The American Fly Fisher

Journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing

SPRING 2015 VOLUME 41 NUMBER 2

Close to Home

Gordon Allen

The way into my house—a narrow path flanked with snow banks several feet high—belies the fact that soon trout season opens in Vermont and, if I'm willing to brave the likely high/cold/fast water, I could soon be standing (legally! with fly rod!) at least thigh high in some local stream, like the Batten Kill.*

The museum's new communications coordinator, Peter Nardini, is looking forward to that opportunity himself and tips his hat to home water by titling his column The Batten Kill Beat. In his first offering, Nardini discusses the river itself and the organizations that have worked hard to maintain and conserve it. "Saving Lee Wulff's Pool" can be found on page 22.

Among the Batten Kill's list of historic characters is Maxine Atherton: angler, museum supporter, wife of artist John Atherton, and grandmother of Catherine Varchaver. During a move, Varchaver discovered a book manuscript and old journals belonging to her late grandmother. She was plunged immediately into Max's world: the golden age of fly fishing mid-twentieth century, when Max and Jack were fixtures in the fishing scene alongside some of the greats, and where women—especially single women, whose ranks a suddenly widowed Max joined—were an anomaly. Varchaver, determined to honor Max's dream of publishing her memoirs, spent two years working on and editing the manuscript. The resulting book will be published by Skyhorse next year. In "Maxine Atherton: The Fly Fisher and the River" (page 2), we include an adaptation of Varchaver's foreword to the book, in which she shares her own memories of Max and gives us an idea of just who her grandmother was.

But wait—we're not through with Vermont history yet. In May 2014, the Governor Aiken Bucktail Streamer became the state's official fishing fly, and Rhey Plumley had a lot to do with it. Beginning on page 9, Plumley offers us a history of the fly, of Governor Aiken himself, and of the legislative process that led to this honor. (Since writing this article, Plumley has discovered the likely missing painting. Look for a follow-up in the next issue.)

To keep your gaze on the American northeast just a bit longer, we direct your attention to this issue's Keepers of the Flame piece (page 21). Here John Mundt profiles Maine craftsman Stephen Zeh, whose traditionally woven ash creels are not only collected as works of art but are built to be used.

From New England, we head to England proper to look in on an altercation that took place more than a hundred years ago. If today's popularity of reality television is any indication, the entertainment value of public bickering is as alive and well now as it was then. Although I tend to think of myself as generally above this form of spectatorship, I admit that when Andrew Herd sent me an account of *Fishing Gazette* editor Robert B. Marston ("the most powerful figure in . . . angling publishing") and writer George M. Kelson ("angling giant, entrepreneur, ardent self-publicist") throwing down in the pages of Marston's magazine, I was immediately sucked in. In "Marston v. Kelson: The Little Inky Boy Controversy, Part I" (page 13), Herd offers insight into the early relationship of this duo and the events that set the stage for their eventual public brawl, the bulk of which appears in Part II (coming in Summer 2015).

Something else has hit close to home: the museum—and the Manchester, Vermont, community—has lost Buzz Eichel. Buzz, who joined our board of trustees in 1979 and became a trustee emeritus in 2003, volunteered his services as legal counsel for many years. His warmth was always appreciated by staff. Fellow Trustee Emeritus Jim Hardman offers us a remembrance on page 26. Buzz is already greatly missed.

Kathleen Achor
Editor

*Readers may wonder about *Batten Kill* versus *Battenkill*. The former is the proper spelling according to U.S. Geological Survey, and that became this journal's house style about a decade ago. *Battenkill* is a local—and not incorrect—spelling. When we directly quote text that uses *Battenkill*, we retain that spelling within the quote.

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ON THE COVER: *The Governor Aiken Bucktail. This fly was tied by Rhey Plumley and donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing's permanent collection. Photo by Sara Wilcox.*

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Maxine Atherton: The Fly Fisher and the River

by Catherine Varchaver

Maxine Breese Atherton and her husband, John Atherton, artist and author of The Fly and the Fish, *helped shape the golden age of fly fishing in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s—and beyond. They fished with and befriended many of the greats, including Edward Hewitt, Sparse Grey Hackle, and Lee Wulff, settling on the Batten Kill, where a love of angling intersected with a vibrant professional art scene. Max's passion for salmon fishing took her to remote parts of the world, and she cast her rod into river waters for several decades after her husband's early death in 1952. She spent her final years in Manchester, Vermont, and died in January 1997 at age ninety-three. One of the seven Hewitt reels in existence was owned by Max and can be found in the museum's permanent collection.*

As Maxine Atherton's granddaughter, I have joyfully edited her fly-fishing tales and life story, which will be published as The Fly Fisher and the River. *An adapted version of the book's foreword, shared here, provides an overview of the range of remarkable experiences and people that characterized her unusual life as a fearless fly fisher, writer, and woman.*

—C.V.

When I was growing up, most of my friends had grandmothers who baked pies and told stories. Some of my friends' grandmothers ventured out to enjoy an occasional vacation cruise. My grandmother, Maxine Atherton, was different. She traveled to remote parts of the globe to wear waders and cast into fast-moving streams for hours, waiting to catch "a big one." She sent frequent, scrawled missives highlighting her latest adventures, many complete with a grainy photograph of her standing next to a guide and the 30-pound salmon she'd just caught. One year she sent us a giant side of smoked salmon that she'd taken herself to a smokehouse.

Well into her eighties, my grandmother drove the 2,100 miles between New Brunswick, Canada, and her then-home in the Florida Keys. She had a constantly shifting array of houses and fishing camps—the octogenarian equivalent of a carefree surfer chasing the next big wave. She would roll into town in her vehicle of the moment. Sometimes it was a Plymouth station wagon with 1970s fake-wood paneling, packed with fishing gear and her springer spaniel, Pete. One memorable year after a windfall, she pulled up to our house in a Cadillac Sedan de Ville, gold and flashy on the outside, and more like an ad for Orvis on the inside. The very next year, she zipped into our suburban village in a two-seat Fiat Spider. It was red.

Not surprisingly, my grandmother always cringed at anything that suggested she was an old lady—like being called "Grandma"—and the last thing she wanted was a title. As a result, everyone, including her grandchildren, was instructed to address her as Max. (She always detested the name Maxine.)

Max Atherton poses with one of her beloved springer spaniels, Pete, in this photo taken during the 1970s. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Atherton collection.

So you can imagine how thrilled I was when, in the midst of a move to a small house I'd bought in Takoma Park, Maryland, I discovered a rubber band–wrapped roll of printed manuscript pages jammed into a crate of old journals. Once I started reading the manuscript, I was hooked like a hungry salmon to a fly. Max's adventures as a wanderer and fly fisher came to life in her collection of remembrances, organized around fishing rivers. I savored the brief family history before watching her tie together the major elements of her life with a string of fishing stories and the rivers and characters she admired along the way. It had always been my grandmother's intention to add her memoirs to the annals of fly-fishing literary history.

