

THE SOUND HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD



Craig Shreeve

The take was solid but belied the ferocity to follow. Fishing just below me, my wife, Laurie, reacted to the upstream turbulence with an exuberant whoop, as the cyclopean steelhead violently shouldered its way across the surface of that small southwest Washington river in the spring of 1990. The same river that 10 years before had produced the current state-record winter steelhead of 32.75 pounds.



Top: Painting by Henry McDaniel. Bottom: Mr. Brookshire hooked this incredible steelhead on December 23, 1979. The hour and a half fight carried over a mile down river. The trophy fish wasn't weighed until the next day probably costing him the state record.



ample time to reflect on my long association with Hardy reels, beginning with a 1958 solitudinous decision to devote all four seasons to the pursuit of steelhead with a fly. Fellow anglers Al Knudson, Syd Glasso, Ralph Wahl and George McCleod coveted the Hardy Perfects, St. Georges and St. Johns. My partner Walt Johnson, who pioneered midge-rod upstream dry-fly fishing for steelhead in the 1940s, preferred to balance his Leonard wands with the Hardy Light Weight series.

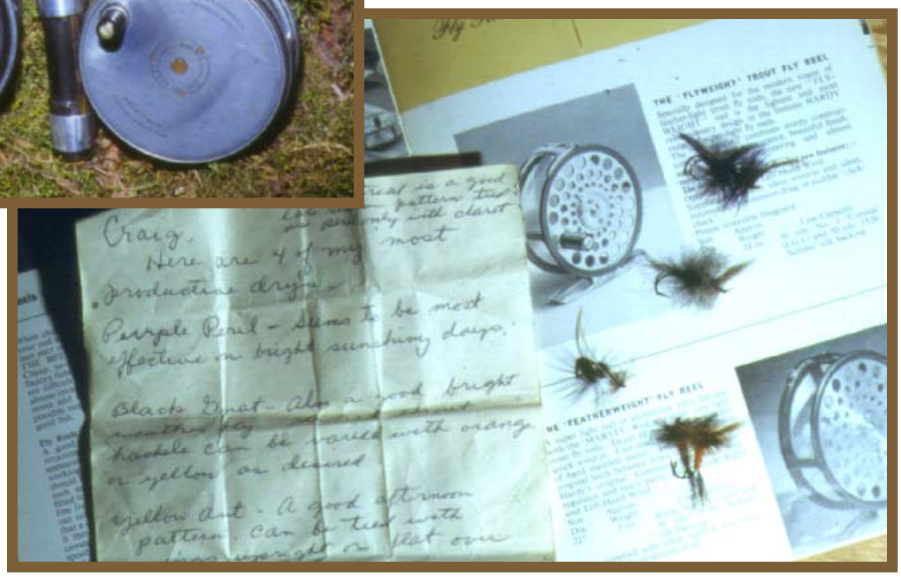
Submerging, the leviathan gathered momentum and headed downstream on a scorching run that in moments dispensed much of my backing, the ever-increasing speed pushing the Hardy Zenith to new decibel levels ... everything ending in a high-arching leap that left no doubt ... this was my mightiest steelhead ever. Two memories remain:



Top left: The Hardy Fly Catalog and surrounding books had great influence on Craig's (the author's) fly tying and selection. Below right: Selection of Hardy Lightweight Series. Below left: Other reels by Hardy include (from left to right): Hardy St. George, Hardy St. John and Hardy Perfect. Bottom right: Walt Johnson cautiously revealing his most successful upstream dries.

the suspended mid-air trophy defiantly throwing the fly ... and the magical sonance of a Hardy reel under the stressful pull of a really large fish. Truly a sound heard 'round the world by all fly-fishers acquainted with the eminent reels from the "House of Hardy."

