

Northwest Atlantic Salmon Fly Guild

Newsletter

Winter 2024-2025



Lady Evelyn

Inspired by Paul Little's guest tyer visit in 2019, Hunter Bachand researched this obscure pattern and tied the above fly after researching the history of this pattern. Read the story in the following pages of this year's winter newsletter.

Club Officers:

President: Glenn Wilson
Treasurers: Steve Brocco and Megan Brocco
Librarian: Dareld Thompson
Fly Archive: Hunter Bachand

Note from the President:

It is with great pleasure that I be the first to thank Hunter for taking on this task of creating a newsletter. We have had something like this years ago, before the internet, where we mailed out a newsletter to our members. It is because of the unselfish nature of our membership that this organization has prevailed for as long as it has, this is yet another example of that. I feel fortunate to have your support in leading you and the Salmon Guild forward each and every month. But I can't do it alone, we have so many that add to this endeavor, making our group the envy of the tying community. We will continue to bring to you information, techniques and the history of our hobby as well as trying to show you different methods to help your tying advance to the next level.

– Glenn Wilson

Treasurer's Report:

Bank Savings Account: \$4,168.97
PayPal Receipts Account: \$ 589.80
Cash On Hand: \$ 250.00
Total Balance: \$5,008.77

Note: When paying dues via PayPal, be sure to check the box labeled "friends and family" rather than "for goods and services." Otherwise, PayPal charges \$1.20 per transaction.

Upcoming Expenses:

Library Purchase from Paul Rossman (owed to Byron Bjerke)	\$175
<i>Spey Flies – Their History and Construction</i> , John Shewey, 2022	\$ 50

Upcoming Events:

Next Meeting: 9:00 am Saturday, January 18, Fall City Fire Hall
Fly for January – **The Smith**

Oregon FFF Northwest Fly Tyer and Fly Fishing Expo 2025
March 7-8, Linn County Expo Center, Albany, Oregon

20th Western Idaho Fly Fishing Expo 2025
January 31 – February 1, Expo Idaho, Garden City, Idaho

East Idaho Fly Fishing and Fly Tying Expo
February 14-15, Mountain America Center, Idaho Falls, Idaho

Washington FFI Atlantic Salmon Fly Tying and Fly Casting Fair
April 27, Pickering Barn Park, Issaquah, Washington

Lifetime/Honorary Members: Steve Brocco, Steve Gobin, and John Olschewsky

Active Members:

Garry Anderson
Tom Anderson
Hunter Bachand
Linda Bachand
Chuck Ballard
Ted Berkeley
Byron Bjerke
Brad Boyden
Brett Breuel
George Breuel
Megan Brocco
Aaron Culley
Sean Dahlquist
Brittany Davenport
Terry Dix
Joy Fenton
James Ferguson

Eric Foch
Frank Fortino
Judy Gattinella
Ben Gehrke
Peter Giffin
Jack Gillis
Rockwell Hammond
Carolyn Hellmuth
Danferd Henke
Tim Howland
James Kinghorn
Joe Kristof
Gary Litman
William Lovelace
Matt Ludden
Kristen Macy
Donovan Maddox
Bethany Maloney

Brandy Marlatt
Mike Marlatt
Jim McKinnon
Jose Menjivar
Ray Miles
Bob Newman
Nicholas Riggs
Levi Rorem
Jesse Scott
George Scoville
Mark Spaur
Chic Sundahl
Dareld Thompson
Jeff Thomsen
Garren Wood
Todd Yorke

Lady Evelyn

Research and fly by Hunter Bachand – December 2024



On October 26, 2019, Paul Little came to NWASFG and tied a silver bodied Spey Fly like the one I tied above. Paul called his fly the Lady Eleanor.

I tried to find a pattern for the “Lady Eleanor” with a review of the flies listed in Arthur Edward Knox’s *Autumns on the Spey*. Knox lists 16 “Old” Spey Fly patterns in this collection of letters written by the author from his visits to the Gordon Castle on the River Spey and published in 1872. It provides general tying instructions for the favorite flies used by the head ghillie, Geordie Shanks, at the Gordon Castle. I thought for sure that the most famous Spey Fly, the Lady Caroline would be listed, but alas it was absent.