My mother, Mary Atherton Varchaver, had given me the book manuscript for safekeeping fifteen years earlier, following my return from two years in Central

Max Atherton in 1962 with her Pinky Gillum rod and the reel handcrafted for her by Edward Hewitt, one of only seven Hewitt reels known to exist. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Atherton collection.

Asia—only a few months before my son Sasha came into the world and just weeks after my grandmother Max left it. Max's manuscript disappeared in the frenzy of a move across the globe and the excitement of becoming a parent, only to resurface as I completed another move. Holding the rolled pages, the unfinished memoir felt especially weighty. I could hear Max's voice telling me, with her lilting laugh, that her dream was now in my hands.

In the fifteen or so years before Max died in 1997, just seven years shy of living a full century, she made it clear to all who would listen that she had tales to tell about fishing, the art world, and the extraordinary people who passed through her life, including several quite celebrated ones. Max came close to fulfilling her dream, but old age finally overcame her unflinching will—a will exerted honorably over decades of learned patience and natural determination, fishing on dozens of trout streams and salmon rivers as a woman engaging and excelling in a man's world. Anyone who knew her outside of the fishing scene would be surprised to hear the words "patience" and "Max" in the same sentence; but as a fly fisher on a river, my grandmother shifted into another way of being, depending on skills honed out of necessity, as battles with salmon or trout cannot be won through rash action or impatient maneuvers.

With a perpetual, mischievous glint in her eye, my grandmother's less meditative side delighted in scandalizing people. At one big dinner with friends and family when she was well into her eighties, Max interrupted a conversation about mundane matters to loudly proclaim that she favored premarital sex. And to my mother's dismay, Max regularly tried to steer our conversations toward discussions of finances and how much she hoped to leave in her will for my mother.

Somehow, Max never got around to teaching her grandchildren how to fly fish. She was probably too busy to educate us on the art of casting and choosing flies. My only sustained experience of fishing was for bass from a rowboat in the wilds of Ontario with my best friend, Valerie, and her parents, whom I called Uncle Vincent and Aunt Betty-Jean. A veteran first violinist in the New York MET Orchestra, Uncle Vincent's obsessions were opera, Volkswagens, and fishing. For several summers in the 1970s, Val and I would pile into his Bug and make the two-day trek north. We looked forward to fishing and swimming at "the island," where we happily went weeks without electricity, phones, or running water. It was an hour's motorboat ride across Lake Penage, not far from Whitefish, to the tiny pine-covered island, where their two-room cabin sat at the top of a hill. Uncle Vincent taught us how to squeeze live worms over sharp hooks and assured me that they felt no pain. When we got tired of waiting for nibbles, Val and I would jump into the lake to swim in its silky, pristine waters, and Uncle Vincent would light up a Kent and put away the fishing gear, resigned to our restless energy. I didn't understand what he was looking for when he'd row up to a good fishing pool, but there was always magic in the air as we wondered if we'd catch enough for a supper of pan-fried bass with boiled potatoes and canned peas. I loved my one and only extended experience of ordinary fishing, but in the end, I was more of a small-town-near-the-big-city kind of girl.

My brothers, Nicholas and Peter, and I were all born in a suburb outside of Paris and moved to the States when I was six. We grew up in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, a small town on the Hudson River a forty-minute train ride from Grand Central Station in Manhattan. The three of us always looked forward to Christmas, Easter, and summer vacations, when we were likely to see Max. Her visits were an event. Although she did not make us the center of her life the way other grandparents did, there was never any doubt that she adored us, as any waiter who ever served us could tell you. "These are my grandchildren!" she would loudly announce as someone walked over to take our order. "Aren't they wonderful?" My brothers and I would slink down in our seats or lift menus to shield our reddening faces.

When our family took a road trip to visit Max at her house or "camp" of the moment, she spoiled us as any grandmother would, with homemade meals of roast chicken, mashed potatoes, seasonal vegetables (often from her garden), and green salad—with homemade deserts of coconut or chocolate cake served with generous spoonfuls of Cool Whip, an attempt at calorie consciousness. Cool Whip aside, Max encouraged us to eat plenty of vegetables and take vitamins for this and that in an era when wellness products were not yet a multibillion-dollar industry. I always assumed her obsession with vitamins was just one of her

In this 1945 Saturday Evening Post *cover,* Harvest*, artist John Atherton sneaks in an expression of his love for Max Atherton (née Breese) by including his carved initials above and hers below a heart pierced by Cupid's proverbial arrow. Illustration © SEPS licensed by Curtis Licensing Indianapolis, Indiana. All rights reserved.*

newfound quirks; but in getting to know Max better through her memoirs, I have come to see that her interest in nutrition and health was first inspired by her longtime friend, fly-fishing legend Edward Hewitt, a chemist by training and one of the first to isolate the value of nutrients and preach supplementation to improve the health not only of people, but of fish and animals as well.

As easy as it was to appreciate her eccentric, quirky qualities, there was also an elusive air about Max that made it difficult to feel that we truly knew her, perhaps because she seemed to be in constant motion, always on her way to or from some place. Reading her stories helps fill in some of the missing pieces. And looking back at Max's adult life, it is impossible not to notice the midlife line that divided her years with her beloved husband, Jack, and her years without him.

Recognized as a serious artist, John Atherton was admired for his magic realism and abstract paintings. In 1936, early in his career and marriage to Max, a painting from his first one-man show in New York, *The Black Horse*, won a $4,000 prize from among 14,000 entries. It became part of the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. My grandfather's bread-and-butter work was as an illustrator in the advertising industry, then as a magazine cover artist. Between 1942 and 1951, he created more than forty-five *Saturday Evening Post* covers alongside artist friends like Norman Rockwell and Mead Schaeffer, as well as a few covers for *Fortune* (which, coincidentally, is where my brother Nick works today). With my grandfather's career secure, he and my grandmother were free to manage their newly empty-nest years with longer fishing expeditions.

The turning point in Max's life came in September 1952 when my grandparents traveled to New Brunswick for some late-summer fly fishing. Jack was only fifty-two years old when he collapsed of a heart attack on the shores of the Miramichi River, doing what he loved most: fishing. He had just caught an enormous salmon and was beside himself with joy. Perhaps the excitement was too much. In any case, that terrible day Max lost the love of her life and her most devoted fishing partner. It was just two weeks before her forty-ninth birthday. Twenty-six years had passed since she and Jack met in art school. Once married, Max focused on being the wife of a successful artist, supporting local causes, taking an occasional literature or poetry class, joyfully raising daughter Mary (with help from a beloved housekeeper), and, as often as possible, fly fishing. Once

my grandfather was gone, Max wondered if she knew who she was apart from her husband. Her only child was living on her own, finishing college (something Max never accomplished herself, much to her regret).