The flight from Seattle, Washington, to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, provided



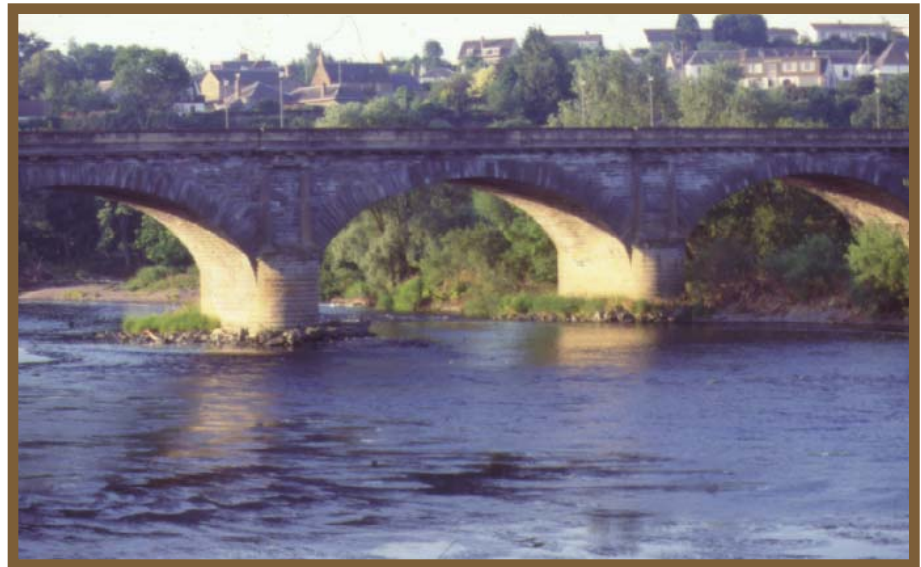


by master reel designer Charlie Norris.

Rocketing north to Kelso with Andy Murray was exhilarating. A fervid Formula One fan, I envisioned the late Jimmy Clark (“The Flying Scot”) honing his skills on these same two-lane negative-cambered serpentine roads. Once our minds adjusted to right-hand steering, we began to assimilate the loveliness of the countryside. Murray gave credit to the Duke of Northumberland and his control of much of the land for the hedge-rowed orderliness we were sensing ... and with museful affirmation declared, “It’s good to be the Duke.” In the days that followed, while observing more of the Duke’s extensive holdings, we found ourselves in agreement with Murray’s colloquial

Leaning forward in the window seat allowed a glimpse of the northern tip of Scotland, as the plane’s cabin graphics placed us some 500 miles from our Netherlands destination. There we would meet our traveling companions from the Cortland Line Company: Russ Darr, manager of marketing communications, and John Stacey, regional sales manager. Together we would fly on to Newcastle in the United Kingdom, meet Hardy’s Andy Murray, and then motor north to Kelso. This dream scenario was made possible by the gracious invitation of House of Hardy and the Cortland Line Company.

Before touchdown, I recalled that fateful spring day in 1990 and I removed the “retired” Zenith reel from my carry-on one more time ... hopeful that our upcoming visit to the House of Hardy could include a personal “tune-up”



Top left: The countryside's orderliness blends into a flowing panorama of tranquility. Above right: First glimpse of the far famed Tweed is everything that one could hope for. Photo by D. Rust. Bottom left: From a high bluff Andy points out the preferred Salmon lies to Russ Darr.



phrase ... it is good to be the Duke.

Nearing Kelso, we had our first glimpse of the far-famed river Tweed. From a high bluff, Murray pointed out the preferred salmon lies and suggested we move to a closer view in hopes of capturing a picture of these noble fish as they inconspicuously journey upstream from tidewater. Closer examination revealed a river at least a foot below normal for this date in July (the beginning of Europe’s 2003 record heat wave) and carpeted with extraordinary weed growth, no doubt promoted by the higher than normal water temperatures. Although hopes for ideal fishing conditions were fading ... it was awesomely special to be in this place at this time.

Centered on its square (the largest market



Cobblestone streets are free of clutter and tend to slow traffic to a friendly pace.

square in Scotland), Kelso is a town well-fitted to do its job today, a town for the visitor — whether armed with a fishing rod, a camera, or just an appreciative eye.

Cobblestone streets are lined with provocative shops that require further investigation, while several historic sights surround this Georgian- and Victorian-appearing border



Inviting shops frame the streets in the best travelogue style. Photo by D. Rust.



Kelso's Town Square is the largest Market Square in all of Scotland.

town. A short walk from our hotel transported us back in time to the site of “one of the most spectacular achievements of Romanesque architecture in Scotland,” the

Kelso Abbey. This oldest, wealthiest, and most powerful of the Border Abbeys, was founded by King David I in 1128.



