It's one of those "if in doubt" or "luxury" patterns - you know, the ones that tend to call from dark corners of one's box when you're struggling to crack the code. As you would imagine, The Flame shines brightly on dark days and is an unmissable target in big, dark, brooding waves. Perhaps best of all, The Flame is one of those rare things - a catcher of fish in bright sunshine and rolling waves, saving the day for me on several occasions in Orkney and on Malham Tarn and Stocks. **T&S**



ROB DENSON

has fly-fished for trout for 25 years, visiting all four corners of Britain and Ireland, combining his love of fly-tying, photography and a rolling wave. Web: robdenson.co.uk



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