Gordon Castle

The list of **sixteen** includes:

Gold Speal	Green King
Silver Speal	Purple King
Gold Reeach	Black King
Silver Reeach	Gold Purple Fly (similar to Gold Purpy)
Gold-Green Reeach	Culdrain Fly
Silver-Green Reeach	Gold Heron
Gold-Green Fly	Black Heron
Silver Green Fly	Carron Fly

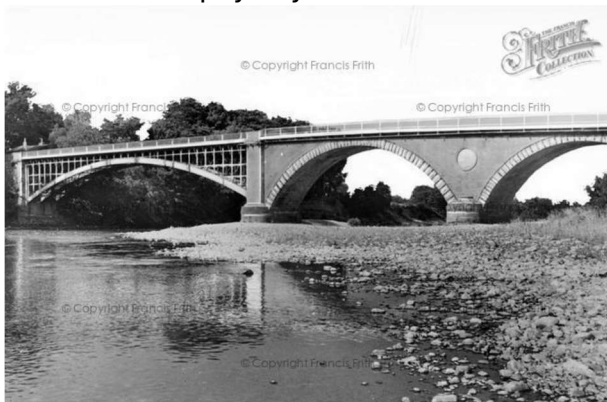
There are **three** additional Spey Flies which were highlighted five years earlier by Francis Francis in his 1867 *A Book on Angling* – the **Spey Dog**, the **Green Dog** (similar to the Green King) and the **Purpy** (a “30-second cousin to the Purple King” according to Francis). Francis acknowledges Charles Grant of Aberlour as the originator of the Purple King and the Green King. Neither book includes the Lady Caroline.



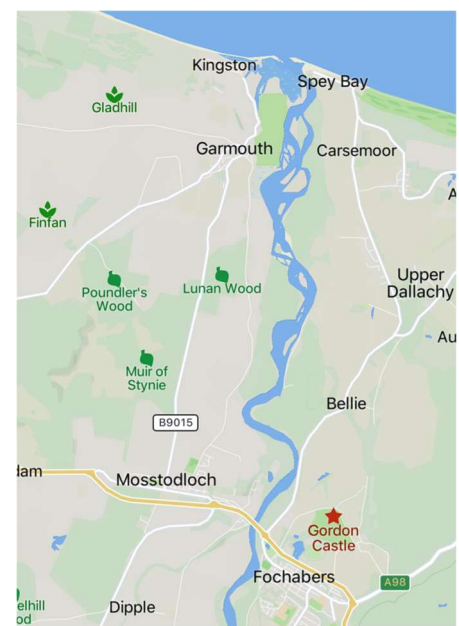
Alt Derg

The Gordon Castle is located on the lower 12 miles of the river which is well known by the names of the towns and the distilleries located there including Glenfiddich and Aberlour. Three miles up-stream from the castle is the unique rock formation called “Alt Derg” which means red clay. This gorge of remaining red spires of clay merges into the Spey River and small geological points like those in the nearby gorge may be found in the shifting riverbed.

Near the Gordon Castle is the bridge at Fochabers. Below the bridge are five miles of non-navigable braided shifting river channels with strong currents and deep salmon pools with the river flowing into the North Sea at Spey Bay.



Spey Bridge



It is believed that Geordie Shanks likely developed the Lady Caroline (1844-1934) and that it was named after the daughter of the 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon of the Gordon Castle. Geordie was the head ghillie for the Gordon Castle for approximately 8 weeks every year for 50 years and served the 4th, 5th, and 6th Duke of the Gordon-Lennox family. Beginning with the 2nd Duke of Richmond there have been four Lady Carolines, but in 1913, Sir Herbert Maxwell wrote that the Lady Caroline for which the fly is named was still living – a reference to the 6th Duke's daughter Caroline Elizabeth Gordon-Lennox (the only living Lady Caroline at that time).

Caroline survived a sister named Lady Florence August Gordon-Lennox who died in 1895.

Augustus Grimble's *Salmon Flies of Scotland* (1899) includes a dressing for the Lady Florence, alongside Lady Caroline, Lord March, and Miss Elinor (*not spelled the same as Paul Little's fly*). Lord March was the first-born son of the 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Lord March (born in 1845) was Lady Caroline's younger brother, Charles, who in 1903 became the 7th Duke of Richmond and Gordon. He also employed Shanks as head ghillie and flydresser.

Geordie Shanks was a friend of the entire family. The room where rods, waders, and reels were kept was called the Shankery. He knew all of the family including the grandchildren and the daughter of the 7th Duke of Richmond and Gordon, Lady Muriel Beckwith. In her 1936 book *When I Remember*, she discusses her high esteem for Lady Caroline who was her aunt and called her "Aunt Lina."