The Kelso Abbey remains one of the most spectacular achievements of Romanesque architecture in Scotland.



Tradition continues at the Ednam House Hotel, our destination residence. This luxuriant Georgian-styled hotel was originally designed as a mansion house in 1761 for James Dickson of Ednam. In 1924, under the ownership of the Brooks family, it became a hotel and currently is in its third generation of proprietorship. Recently retired Alastair Brooks holds the peerless distinction of being born in room number 6. He and several natty gentlemen meet promptly at 10:00 each morning in the formal sitting room, and over coffee discuss the day's events, along with current and past fishing tales. Included in this group and accompanied by his son, Jim, is the distinguished Mr. Henderson, a well-known artist and former instructor at Edinburgh. At 95 he confided, "I haven't fished for a few years now but did manage to take my two largest salmon while in my 80s."

Top left: Third generation proprietors, Ralph and Anne Brooks, under the watchful eye of James Dickson, pictured above. Top right: Promptly at ten each morning they meet in the sitting room for coffee, tea and conversation. From left to right, Alistair Brooks, James Henderson and son Jim. Center right and below: One is transported back in time at our Ednam House destination, with style and comfort. Photo below by D. Rust.





From the hotel's dining room there is a splendid view of the river Tweed, just downstream from the world famous "Junction Pool." I introduced myself to the Craig brothers and was soon treated to a novel tale. Harry Craig caught his first salmon some 25 years prior from the Teviot (just above its confluence with the Tweed). He recounted, "The day was blustery and I ventured forth without the aid of a ghillie, determined to hook my first fish. As luck would have it I managed to land a lovely salmon of some 11 pounds. I hastened back to the hotel and laid my fish out on the lobby's floor as was the custom, and headed upstairs for a bath. On my return I was amazed to see the lobby completely covered with fish, and mine by far the smallest."



Top left: At the dining table planning the days events are (from left to right) – John Stacey, Laurie Shreeve Andy Murray, Russ Darr and Dave Rust. Top right: The Craig Brothers along with their former employee preparing for a day on the Tweed. Harry Craig on the left. Below: The Teviot river just above the Junction Pool (Harry Craig's first salmon came from this water).



