

BRITISH ANGLING FLIES

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British Angling Flies by Michael Theakston

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MICHAEL THEAKSTON

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LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

RIPON: W. HARRISON, MARKET-PLACE.

1862.

After the flies were divided into classes, it became necessary to give an appropriate name to each class, in order to distinguish them. Their names are as follows :—

	PAGE.
1st Class, BROWNS .—From the prevailing color, which is brown, more or less mingled with orange and yellow. The Stone fly is the largest of the class, and superior trout fly of the angler's list. There are eleven species, all termed Browns... ..	2
2nd Class, DRAKES .—Named by the flyfishers of yore. The Drakes are the only class that have protective skins when they leave the water, in which they can fly about and cast off at leisure. Casting changes their color, and to appearance doubles their number. There are about sixteen different species, all of the name of Drake. The green, grey, and brown Drakes are the largest types of this class	3
3rd Class, DUNS , are named from their colors of deep sable hues to the light tinges and shades of an evening summer cloud in the setting sun. There are seventeen species, all named Duns, of which the red Dun is the largest species	5
4th Class, SPINNERS , are named from their round shoulders, long small bodies, narrow wings, and long legs. There are twelve species, all of the name of Spinners. The type of this class is the Jenny Spinner, or Harry Longlegs	7
5th Class, HOUSE FLY .—Named from their resemblance to the House fly. There are seven species termed Flies	8
6th Class, BEEFLIES .—Nine species of their common name	9
7th ,, ANTS .—There are two species of their common name	9

Few of the flies in these classes bear the old conventional names, which do not fall in with this arrangement; most of them having been given without regard to distinction or description. The terms "Browns," "Drakes," "Duns," and "Spinners," are significant and proper, and are of very ancient usage by flyfishers, but the *misapplication* of them has ever caused great confusion. Thus all the "Drake" class, except the green and grey, before casting their skins, are commonly, but erroneously, termed "Duns," and after casting, "Spinners." The terms "Dun" and "Spinner" are misapplied; they and the other class names can only be applied to flies of their own shape and class. In the following list every fly is surnamed after its class; which distinguishes its shape, and the additional name or names given from color or other peculiarities, distinguishes one species or fly from another, and gives their sizes and colors, as "*Red BROWN*," "*Golden Legged BEETLE*," "*Sand FLY*," &c., &c.

 FEBRUARY.

CLASS NAMES.	DISTRICT NAMES, &c.	PAGE.
1st, <i>Needle BROWN</i> ..	"Spanish Needle," "Willow Fly," or the "Withy Fly"	11
2nd, <i>Early BROWN</i> ..	"Dark Brown," "Winter Brown," "Inside of Woodcock's wing"	13
3rd, <i>Little Early BROWN</i> ..	.. ..	13
4th, <i>Early SPINNER</i> ..	.. ..	14
5th, <i>Gravel SPINNER</i> ..	"Spider Fly," "Sand Gnat" ..	14
6th, <i>Red BROWN</i> ..	"Red Fly," "Coch-y-bonddu" of Wales ..	15

MARCH.

CLASS NAMES.	DISTRICT NAMES.	PAGE.
7th, <i>Early Dow</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	17
8th, <i>Blue Drake</i>	"Blue Dun"	17
9th, <i>Orange Drake</i>	"Red Spinner." The Blue and Orange Drake are one and the same fly; the Blue Drake casts her skin and becomes the Orange Drake; casting her skin changes her color, but it does not transform her shape—she is a drake fly both before and after casting. Nature seems to have fitted out the Blue Drake with three coats. When she is not dismayed by cold days, she casts one by one early in spring, and strips into buff towards summer, a rich lemon color.	18
10th, <i>Golden-legged BERTIE</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	19
11th, <i>Tortoise Shell BERTIE</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	19
12th, <i>Heron SPINNER</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	19
18th, <i>Royal Charley BROWN</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	20
14th, <i>Cow Dung FLY</i>	"Lion Fly"	21
15th, <i>Brown Drake</i>	"March Brown," "Dun Drake," in Wales the "Cob Fly"	22
16th, <i>Amber Drake</i>	"Great Red Spinner;" "Spinner" is misapplied to any of the Drake class	22
17th, <i>Light Brown</i>	"Outside of Woodcock's wing"	23
18th, <i>Black FLY</i>	"Midge"	23

APRIL.

19th, <i>Mottled BROWN</i>	25
20th, <i>House FLY</i>	25
21st, <i>Blue Bottle FLY</i>	"Flesh Fly"	26
22nd, <i>Grannam DUN</i>	"Green Tail"	27
23rd, <i>SPINNER</i>	"Jenny Spinner," "Harry Longlegs"	28
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TO ALL FLYFISHERS.

THE following home-spun pages owe not their origin to any intention of printing, but were written for the Author's memoranda and reference. They are the casual gatherings of Fifty Seasons, the greater part of which past with partial practice, observation, information, and research; which altogether furnished but a misty and undefined knowledge of the Angling Flies; and which seems to be the stopping point of all the craft. Bewildered with numbers, names, sizes, colors, and shapes, the latter suggested their classification, which cleared away much perplexity; and ultimately the memoranda assumed a character that may prove intelligent and useful to the lovers of flyfishing, which induced their author to throw them together into being rather than their being lost. They are intended to lay bare the foundations of artificial flyfishing, which is the most gentle and scientific of any other branch of angling. It tortures no baits; it punishes nothing but the fish that would murder the fly; it keeps the