All of the above helps to introduce a few of the newer Spey Flies including Lady Florence, Lord March, and others. In John Shewey's 2002 thorough study of Spey Fly history (*Spey Flies and Dee Flies – Their History and Construction*) he concludes that the Lord March pattern was named after Lady Caroline's younger brother Lord March and not after his father who likewise would have held the title Lord March until his father died in 1860. The first mention of "Lady Caroline" comes in Kelson's book (1895).

Other Spey flies include the Pitcroy Fancy. The town of Pitcroy is upstream on the River Spey between Aberlour and Grantown. Also of note is the Glen Grant by Major James Grant, and others including Mrs. Grant and the Glen Grant Fancy. Kelson also lists a fly called Miss Grant.

Kelson provides a dressing for the Lady Caroline and directs the reader to the Green King. He points out there are other patterns like the Secretary and the Green Riach which are excluded because they closely match other patterns. Notice that he calls his list of fly dressings "The Present List" and frequently notes when a pattern is an old standard pattern from a particular river.

Kelson provides a list of top producing flies at a spot upstream on the River Spey called Wester Elchies for the previous 5 years, the number one fly was the Gold Riach followed by Purple King, Jock Scott, Miss Jackson, Lady Caroline, Caron Fly, Glentana, Thunder and Lightning, Blue Doctor, Green King, Black King and Dunkeld. He goes on to say that the Green King is often only used when the natural large green king insect is hatching in late April. Kelson does a good job of referencing his Spey pattern sources such as Charles Stuart (actually Stewart) of Aberlour and John Cruikshanks of Aberlour.

While some of these flies are standard salmon patterns, the Miss Jackson obviously wasn't important enough to Kelson to be included in his list of 300 flies. However, he includes the Miss Grant and the Mrs. Grant (wife of Major George S. Grant) as modern spey patterns (perhaps as a nod to his friend, Major Grant who had inherited the Glen Grant distillery).

Kelson fished upstream of the Gordon Castle beats and wanted to brag of his record large "fish of the year" at Wester Elchies in May 1891, where he landed a 33-pound salmon on a large **Purple Emperor**. He must have been very fond of this particular overly dressed fly (which we now call a Spey Fly even though it varies widely from the usually drab flies preferred by Geordie Shanks). Perhaps that is why he included it in TIPS as the **Empress**?

In *Tips*, Kelson provides a dressing which includes glorious tail feathers including Ibis, Turaco, Bird of Paradise, and perhaps as a substitute to those, insert Cock of the Rock for good measure.



Hardy's Salmon Flies – Patterns from the Fly-Tying Department 1883 to 1969 by Martin Lanigan-O'Keefe (2019)

John Shewey's book *Spey Flies and Dee Flies* was published in 2002. Did he ever visit Hardy to discuss the flies from their pattern books and catalogues? I believe some of these patterns would have received more review if John had access to this new book. The book includes photographs and substantial history on almost every pattern ever sold by Hardy including the following patterns for the River Spey. Like the books written by Kelson and Francis, the "present" list was likely provided to Hardy by Geordie Shanks of the Gordon Castle and then added to with flies for the River Spey sold by flydressers further upstream at Wester Elchies and Aberlour. Paper was scarce at Hardy. The mysterious "pattern box" at Hardy was nothing more than a collection of small envelopes with a fly or two inside (often made by turning inside out the envelopes of letters (and orders) received to create a blank piece of paper to write the name of the fly and any special notes). When Hardy discontinued dressing flies in 1969, these pattern envelopes were dispersed and difficult to track down by the author. The Hardy catalogues contained 7 of the "old sixteen" including:

- 1) Gold Riach, 2) Silver Riach, 3) Green King, 4) Purple King, 5) Black King, 6) Gold Heron, and 7) Carron Fly.

The catalogues also included the following 14 flies (although some patterns like the Black and Tan may have simply been in the pattern box and never actually appeared in a catalogue).

1) Black and Tan – The dressing instructions called for a red Carron cock hackle. The words Carron and Spey seem to be interchangeable. Perhaps the area around the town of Carron was the area where most Spey cocks originated. However, the hackles on the Carron Fly are black heron. The descriptions in the pattern box at Hardy said the hackle should be

"a red patchy kind, and tied in butt first with one or two of the white fibres left on, as the whitish fibres are long and kept to the top, they take the place of a tail." In an article in *The Fishing Gazette* in 1891, the author instructed future tiers to select a hackle that has fibres long enough to extend about half an inch beyond the bend of the hook – just as the above photo shows.