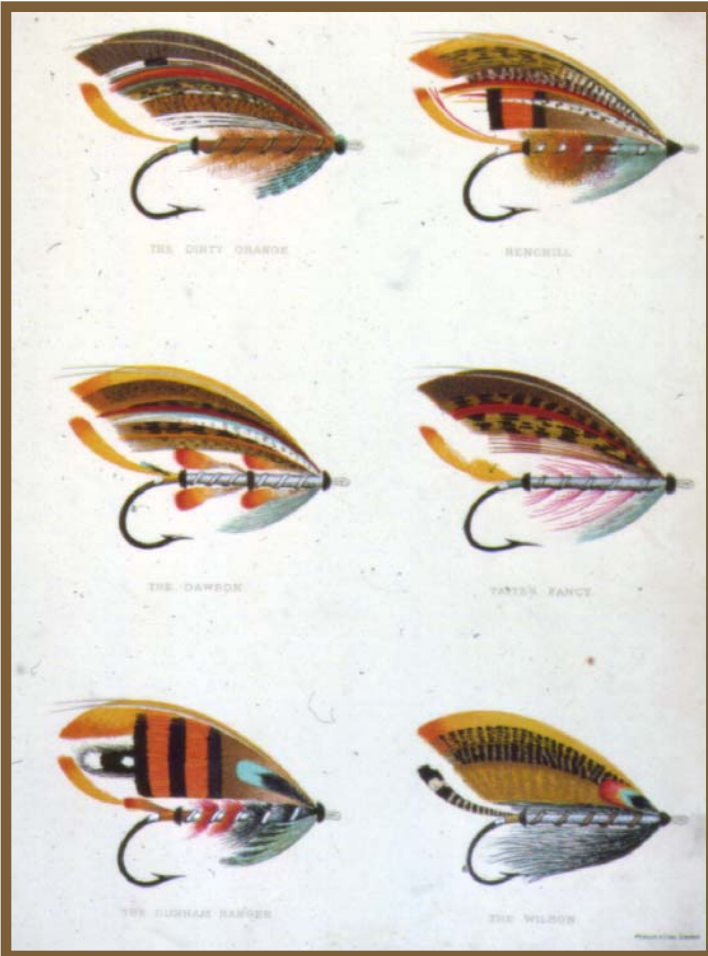
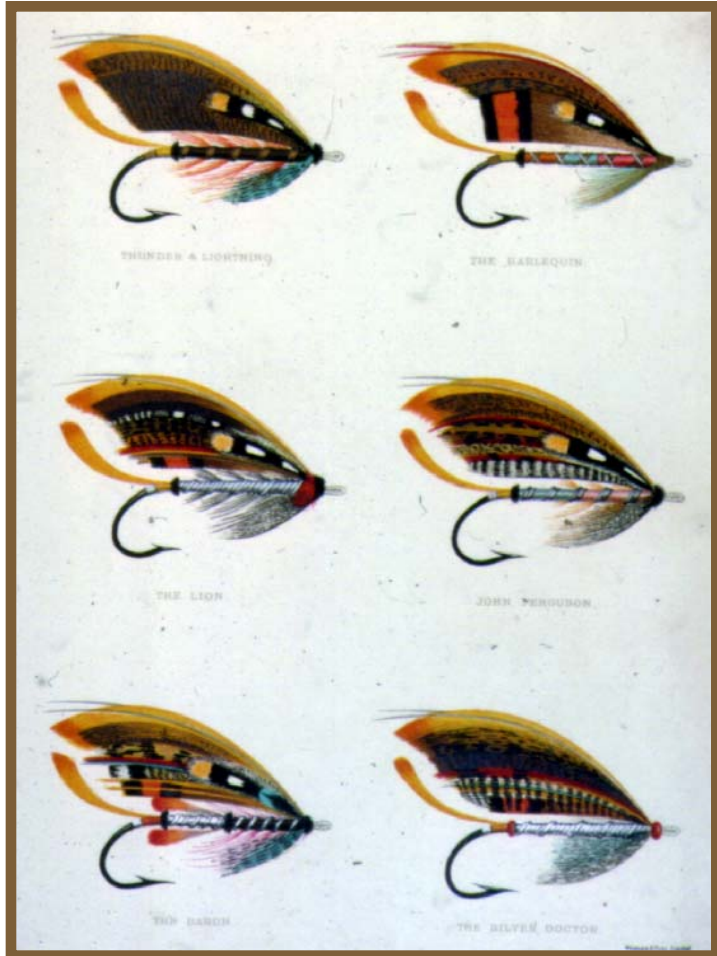


A gothic-style garden pavilion stands between the house and the river, with an intoxicatingly redolent floral display. From across the river, under the influence of nearby Floors Castle, sweeping views upstream and down are strikingly palatial and easily captured on film or video to be long appreciated. The true impact of this place is felt not only through the senses ... but further ... into the soul, as one ingests the surrounding “Living History.”