With help from many—especially longtime Arlington, Vermont, friends and neighbors Norman and Mary Rockwell—Max found the courage to face the devastating turn her life had taken. Fly fishing and the desire to write gave Max a reason to get up every day and re-engage in life, as did the need to raise awareness about the growing environmental degradation of streams and rivers and the health of salmon. She applied her energies and funds to the causes about which she cared deeply, supporting institutions that included the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont; major art galleries and museums, which were honored to acquire her husband's paintings; community hospitals; environmental organizations; and universities. Max also began exploring her longtime interest in writing and participated in a writer's conference at Middlebury College that was part of the famous Bread Loaf Writer's Conference program. There she connected with a handful of struggling writers with whom she became fast friends, including Shane Stevens, who eventually gained respect as a crime novelist.

In keeping with what she eventually realized was her fearless, independent nature, Max followed the advice of fishing friends following Jack's death: she traveled by ship across the Atlantic to fly fish in remote parts of France and Spain. There adventures abounded, and she encountered all kinds of people, including armed guards serving the Spanish dictator General Franco. As a widow on her own in the 1950s, taking off to travel the world and trudge into fishing streams with strangers, inevitably men, Max was undoubtedly viewed as unusual, if not eccentric. And given the slow, demanding modes of travel, limited means of communication, and frequent dearth of lodging options near the best fly-fishing venues, her travels as a woman alone in foreign lands (and waters) are all the more remarkable.

Also notable is the fact that Max was already a published author before starting work on her memoirs. Her *Every Sportsman's Cookbook* was published by

Max Atherton on the Fane River, near Castle Bellingham in Ireland, c. 1964. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Atherton collection.

Max Atherton with her guide and catch on the Driva River, Norway, 1963. From the collection of Mary Varchaver.

Max Atherton releasing a trout on the Batten Kill in Vermont, c. 1950. Photo by John Atherton. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Atherton collection.

MacMillan in 1962; her straightforward, practical style gave Julia Child–like inspiration to fishers and hunters. Fortunately for the angling world (and those with an interest in post–World War II American artists), Max decided to capture her fly-fishing experiences on paper. An early version of this manuscript made the rounds among a few publishers about a dozen years before my grandmother's death. In 1981, Max sent a draft to fly-fishing acquaintance and successful publisher-author Nick Lyons. He liked the stories but advised her that the book needed a strong editor's hand; he was too busy to do it himself. Discouraged but determined, Max reworked parts of the book, and over the next few years some chapters appeared as essays in the *Atlantic Salmon Journal* and various fly-fishing magazines.

In giving us her memoirs, my grandmother wanted readers to feel the love she had for fishing and for preserving the natural world. She reveled in the rivers around which her life revolved as she waited for her chance to duel with one worthy stream-dwelling opponent after another. Salmon proved to be as much friend as foe, because the beauty of fly fishing was not merely about the catch, but about playing the game with elegance and strength—and about gaining the respect and admiration of her fishing companions (and maybe even the respect of the salmon who got away!). Max's expansive imagination, to which she makes reference numerous times, took her to beautiful places whenever she wanted. On a river, away from urban noise and distractions, her imagination blossomed and transported her to another realm, even as she remained aware of the subtle activity all around her, as any outdoor sportsperson would.

In a conversation one snowy Christmas at her house in Fairfax, Vermont (when she was still living with her second husband, Watson Wyckoff, another avid angler and a character in his own right), Max reminded me that life was fairly bleak for many years, with world wars raging overseas and the Depression at home. I was ten or eleven, listening to her talk of the old days. She explained that fly fishing had been and still was a wonderful escape from the depressing and sometimes horrific news of the day, especially when she and Jack found themselves raising my mother during the early Depression years. My grandfather's profession as an artist was a challenging one. But his hard work and recognized talent—and some measure of luck—meant that he and his family lived comfortably. Max told me that although Jack did well and they struggled very little compared with many, they also never knew if the bottom was about to fall out from under them, especially during the 1930s. A sensitive soul, painfully aware of all the suffering around her and around the world, Max could tolerate these tragic visions for only so long. She was blessed with the freedom to escape, financial privilege, and a mind-set that sought out the joys in life rather than obsessing on the deep wrongs and downsides.

Max was aware of her good fortune as a woman born at the tail end of the Victorian era. In spite of her mother's

more conventional views, Max grew up believing she could have her own beliefs and act on her own behalf. Her marriage with Jack provided as much space for freedom as it did love and security, and she would not have tolerated limits on her choices. This attitude carried her forward after Jack's death and during the rest of her days. Only in her eighties, when fighting a river's current and reeling in a weighty salmon had become taxing for her petite frame, did she feel the need to begin adapting to some of the realities of age. At that point, her Miramichi fishing camp neighbor and fellow fly fisher, baseball legend Ted Williams, helped design a lightweight graphite rod for Max to use, which she gratefully accepted; although I imagine it never compared with her beloved first Powell rod (or borrowed Hewitt reel). A few years later, when she felt her legs were no longer able to resist strong river currents, Max sold the New Brunswick fishing camp and shifted her focus away from fishing and exclusively to writing.

Like fast-moving currents, the fishing tales Max tells move us through a selection of her adventures, and we experience the magic of the rivers' waters. These tales remind us that alongside the (then) radical environmentalist-explorer part of Max, there was a playful joie de vivre, one that appreciated the company of good-looking, intelligent outdoorsmen. Even before Jack Atherton's death, Max clearly enjoyed the attention she got as a fisherwoman—especially from men. Although Max cherished her friendships with a few women, she felt in that era that they did not engage their minds as much as they could and tended to settle for less in their lives than she was willing to. Men—educated, with leisure time to fish—had more freedom and could have adventures and talk about ideas, politics, and the intricacies of fly fishing. This refined form of angling provided an escape from the mundane, and Max enjoyed the adrenaline rush of fishing and camping in the great outdoors as much as the meditative quiet of nature. Her expertise provided the entrée she needed to thrive in a man's world.

Max always longed to write about the joys of casting her lines into one river after another. With the blessing of my mother (Max's closest living relative), I stepped into the role as editor, determined to honor my grandmother's dream. The process of absorbing and working with Max's words reeled me into a profound journey that tightened my connection to both my grandmother and my mother, who helped provide context and some of the missing pieces to the puzzle that was Maxine Atherton. It took more than two years to complete the editing process as I spent time getting to know the fascinating characters in Max's life. I not only reconnected with my family history, but also felt the disparate pieces of my life fitting together in rough parallel with my grandmother's. My own adventures—living and working around the world, writing and editing stateside over the years for a variety of nonprofits, practicing as a holistic nutrition counselor, and finally, promoting conservation programs at World Wildlife Fund—resurfaced as these threads pulled me closer to the journey that Max relayed.

Max Atherton with a pair of steelhead on the Klamath River, California. From the American Museum of Fly Fishing's Atherton collection.

Fans of my grandfather's classic, *The Fly and the Fish*, may find Max's *The Fly Fisher and the River* to be the yin to his yang. It's easy to see how their shared passion for art and fly fishing, and for the smallest wonders of the natural world, would make for an enduring and fulfilling marriage. Working on my grandmother's book, I have come to appreciate the richness of the camaraderie fly fishers enjoy. And I see the importance of giving time to the full experience of casting as an art and fishing as an opportunity for meditative reflections and for being in the "now," away from the distractions of daily routines and demands. There's a reason fishing is so often a metaphor for life as a journey to be relished rather than a goal to be reached.