Black and Tan

2) John Dallas (in later catalogs from 1933 – 1952), 3) Glen Grant, 4) Grey Heron, 5) Jungle Heron, 6) Lady Blanche (Gordon-Lennox) (sister-in-law to the Duke of Richmond – married in 1886 (recent pattern), 7) Miss Grant, 8) Miss Jackson, 9) Mrs. Grant, 10) Pitcroy Fancy, 11) Purple Emperor (similar to Kelson's Empress in TIPS), 12) Silver King, 13) Spey Gled Wing, and 14) Lady Caroline.

Even though the new Hardy book by Martin Lanigan-O'Keefe is very comprehensive, on page 447, he states, "***I am inclined to think that Spey dressings were not one of Hardy's stronger points.***"

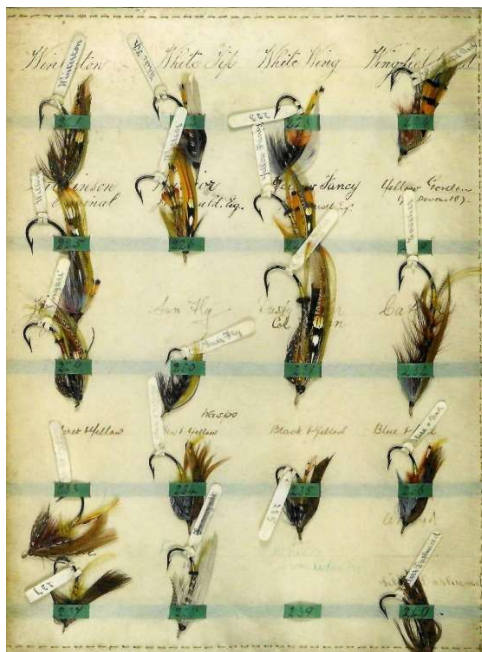
Farlow's Salmon Flies – An Illustrated Catalogue of Farlows' Pattern Salmon Flies from 1870 to 1964

by Martin Lanigan-O'Keefe (2017)

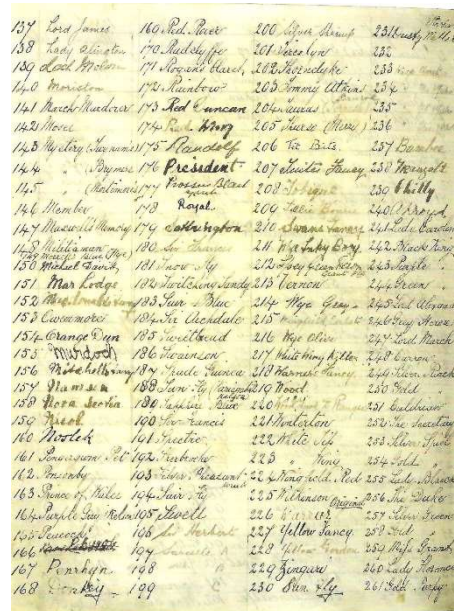
In this earlier work by Mr. O'Keefe, he is able to actually see the two Pattern Books that were used by Farlows. It is amazing how small yet concise these records were. In the newly published book, Spey Patterns start on page 258 and are all kept together. The first section includes flies from the Gordon Castle and then flies from J W H Grant from Wester Elchies, and G F McCorquodale of Dalchroy (now Tulcan) on Spey.



Pattern Books A and B



A page of flies from Pattern Book A



An Index Page from Pattern Book A

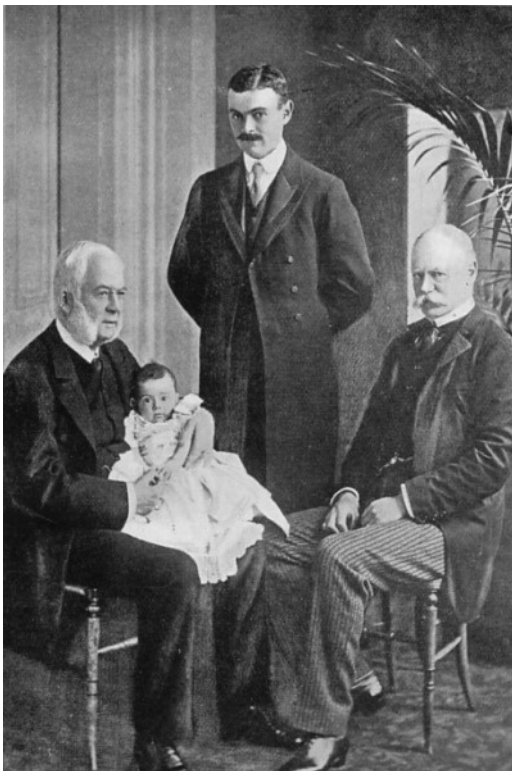
The Farlows catalogues contained 12 of the "old sixteen" including:

- 1) Gold Spiel, 2) Silver Spiel, 3) Silver Riach, 4) Gold Green, 5) Green King, 6) Purple King, 7) Black King, 8) Gold Purpy 9) Culdrain, 10) Gold Heron, 11) Black Heron, and 12) Carron Fly.

The catalogues also included the following 29 (mostly modern) flies (although some patterns may have only appeared in the catalogue as little as one year).

1) Lady Caroline, 2) Lord Alexander (Gordon-Lennox) (Lord March's uncle) ,3) Grey Heron, 4) Black Heron, 5) Lord March, 6) The Secretary, 7) Lady Blanche, 8) The Duke, 9) Miss Grant, 10) Lady Florence (1851-1895) (Gordon-Lennox) (Lord March's younger sister), 11) Lemon Grey, 12) Dandy Paget (named after Lord March's cousin Lord Alexander Paget (mentioned above), 13) Craven Nun [all grey like the attire (habit) of local nuns], 14) Green Riach, 15) Vivian's Sprit, 16) Hume Fly,...

17) Settrington (Lord Settrington is the title of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon used by the eldest son of the Earl of March). Lord Settrington is 2nd in line to become the Duke of Richmond. In other words, the Duke's grandson who is the eldest son of his first son. Lord March had this title until 1860 when his grandfather died, and his son (also named Charles) held this title until 1903 when his grandfather the 6th Duke of Richmond died, and Lord March became the 7th Duke of Richmond and Gordon. His son then assumed the title Lord March, and his eldest son, who was born in in 1899 became Lord Settrington. In the photo, you can see this grandchild and his father, grandfather, and great grandfather. I believe his grandparents wanted a fly to be named after the toddler and the fly is unlike the subdued Spey Fly patterns of the Gordon Castle with bright red and white colors.



Four generations of Lennox-Gordon



Settrington

Above: The youthful Lord Settrington fly for the River Spey.

Left: Photo from 1900 with the 6th Duke of Richmond and Gordon, his son, Lord March, grandson, Lord Settrington and his great grandson, who became the new Lord Settrington when his grandfather passed in 1906. This new Lord Settrington died in the Russian War in 2019 at age 20.

18) Lady Evelyn

Lady Evelyn (the only tinsel bodied fly in the Gordon Castle patterns sold by Farlows). This fly has a silver tinsel rib instead of the gold tinsel rib on the Paul Little fly. Perhaps Paul didn't have any silver oval tinsel available on the day he tied his fly. There are over 10 wraps of tinsel and only 5 wraps of hackle on the fly in the Farlows pattern book (which on this fly is over the tinsel rather than bound down by the cross-wrapped tinsel (perhaps that is why all of the hackles are missing from the fly). Is it possible that this fly was actually fished by Lady Evelyn? This is the **only** Spey Fly (from all of the sources available) with a yellow golden pheasant rump feather for the throat hackle matching the tail like the fly tied by Paul Little. This was one of Lady Evelyn's preferred flies for bright weather. The other being the Thunder and Lightning. Lady Evelyn Gordon-Lennox (1872-1922) was Lord March's daughter. She married Sir John Cotterell in 1896.

In 1911, Lady Evelyn landed seventy-five salmon. Her largest salmon that year was over thirty-four pounds.



Lady Evelyn from Farlows Pattern Book



Lady Evelyn Cotterell (née Gordon Lennox), followed in the footsteps of her famous "Aunt 'Lina,'" (Caroline), becoming one of the most accomplished salmon anglers on the Spey. Photo courtesy of Gordon Castle Estate



It is interesting that all of the patterns named after women seem to be their favorite "bright" pattern for a sunny day. It makes the reader wonder if these women of Atlantic Salmon lore only fished on fair weather days.

Burberrys tried to capitalize on this fashion trend, but the results may have been less than desired based on the fashionable foul weather options available to the women of Gordon Castle.