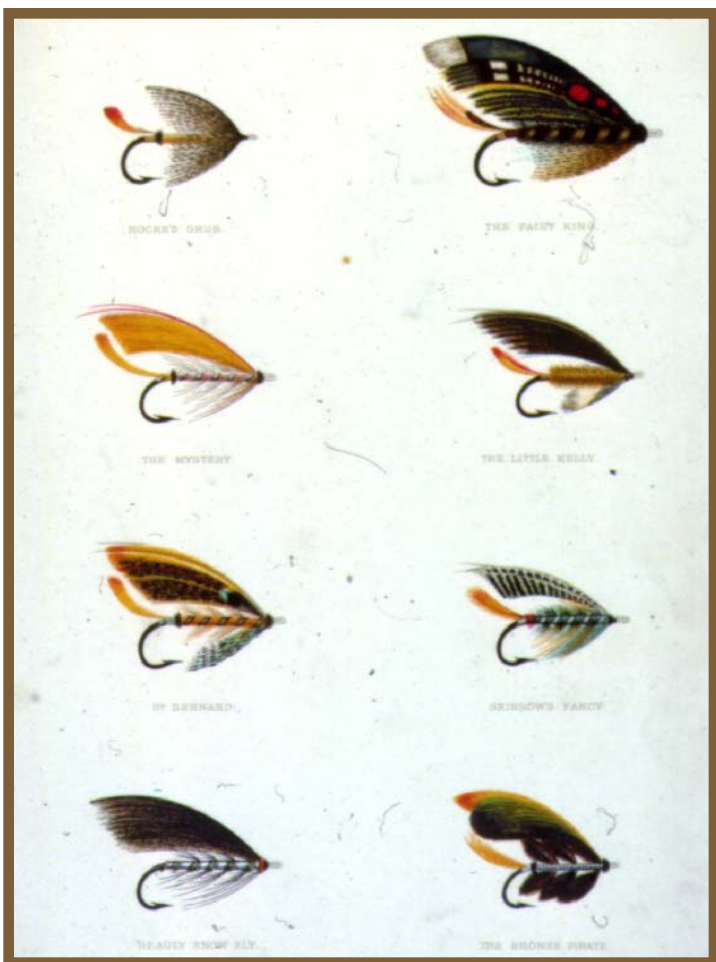
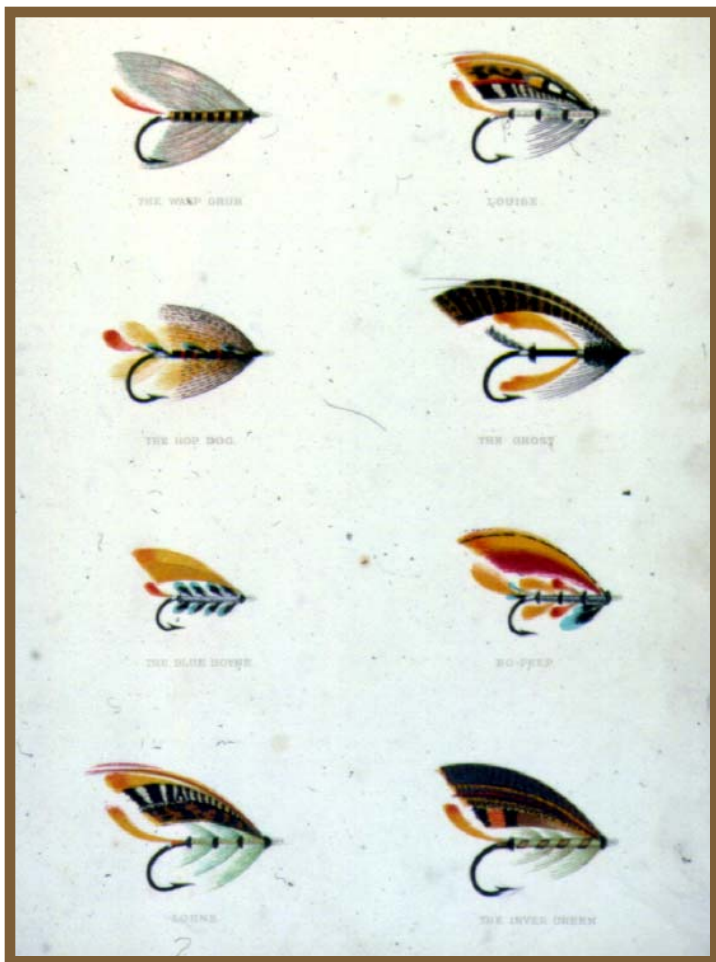
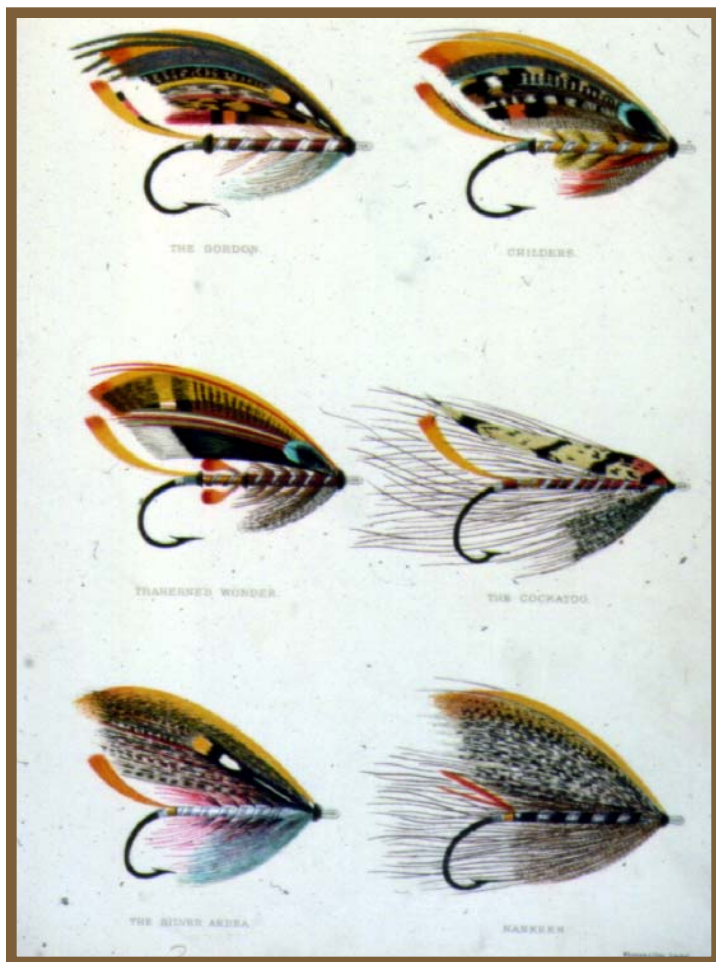
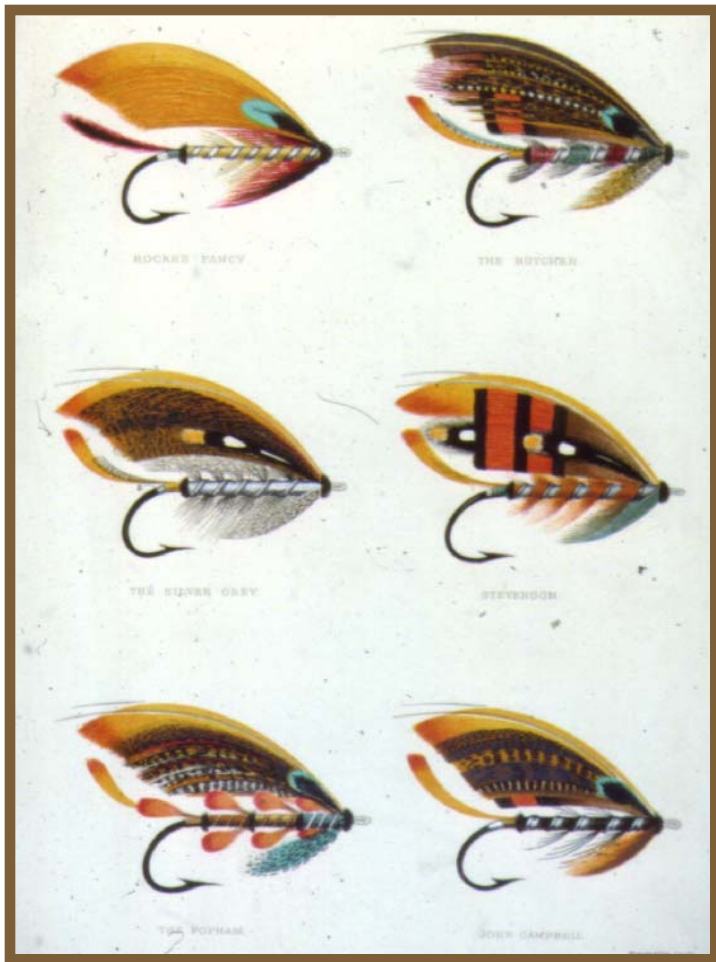
Strolling the riverbank just below the “Junction Pool” compels one to romance the past and envisage renowned anglers at the turn of the 20th century migrating here to ply the waters of the Tweed with their exotic full-dress salmon flies. Most prominent among them, of course, was George Kelson (1836-1920). Though controversial, his cherished and classic fly-dressers book *The Salmon Fly* (1895), provides the reader with clear and orderly instructions for dressing 240 showy salmon-fly patterns plus eight color plates illustrating 52 historic flies.