The Fly Fisher and the River will, I hope, speak to fly fishers everywhere who share my grandmother's obsession for this elegant, yet earthy, sport and to anyone with an appreciation for nature and an interest in conserving its future. Max thrived on the expansive quiet of

Max Atherton and her daughter, Mary, by Broad Branch River, Vermont, c. 1947. From the collection of Mary Varchaver.

Max Atherton's granddaughter, Catherine Varchaver, Lake Penage, Ontario, c. 1970. From the collection of Catherine Varchaver.

being in nature as much as the concentrated interruptions of adrenaline at the sudden bowing of the fly rod. Through her stories, one can feel the trained fisher's presence to details of reels and flies give way to an intuitive awareness of the river's ripples and the flies' telling dances above the surface, while below majestic salmon or trout wisely lurk. Like countless anglers before and since, my grandmother was happily addicted to the inevitable tension between the chaser and the chased, and, ultimately, the joy of engaging in respectful battle with a strong and savvy adversary.

In the end, Max not only expresses her lifelong love of fly fishing and the need to conserve the biodiversity and magic of the planet's rivers and all of nature, but also her eternal love for the man who helped her realize her passion for angling. Jack Atherton was proud of his accomplished fly-fisher wife. In his *The Fly and the Fish*, we feel this sense of pride as he concludes a chapter about angling on the Neversink River with their dear friend Edward Hewitt:

> To Max, particularly, he [Hewitt] imparted a practical knowledge of streamcraft, casting and fishing with a patience and interest equaled only by her appreciation. How much he contributed toward making her an angler of prowess neither a big brown trout nor I realized until one day when I tried fruitlessly for an hour to deceive him. He looked over my fly a few times but each time turned it down with a nonchalance which was irritating to an already sorely tried angler.
>
> When I finally decided to give up, Max, who had been waiting on the bank, waded out to try for him. Secure in the knowledge that if I could not get him after such a long effort, she could not, I started off up the stream. I had gone but a few steps when I heard her reel screech and turned to see the fish slash madly across the pool. He had taken her second cast and thus two more males had underestimated the power of a woman.*

Many men (and women) before and since have made the mistake of underestimating my grandmother, but most learned quickly that Maxine Atherton was a force to be reckoned with. Through her stories, Max gives us a glimpse into the woman behind the force, into the fly fisher and the river.

~

Maxine Atherton's The Fly Fisher and the River *(edited by Catherine Varchaver) will be published by Skyhorse Publishing in spring 2016, as will a companion reprint of John Atherton's* The Fly and the Fish.

*John Atherton, *The Fly and the Fish* (New York: Freshet Press [reprint], 1971), 186.

The Governor Aiken Bucktail: The Official Fishing Fly of the State of Vermont

by Rhey Plumley

Governor Aiken and Alf Landon at Quimby, c. 1936. Photo from the Quimby Archives.

On 5 May 2014, Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin signed into law Bill H. 589, An Act Related to Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping, which included the designation of the Governor Aiken Bucktail Streamer—named for George D. Aiken, Vermont's governor from 1937 to 1941—as the official fishing fly of the state of Vermont. This is a first for Vermont, as well as a tribute to a highly regarded governor and senator and to Vermont's historic enthusiasm for fly fishing. Let me tell you the story of the fly and how it came to honor the man.

Fly fishing as a pastime, especially during winter, is full of dreaming, reading, curiosity, and fiddling around with feathers and hair. The Governor Aiken Bucktail, because it's a pretty fly and catches fish, is one of my favorite fly patterns for landlocked salmon fishing in northern Lake Champlain and its tributaries. The pattern for this fly is referenced in several fly-tying books, going back to Joseph D. Bates Jr.'s *Streamer Fly Tying and Fishing*[1] and later in Stewart and Leeman's *Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon*,[2] Leiser's *The Book of Fly Patterns*,[3] Wilson's *Smelt Fly Patterns*,[4] and Schmookler and Sils's *Forgotten Flies*.[5]

In his book, Bates mentions that the Governor Aiken Bucktail was popular in the Lake Memphremagog area near the border of Vermont and Québec.[6] The pattern he described (also called the "smelt streamer"[7]), is the American version, dressed by the company Fin, Fur and Feather, Ltd. The Governor Aiken Bucktail is related to the Magog Smelt, a Canadian variation originated by Grier Gulline of the same company.

I tied the fly for myself and for the occasional customer at Classic Outfitters in South Burlington, Vermont, where I was manager. I fished the fly for landlocked salmon in Lake Champlain tributaries, Northeast Kingdom rivers, and streams in the Connecticut Lakes region of New Hampshire. I read about the fly, but nowhere could I find a written history of the Governor Aiken Bucktail or who originated this fly honoring Vermont's former governor.

Sometime during the winter of 2001–2002, I spoke with Attorney General

Sheila Reid

Quimby Main Lodge today.

Bill Sorrell, an occasional fishing partner, whose mother, Esther Sorrell, had been friends with Lola Aiken, Governor Aiken's widow. He graciously arranged for me to talk to Mrs. Aiken via telephone. During our conversation, Mrs. Aiken shared with me her memory of the origin of the Governor Aiken fly.[8] According to her, Russell Merriman (1892–1962),[9] an insurance official from Montpelier and friend of Governor Aiken, originated the fly. The governor, an avid fisherman, and Merriman were regular guests at Quimby Country, an historic sporting lodge in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. Mrs. Aiken went on to tell me that Merriman had also created a framed oil painting of the original Governor Aiken Bucktail that he wanted to present to Governor (by then U.S. Senator) Aiken. Because Senator Aiken had his office in Washington, Merriman, in 1948, entrusted the painting to the then-current governor of Vermont, Ernest Gibson, and asked Gibson to give the portrait of the fly to Senator Aiken when he was next in town. Sometime later, Merriman stopped by Governor Gibson's office and noticed that painting was right where he had left it. Frustrated, Merriman took the painting back. As far as anyone knows, the painting is sadly lost to history.

With the appearance of the Governor Aiken Bucktail in Bates's 1950 streamer book, the popularity of the fly soon spread throughout northern New England, from Memphremagog and the Averill Lakes region of Vermont to New Hampshire's and Maine's lakes, ponds, and streams. Willey's Store in Greensboro, Vermont, and L.L.Bean in Freeport, Maine, were early distributors of what has become an important landlocked salmon and trout fly. According to Mrs. Aiken, Clark Gable purchased some Governor Aiken flies for $5 each, and Ted Williams traded one of his signature fishing rods for a fly. More recently, Skip Vallee, who at the time was serving as U.S. ambassador to the Slovak Republic, asked me to tie a dozen presentation Governor Aiken Bucktail flies to offer as goodwill gifts to local Slovakian dignitaries.

