

Blasts from the past

Memories Are Made of This

This month, **Stevie Munn** gives us three flies that evoke great childhood memories for him, including his very first trout.



Stevie Munn relives memories of his first trout.

These flies still have a place in my fly box among their more modern counterparts and I still use them on occasion during the fishing season. Although I have fished countless times in my life, every time I reach into my box to put one of these flies on, it reminds me of a certain event in time or a fish from my past or – which may sound strange – even a cast I made to a trout many seasons ago. I now believe that flies are not just a means of fooling a fish into taking. Yes, that maybe their principle purpose, but to me and I am sure many other fly anglers, they are much, much more. Some flies are things of beauty, some are true legends with rich and illustrious histories and some can be almost magical. Then there are fly patterns that can be very personal to individual anglers and can hold a special place in our thoughts, hearts and minds.

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FACT FILE

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Stevie Munn has fished many places in the world but grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he now guides.

He is a member of the Hardy Greys Academy, and helps run teaching courses on the River Drowes in Ireland and in Canada.

He is a qualified Advanced Professional Game Angling Instructor in Casting (APGAI) and Association of Professional Game Angling Instructors in Fly Tying (APGAI-Ireland).

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The Badger Quill is very special to me as it was the first dry fly I hooked and actually landed a brown trout on. I must have been only around six or seven years of age and yet this momentous event still burns bright in my memory. I remember the exact spot on the river and walking backwards and almost falling over my own feet as panic set in whilst playing it, then staring at my prize as the sunlight reflected off its flanks.

BADGER QUILL

Hook: Size 12-16 dry fly

Thread: Black or red

Tail: Badger hackle barbs

Body: Stripped peacock quill or badger hackle stem stripped

Hackle: Badger cock

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The Badger Quill was probably by Frederic Halford. Halford is portrayed by many as an angler who enforced the dry fly code against all other types of fly-fishing. After reading some of his books I have found this is not the case. It was the Halford School which followed him that seemed less forgiving in their attitude to wet fly fishing, and in particular in their opposition to fishing the nymph.



This unusual fly was first given to me when I was very young by a fantastic local angler that we all called Old Matt. His real name was Matthew Houston, and he was a local legend when I was growing up. Matt was an innovative angler and the only one I've ever seen who fished with up to eight flies on his cast. Sadly Matt drowned while fishing on the Six-mile Water in 1981.

BRADSHAW'S FANCY

Hook: Size 12-18

Thread: Black or purple

Tag: Red wool or floss

Body: Peacock herl – I rib with fine wire

Hackle: The original pattern asks for Norwegian or hooded crow, but a soft blue dun hackle is a good substitute.

Head: Red wool or floss like a small tag at the front.

The Bradshaw's Fancy is originally from Yorkshire and was first devised by Henry Bradshaw sometime in the 1880s. It is still used in England, although mostly as a grayling fly. I have found it good on size 16 or 18 when fish are smutting, but it also works when there is little sign of any fly life as a searching pattern on sizes 12 and 14. Fish it like a nymph, just in the surface film.



This is a great fly from the USA. It works on rivers, still waters and lakes as a general purpose fly, but for me it excels in a caddis hatch and also works well on still waters when trout are taking migrating pea mussels. In larger sizes it is an excellent evening pattern, which has also been known to catch Atlantic salmon. It is a Catskill-style dry fly and was first dressed by Harry Darbee in the

RAT-FACED MACDOUGALL

Hook: Size 10-14 dry fly

Tail: Deer hair, natural or dyed yellow or ginger cock fibres

Body: Deer hair spun and clipped so that it tapers to the rear

Wings: Cree or grizzle hackle points or buck tail

Hackle: Cree, ginger or grizzle cock

'IN LARGER SIZES THE MACDOUGALL HAS ALSO BEEN KNOWN TO CATCH ATLANTIC SALMON.'

1930s. Once called the Beaverkill Bastard, thanks to a judge from New York state, as he thought it looked like a cross between a bass bug and a trout fly. The story goes the name was changed when Darbee and an angling friend Percy Jennings were tying the fly and a young woman asked what it was called. Not wishing to offend the young lady, she was asked would she like to name it and she said: "I think it should be called a Rat-Faced McDougall."