Top left: Sumptuous floral blooms ornament the landscape. Top right: Romancing the past comes easily here. Below: Sweeping riverscape views await each visitor. Photo by D. Rust.





The first four plates from Kelson's book, *The Salmon Fly* (1895).



The last four plates from Kelson's book, *The Salmon Fly* (1895).



*Original popular 19th century flies for the Tweed as prescribed by Francis Francis in his publication
Middle row: Durham Ranger (9/0), The Candlestick Maker, Childers*

The Tweed's fly history changed gradually through the early 1800s from rather plain patterns such as the Toppo, espoused by Younger and Scrope, to include in the 1840s the more difficult to tie Durham Ranger,

a handsomely hued creation by Mr. Scruton, from the town of Durham. Then, in nearby Sprouston, James Wright, one of the most innovative and artistic fly dressers for miles around, created for us several classics



publication, *A Book on Angling* (1867). Top row: *Durham Ranger* (4/0), *The Captain*, *Jock Scott*.
Childers (10/0). Bottom row: *Silver Doctor*, *Alexandria*, *White Wing*.

including: the Black Doctor, Greenwell, (the fly Sir Herbert Maxwell claims was responsible for the capture of numerous very large salmon), the Silver Grey and that famous storm fly, Thunder &

Lightning. The last half of the 19th century saw an ever-increasing global search, acquisition, and application of exotic feathers that promulgated new levels of color intensity at the fly-tier's table.



*Additional popular 19th century Tweed flies. Left column: **Butcher**, **Blue Doctor Variation**, **Blue Doctor Variation**, and **Baconsfield**. Right column: **Popham Variation**, **Popham**, **Childers**, and **Thorndyke**.*



Across from the Ednam House is Tweedside Tackle, a full service fly shop.

Anxious to view current fly patterns being favored for the Tweed in low water we crossed from Ednam House to Tweedside Tackle fly shop where proprietors T.M. & L.H. Vipond carefully selected flies for the conditions at hand. Several patterns were crafted on smallish treble hooks, as well as doubles, all tied by the ghillie whose

beat lies just above the Junction Pool. I recognized two of three flies recently acknowledged as top producers in Scotland: Willie Gunn and Ally's Shrimp. While hairwings dominated the lot, three low-water featherwings caught my eye, particularly a version of Teal & Red, long a favorite.



Mr. Vipond with Andy's help selects the right flies for the Tweed.