Several years went by after Mrs. Aiken told me the story of the Governor Aiken Bucktail. It was in spring 2012 when a new customer arrived at my fly shop. He introduced himself as Arto Sieppi, the director of coaching for the Finnish women's hockey team, in town for a two-week tournament at the University of Vermont. An avid fly fisher, he visited the shop several times over the course of his stay. We swapped fishing stories and talked about flies that were popular here and in Finland. Sieppi told me that his favorite fly was a dry fly called the Nalle Puh, which is the unofficial national fly of Finland. The Nalle Puh gets its name from the bear hair that is the primary ingredient in the fly's design. The body is the underfur of the bear, and the wing is the guard hairs. The English translation for Nalle Puh, he told me, is Winnie-the-Pooh.

If Finland could have a national fly, why couldn't Vermont have a state fly? Of the thousands of flies fished in our state, which fly originated in Vermont and would be a fitting symbol of Vermont state history and its fishing heritage? There was little doubt in my mind that

George Aiken (right) *looks on as President Harry Truman signs the National School Lunch Act on 4 June 1946. Aiken represented Vermont in the United States Senate from 1941 to 1975. Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration.*

The Governor Aiken Bucktail

Sheila Reid

The top two single-hook flies are effective fly patterns for landlocked salmon and trout in rivers and streams. The lower two tandem-hook streamer styles are effective when trolling for salmon and trout in lakes.

Hook: 4–5x long streamer (for the tandem, two standard-length hooks joined by wire)
Thread: Black
Tail: Barred wood duck or mandarin
Body: Medium flat silver tinsel
Ribbing: Narrow oval silver tinsel
Throat: White bucktail, under which is red swan or goose quill
Wing: Lavender bucktail
Topping: Five or six strands of peacock herl, as long as the wing
Cheeks: Jungle cock (optional)

the obvious choice should be the fly tied in honor of Governor George Aiken.

Aiken started out as a professional horticulturalist from Putney who cherished Vermont, its people, and the beauty of its mountains. During Aiken's early political career, he published two books, *Pioneering with Wildflowers*,[10] which remains in print, and *Pioneering with Fruits and Berries*.[11]

Politically, Aiken was a progressive Republican and a Vermonter who believed that "freedom of thought and action is logical and inherent."[12] He served in the Vermont House of Representatives from 1931 to 1935 and as governor from 1937 to 1941. In 1941, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served through 1974. As governor and senator, Aiken was a champion of people facing hard times during the Depression. He took on land and flood control issues, and supported food stamps, public works projects, rural electrification, and crop insurance. As senator, he was an early proponent of a more efficient and universal health-care system.[13]

Throughout his career, Aiken sought cooperation at the local, state, and national levels in an effort to establish a more bipartisan system. Aiken's many accomplishments, as well as his posture during the Vietnam conflict, stand today as his lasting legacy to the state of Vermont.

During winter 2012, I drafted a "modest proposal" to establish the Governor Aiken Bucktail as the official Vermont State fishing fly and forwarded it to Pat Berry, then commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. He supported the idea and suggested that it be passed on as a formal proposal to Vermont State Representative David Deen, chair of the House Committee on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources, for consideration by the House. I didn't hear anything about the status of the proposal until late in the 2013–2014 legislative session. Toward the end of February 2014,

Sara Wilcox

A closer look at the Governor Aiken Bucktail. This fly was tied by the author and donated to the American Museum of Fly Fishing's permanent collection.

Maida Townsend

Louis Porter, commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, presents a framed Governor Aiken fly to Lola Aiken on her 102nd birthday.

Deen e-mailed me that Bill H. 589 had passed the House and was now in committee in the Senate. The dream of a state fishing fly was becoming a reality. I passed the news on to friends and colleagues, urging them to contact their senators to support the bill.

Late in April 2014, Representative Deen sent the message that the Senate had passed the bill and that there would be an imminent signing ceremony in the governor's office. A framed fly and the story of the Governor Aiken Bucktail were delivered to Governor Shumlin's office in time for the signing ceremony on Monday, May 5. The governor signed the bill into law and said that the framing and story would share space in his office next to the portrait of Governor George Aiken.

Up to this point, as far as I knew, no one had been in touch with Mrs. Aiken to tell her about the new state fishing fly. At the urging of a friend and with the help of Maida Townsend, our local legislator, and Lisa Kunin, executive assistant to the governor, we were able to contact Mrs. Aiken's family. Timing is everything. Doug Robie, Mrs. Aiken's nephew, speaking on behalf of the family, informed us that there would be a party for Mrs. Aiken on June 24 to celebrate her 102nd birthday. We were able to have another fly framed in time for the celebration, at which Louis Porter, commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, presented the commemorative framing to Mrs. Aiken.

And that's pretty much the story. Having lived in Vermont for almost forty-five years and having fished its rivers and streams for the better part of my life, I am proud to know that a simple fly, the Governor Aiken Bucktail, has joined the ranks of the brook trout, the hermit thrush, red clover, the Morgan horse, and the taste of maple as symbols of this great state.[14] You can—and should—view Vermont's official state fishing fly for yourself at the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont, and at the South Hero Bicentennial Museum in the Champlain Islands.

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Marston v. Kelson: The Little Inky Boy Controversy, Part I

by Andrew Herd

There are two rules that no journalist should ever forget. First, it is tempting fate to pick an argument with an editor in his own magazine's correspondence columns. Second, if one has previously got at cross-purposes with said editor, the outcome of a second round will generally be fatal to one's interests. This is the story of how George Mortimer Kelson—angling giant, entrepreneur, and ardent self-publicist—forgot both rules with absolutely disastrous results.

Kelson should need very little introduction. As one of the dominant figures in salmon fishing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, he did a great deal to popularize and advance the sport. Because he was born into the third generation of a family of dedicated anglers, salmon fishing was in his blood, but Kelson came to national attention after writing a minority report criticizing the way that awards had been allocated at the Fisheries Exhibition of 1883.[1] Kelson had submitted two exhibits, one of which was a case of twenty salmon flies, arranged around a miniature by Rolfe,[2] which, having won a medal and a diploma at the 1880 Berlin exhibition and another medal at Norwich in 1881 (both medals were included in the case) was much admired, but it could not be considered for a prize because Kelson was a juror.[3] Although it is not obvious from the exhibition catalog, Kelson's exhibit appeared next to both a case of flies tied by John Traherne and to the artist J. M. W. Turner's combined fly and spinning rod, so the trio must have been quite a draw.[4]

One of the many criticisms in Kelson's report was that Traherne's case of salmon flies had been completely overlooked. He also suggested that Farlow and Hardy's salmon rods were technically better than the ones that had been given the prizes. All in all, the episode shows Kelson as a man who was not afraid to stand up and be counted. In a gesture of support inspired by this brave venture, Robert Bright Marston, the editor and publisher of the *Fishing Gazette*, encouraged the forty-eight-year-old Kelson to write a series of illustrated pieces on salmon fishing and flies in the magazine, which began on 22 December 1883.[5] Marston was also motivated by self-interest, given that the paper had published remarkably little on salmon fishing up to that point. Kelson's pieces proved so popular that the new columnist quickly became a household name—a just reward for the risk he had taken in writing that minority report, which had pitted him against the might of Britain's angling establishment.