The Farlows catalogues also included... 19) Pitcroy Fancy (named after the town upstream on the River Spey (this pattern is attributed to G.S. Turnbull in Kelson), and River Spey patterns by J W H Grant of Elchies including... 20) Rough Grouse, 21) Red King, 22) Black and Tan (also in Hardy's book), 23) Elchies Fancy, 24) John Dallas, 25) Glentana Spey, and 26) Spey Green Heron.

Finally, the last group of flies associated with the River Spey are patterns of George F. McCorquodale from Dalchroy (now Tulchan) on the Spey. His additional flies for the River Spey included... 27) Gled Wing, and 28) Silver Heron.

Mystery Solved!

Well, the mystery is finally solved, and I've uncovered a significant amount of history regarding fishing on the River Spey and through the new Farlows and Hardy books I was able to see significantly more of the Spey Flies used during this Victorian era of fly fishing and observe their construction in detail. Queen Victoria reigned from June 20, 1837 until January 22, 1901.

It was rewarding to find the dressing for the Lady Evelyn in Farlows book. Since this book was published in 2017, it is likely that this is the fly dressing Paul Little was using when he visited our club in 2019.

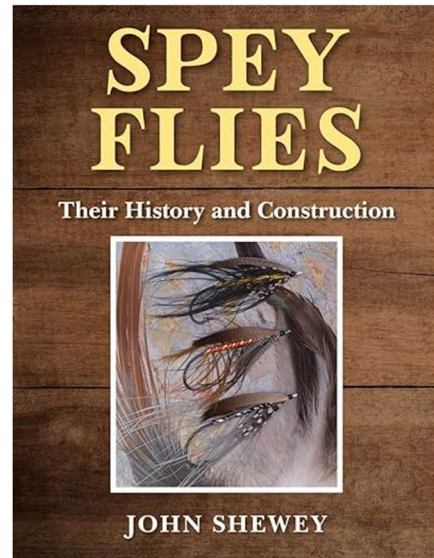
29) Miss Elinor

What about the fly named "Lady Eleanor" by Paul Little? In Martin Lanigan-O'Keefe's book of Farlows Salmon Flies, I found two flies with the closely matching "Miss Elinor" name. Unlike Lady Evelyn, both flies have a purple (or lavender) body. The original fly is believed to have been tied by J Stewart (who worked with John Cruickshanks at Wester Elchies) and named after the younger daughter of Sir Archibald Levin Smith who leased fishing rights at Wester Elchies and was close friends with the Grants. Her older sister, Isobel Smith, married J W H Grant (see his Farlows patterns above). Finally, her name is sometimes spelled "Elinor" and sometimes "Elenor." Lanigan O'Keefe states that the former seems correct.

Link between the Grants and Miss Jackson and Miss Elinor:

There are untold "Grant" families up and down the Spey River. Henry Alexander Grant's wife, Mary Jane Jackson, is the female angler of renown prowess from Wester Elchies for which the Miss Jackson Spey fly takes its name. Her son, James William Hamilton (JWH) Grant married Isobel Smith as mentioned above. She is the older sister to Miss Elinor (Smith).

My research for this story led me to a new book published in 2022 by John Shewey titled, **Spey Flies – Their History and Construction**. In his twenty-plus years of researching Spey Flies, he has traveled to Scotland for first-hand research. He found over a half-dozen prominent women named Grant that the “Miss Grant” fly may have been named after. However, he provides a compelling three-page story of why the Miss Grant fly was named after Margaret MacPherson-Grant of Aberlour. I encourage you to get his book for the intriguing details.



In summary, I found 59 Spey Flies – 16 “old” patterns, 14 additional dressings from Hardy’s pattern book and catalogues, and 29 additional flies in Farlows pattern books and catalogues.

Numerous active club members contributed their flies to John Shewey’s new book. They include Glenn Wilson, Byron Bjerke, Sean Dahlquist, Nicholas Riggs, Mike Marlatt, and Rocky Hammond.

Their outstanding fly-tying skills stand out in the book and are a credit to our club and the work we do as a guild to help maintain the tradition, history, and excellence necessary to tie classic Atlantic Salmon Flies.



Unnamed, by Glenn Wilson



Purple Prism and Green-Butt Skunk, by Byron Bjerke



Wigeon Spey #2 and Purple Pheasant Spey, by Sean Dahlquist



Purple Wabbit Shrimp and Charming Wabbit, by Rockwell Hammond



Green Butt and Purple Piggy, by Mike Marlatt



Scepter and Old Timer, by Nicholas Riggs



Cabot's Spey (purple) and Cabot's Spey (black), by Rockwell Hammond