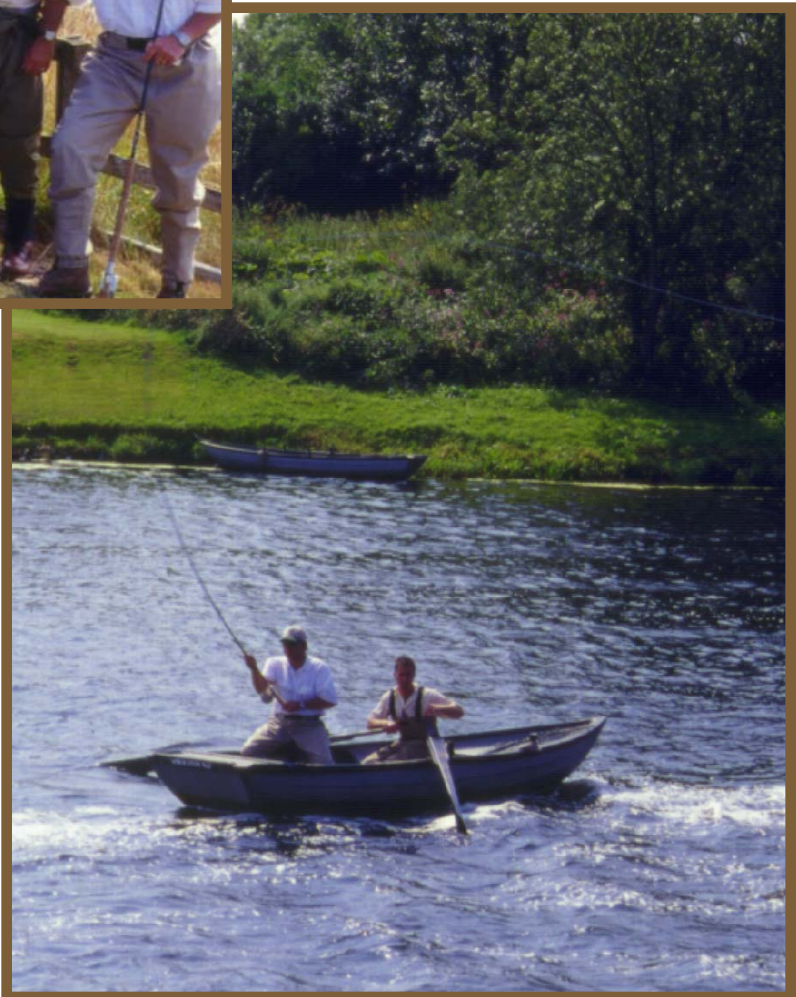


Our guides selected these flies for us from the selection offered at Tweedside Tackle.



casting lessons from the great Johnny Logan. After the first lesson Logan turned to me and said, 'You don't need any more lessons, and as a matter of fact I'm giving your money back ... and what I want you to do is come down next week to watch me give some lessons.' Unbeknownst to me was that

"On the Water," a fly-fishing television show with Andy Murray is legendary. A pleasant, professional stream-side manner makes it easy to take in his ineffable spey-casting techniques. His tutorage began at age 5 under the guidance of his grandfather, a Scottish game-keeper and ghillie. Andy recalls, "Before Hardy I was a professional musician, music being a very big part of my life from the age of 10. I was a trumpet player, and at 16 joined the Scots Guards, passed an audition, went to the Royal Military School of Music and came out with a degree and continued in the Scots Guards for six years." He added with a wry smile, "All the while I was fishing ... no doubt instilled by my grandfather." Andy continued, "While working as a musician in London I had some time on my hands so I decided to visit Hardy's at Pall Mall. I booked four one-hour fly-



Top left: Ready for a day on the water (left to right) — Michael, Russ, Billy, Gavin, John and Andy. Photo by D. Rust. Above right: Andy plies the waters of the Tweed with the help of Hardy's professional ghillie, Michael. Photo by D. Rust. Bottom left: John Stacey gets special time with the master.

I had been chosen to be his protege. For the next six months I carefully observed how Logan taught. Then one day he asked, 'Would you like this job?' I replied, 'Well yes, very much!' He then added, 'William Hardy and Jim Hardy are coming down to see you cast,' which they did in a couple of days time ... and that's how I became Hardy's Professional Caster."



Above left: Andy's ineffable style is captivating to the beginner and expert alike. Photo by D. Rust. Above right: Russ Darr contemplating his special time "on the water" with Andy.

In Hardy's long history there have only been three casters. The first was the late Captain Tommy Edwards, followed by the late Johnny Logan, and currently, Andy Murray, who for the past 25 years has been traveling the globe sharing his crackerjack casting skills with beginners and experts alike. Murray explained, "There's been a steadily increasing interest in two-handed rods over the past 10 years, with tremendous growth in the last five, not just for swinging salmon flies, but many new applications as well."

Experiencing Murray's double-handed rod presentation, the observer is struck by the lubricity of motion that results in an almost imperceptible application of energy on the forward stroke ... yet somehow powerful enough to aerialize the entire length of line in a 100-foot cast. Murray's categorical summation of the two casting types leaves the angler with the question: is he a "Swinger" or a "Pinger?" Does his casting style use

a longer, slower rod stroke or is it characterized by a more abrupt style ... an interesting observation. Our fishless day on the Junction Pool was made whole by having personal access to one of the world's finest casters.

Next, we look forward to moving on to Alnwick (pronounced Ann'ick) where we'll attend the grand opening of "Hardy's Compleat Angler Retail Store," and have the opportunity to meet one of Britain's top television stars and host of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." And also to see the Castle where they filmed the "Banquet Scenes" for Harry Potter. Then, finally my dream visit with the creative minds at House of Hardy to experience first-hand how today's application of modern technology is blended with unparalleled tradition from the past ... followed by a rare dinner conversation with none other than James Hardy himself. ... **TO BE CONTINUED ...**



The Holy Grail of the Junction Pool.