The stage seemed set for a long and happy collaboration between the influential publisher and his new star. Then, a shade less than two years after he had begun writing for Marston, Kelson transferred his allegiance to *Land and Water*, a broad-based sporting periodical that had been established in 1866 as a competitor to the *Field* and whose interests clashed with those of Marston's publication. Kelson's contributions helped *Land and Water* to build a solid circulation among salmon fishermen at the expense of the *Gazette*, and some of Kelson's best work (for example, his fabulous series of salmon-fly pattern cards) ended up being published by Marston's rival.

George Kelson and his daughter at Carlogie. From George M. Kelson, The Salmon Fly *(London: George Kelson, 1895), 455.*

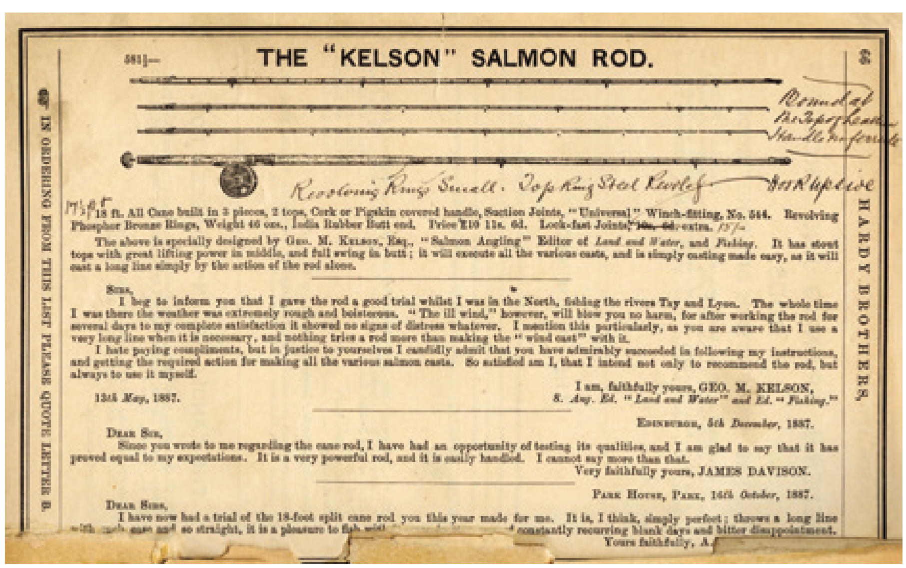
Robert Bright Marston, complete with his habitual cigar. From A. Nelson Bromley, A Fly Fisher's Reflections, 1860–1930 *(London: Fishing Gazette; Nottingham: J. & H. Bell, 1930), opp. 74.*

Kelson could hardly complain that he had been neglected by the *Gazette*. Not only was his copy featured prominently, but it was illustrated more often than not, and on occasion his pieces were allowed to run to three or more pages—few other writers received such preferential treatment, given that an article of that length occupied a substantial proportion of the paper. Even more ambitious plans had been laid, because in June 1885, Marston had announced that Sampson Low, Marston & Co. were "about to publish pattern-books of Mr. Kelson's standard colours," adding that further particulars would be given shortly, but neither the announcement nor the books ever came.[6] This project of Kelson's seems to have been similar to the one that Frederic Halford carried out for trout flies.[7] Preparations had advanced as far as having swatches prepared by the artist R. S. Lovell based on dyes prepared by Cornelissen and Co., the idea being to provide not only reference plates but samples of the correct shades of seal's fur tucked into pockets bound into the publication. It seems that Kelson intended to extend his series of articles in the *Gazette* to cover all the chief flies for the English, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish rivers, but that didn't happen either.[8] Events dictated that a decade would elapse before Kelson's name appeared on the spine of a book about salmon flies, and the books of standard colors never appeared. In any event, on 31 October 1885, *Land and Water* announced, with great glee, that the *Fishing Gazette*'s star writer had signed on to their editorial team.[9]

Marston's views about being jilted are not on record, but in light of subsequent events, it can be assumed that George Mortimer Kelson had been deleted from his Christmas list and would have been disappointed had he applied to the offices of the *Fishing Gazette* for a personal reference. Whether Kelson knew exactly how low his stock had sunk with Marston is open to question. The salmon guru had written for the *Gazette* long enough that he must have known the character of its editor, who was the most powerful figure in British (if not worldwide) angling publishing and was therefore not a good man to upset if you wanted to sustain a career as an angling writer. Marston was very smart and extremely well connected, had a memory like a trap, was (according to Kelson himself) intolerant of error,[10] regarded loyalty as a sine qua non, and, although gentlemanly and forbearing of rivals, was extremely single-minded "once he was embarked upon a crusade."[11] The clash about to be recounted pitted the hot, impetuous character of Kelson against the cool, calculating Marston—a match bound to have its share of fireworks.

So Kelson found himself on a stage where wiser men would have trod carefully. For a long while he did more or less exactly that, although with typical Kelsonesque flourishes; he was a flamboyant character to whom reticence did not come naturally, and he was a master of the theatrical at the expense of caution. Kelson had a great deal to offer any periodical. He was a tremendously experienced salmon fisherman and a very gifted writer, but diplomacy wasn't his strong suit, and his love of the limelight meant that he didn't make a great team player. As a consequence, although he wrote extended articles every week, Kelson's time as a *Land and Water* staffer lasted little longer than his residence at the *Gazette*, and his article on 17 March 1888[12] was followed by an announcement the following week that he was leaving the staff by mutual consent.[13]

Despite this setback, Kelson was rewarded with much attention from tackle companies and attracted a wide readership that lapped up his didactic, declamatory style and the relentless quest for progress that was such a strong feature of his character. Hardy's honored him with a split-cane Kelson salmon rod, which was first advertised in the company's *Anglers' Guide* in 1886 and remained



THE "KELSON" SALMON ROD.

☞ IN ORDERING FROM THIS LIST PLEASE QUOTE LETTER S.

HARDY BROTHERS.

18 ft. All Cane built in 3 pieces, 2 tops, Cork or Pigskin covered handle, Section Joints, "Universal" Winch-fitting, No. 544. Revolving Phosphor Bronze Rings, Weight 46 ozs., India Rubber Butt end. Price £10 11s. 6d. Lock-fast Joints, ~~10s. 6d.~~ extra.

The above is specially designed by Geo. M. Kelson, Esq., "Salmon Angling" Editor of *Land and Water*, and *Fishing*. It has stout tops with great lifting power in middle, and full swing in butt; it will execute all the various casts, and is simply casting made easy, as it will cast a long line simply by the action of the rod alone.

Sirs,

I beg to inform you that I gave the rod a good trial whilst I was in the North, fishing the rivers Tay and Lyon. The whole time I was there the weather was extremely rough and boisterous. "The ill wind," however, will blow you no harm, for after working the rod for several days to my complete satisfaction it showed no signs of distress whatever. I mention this particularly, as you are aware that I use a very long line when it is necessary, and nothing tries a rod more than making the "wind cast" with it.

I hate paying compliments, but in justice to yourselves I candidly admit that you have admirably succeeded in following my instructions, and getting the required action for making all the various salmon casts. So satisfied am I, that I intend not only to recommend the rod, but always to use it myself.

13th *May*, 1887.

I am, faithfully yours, GEO. M. KELSON,
S. Ang. Ed. "Land and Water" and Ed. "Fishing."

Edinburgh, 5th *December*, 1887.

Dear Sir,

Since you wrote to me regarding the cane rod, I have had an opportunity of testing its qualities, and I am glad to say that it has proved equal to my expectations. It is a very powerful rod, and it is easily handled. I cannot say more than that.

Very faithfully yours, JAMES DAVISON.

Park House, Park, 16th *October*, 1887.

Dear Sirs,

I have now had a trial of the 18-foot split cane rod you this year made for me. It is, I think, simply perfect; throws a long line with such ease and so straight, it is a pleasure to fish [illegible] constantly recurring blank days and bitter disappointment.

Yours faithfully, A. [illegible]

The Hardy Kelson rod in the 1888 Hardy catalog. This catalog was marked up in house, and the annotations are in William Hardy's hand. From the collection of Pure Fishing at Alnwick.

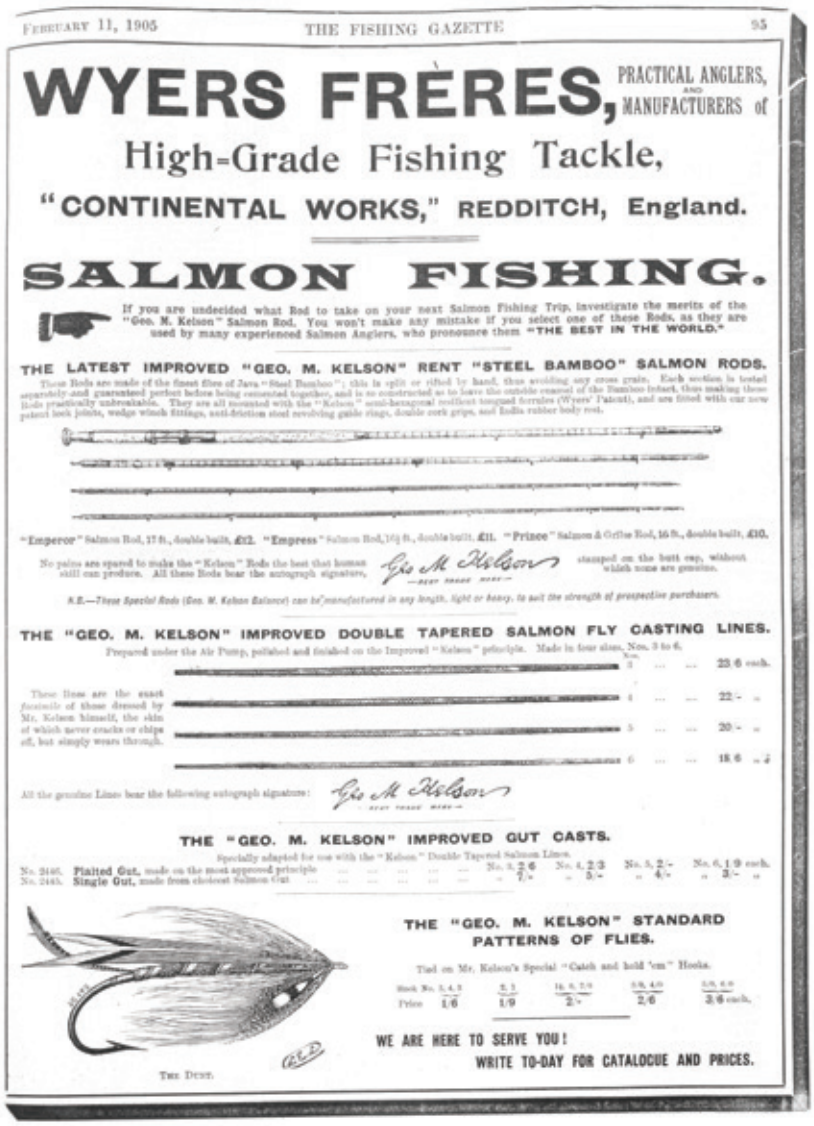
on sale until the early 1920s. Kelson also designed a Patent Lever salmon reel, which was marketed by Farlow and featured in their catalog for many years, as was a greenheart rod with Kelson's name on it. Having done so much for salmon fishing, the man scarcely deserved less.

In early 1896, Kelson self-published his magum opus, *The Salmon Fly*, a massive quarto of more than 500 pages, whose main selling points, apart from its author's name, were that it listed "about 300"[14] salmon flies, was illustrated in color, and gave comprehensive instructions on every aspect of salmon fishing. It is hard to get any kind of a handle on the size of the print run of *The Salmon Fly*, as there was only one printing, but sales clearly did not come up to expectations, because half a decade later, Kelson had to sacrifice two whole pages in his later book, *Tips*, to announce the fact that copies of *The Salmon Fly* were still available.[15] To be fair, John James Hardy's *Salmon Fishing* suffered much the same fate,[16] but in Kelson's case, there was good reason for complaint.

It is no surprise that *The Salmon Fly* had many good reviews in papers such as the *Times*, the *Scotsman*, the *Field*, *Land and Water*, and the *Evening Standard*. Unfortunately, the *Fishing Gazette* was not among their number, and Marston dissected the book in three successive issues, beginning on 28 March 1896:

> We think that all salmon anglers who take real interest in the noble sport and all its surroundings, will find much in Mr. Kelson's book to interest them.
>
> Some, doubtless, will be inclined to grumble at the want of anything like an adequate index, at the general style of—well, to use a very favourite expression of the author—of "exaggeration" about the binding and general get up of the work, with advertisements galore not only bound up with it, but interspersed in the text. Then, why should more than a hundred pages of spaced out large type be devoted to the dressings of about 300 salmon flies? It is an abuse of the word "standard" to apply it to such a list; at this rate, everything which appears in this list is a standard salmon fly. No fly is entitled to be called a "standard" pattern until it has become generally known and recognised as such, and we venture to say that no salmon fly dresser living, except Mr. Kelson, has even heard of scores of flies given in this list.[17]

Marston concentrated on the inaccuracies that he charged Kelson with introducing into many dressings and what he saw as the worse sin of the many well-known patterns that had been left out. He also took the author to task over his claims to have invented both the mixed


FEBRUARY 11, 1905 THE FISHING GAZETTE 95

WYERS FRÈRES, PRACTICAL ANGLERS, AND MANUFACTURERS of

High-Grade Fishing Tackle,

"CONTINENTAL WORKS," REDDITCH, England.

SALMON FISHING.

If you are undecided what Rod to take on your next Salmon Fishing Trip, investigate the merits of the "Geo. M. Kelson" Salmon Rod. You won't make any mistake if you select one of these Rods, as they are used by many experienced Salmon Anglers, who pronounce them "THE BEST IN THE WORLD."

THE LATEST IMPROVED "GEO. M. KELSON" RENT "STEEL BAMBOO" SALMON RODS.

"Emperor" Salmon Rod, 17 ft., double built, £12. "Empress" Salmon Rod, 16½ ft., double built, £11. "Prince" Salmon & Grilse Rod, 16 ft., double built, £10.

No pains are spared to make the "Kelson" Rods the best that human skill can produce. All these Rods bear the autograph signature, Geo M Kelson stamped on the butt cap, without which none are genuine.

N.B.—These Special Rods (Geo. M. Kelson Balance) can be manufactured in any length, light or heavy, to suit the strength of prospective purchasers.

THE "GEO. M. KELSON" IMPROVED DOUBLE TAPERED SALMON FLY CASTING LINES.

Prepared under the Air Pump, polished and finished on the Improved "Kelson" principle. Made in four sizes, Nos. 3 to 6.

These lines are the exact facsimile of those dressed by Mr. Kelson himself, the skin of which never cracks or chips off, but simply wears through.

All the genuine Lines bear the following autograph signature: Geo M Kelson

THE "GEO. M. KELSON" IMPROVED GUT CASTS.

Specially adapted for use with the "Kelson" Double Tapered Salmon Lines.

No. 2460. Plaited Gut, made on the most approved principle
No. 2445. Single Gut, made from choicest Salmon Gut

THE "GEO. M. KELSON" STANDARD PATTERNS OF FLIES.

Tied on Mr. Kelson's Special "Catch and hold 'em" Hooks.

WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU!
WRITE TO-DAY FOR CATALOGUE AND PRICES.

THE DEVE.

A Wyers Frères advertisement for Kelson-branded tackle published in the Fishing Gazette, *1905. Reproduced courtesy of the Flyfishers' Club of London.*

wing and the method of striking from the reel, demonstrated Kelson's claim to have no experience of the Sun and Planet reel to be false (using one of his own columns), and made many other criticisms, the most damaging of which was that many of the flies listed in the book had been attributed by Kelson to the wrong inventors. Very fortunately, Marston did not notice that the number of salmon flies listed by Kelson fell at least four dozen short of the number claimed, or he would have added that arithmetical error to his long list of misdemeanors.

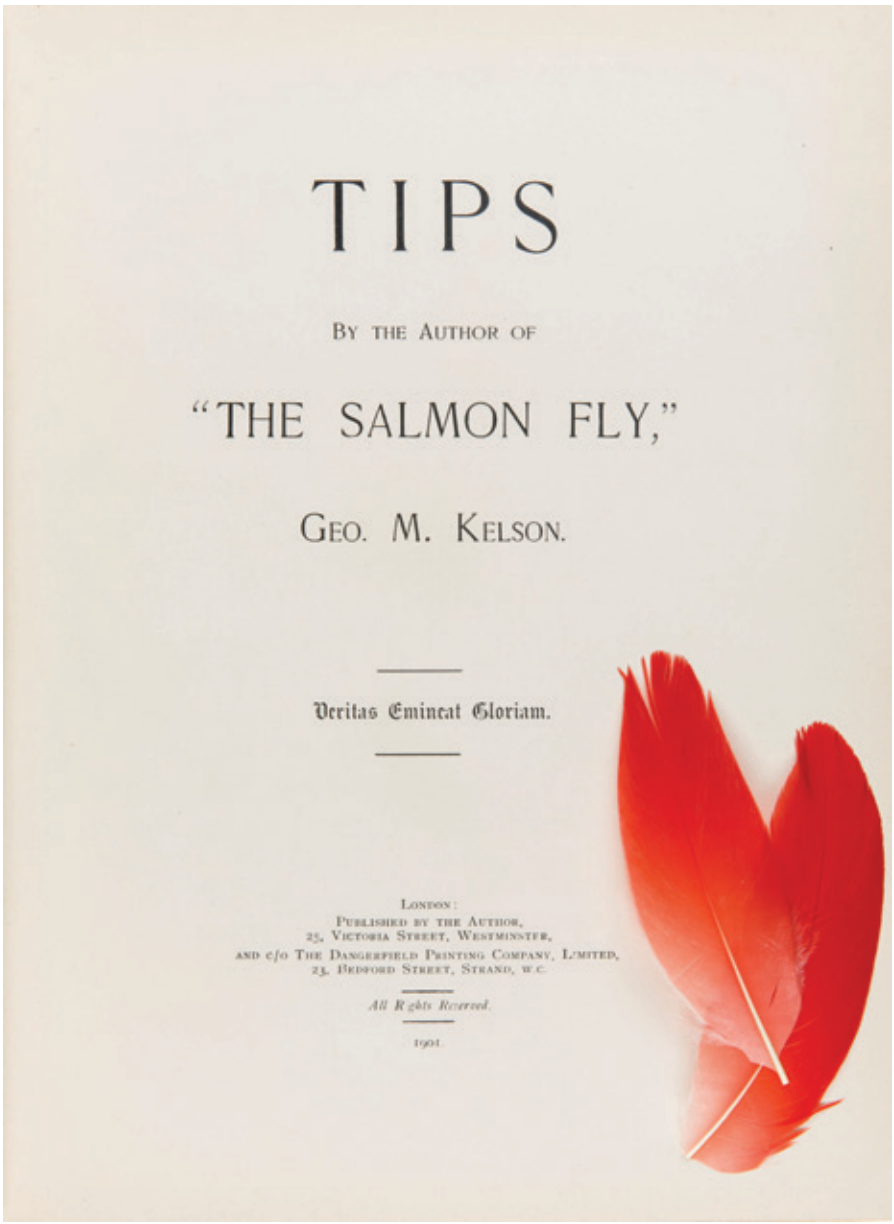
Some of Marston's accusations were fair and some less so; for example, by "improving" many existing salmon flies, Kelson was doing no more than William Blacker had done. The difference was, as Alec Jackson remarked long ago, that Kelson had made something of a career out of disapproving of substitution,[18] which was almost certainly why the editor chose to castigate his former columnist on what would otherwise be a trivial point. Readers who doubt that Kelson did anything like this should compare the original Duchess pattern with the dramatically different version that Kelson gave in *The Salmon Fly*,[19] or, for a less flagrant example, contrast Ephemera's Britannia (a Blacker original)[20] with Kelson's take on the same dressing, which was spiced up with jungle cock and then attributed to John Bernard.[21] In view of this, it is ironic that one of the flashpoints in the exchange that follows should turn out to be the substitution by Kelson of one very rare material for another very rare one in a small and otherwise unremarkable fly; but then again, if all men were built of pure logic, we should have no great art. Marston's final complaint was that many of the illustrations of casting used in *The Salmon Fly* were taken without permission from

articles published a decade earlier in the *Fishing Gazette;* no doubt the editor was sensitive about this because some of the artwork was by Bernard Partridge, the famous *Punch* cartoonist, but the charge was demonstrably false.

From Kelson's point of view, the three-week serialization of an unremittingly negative review in Britain's best-read angling newspaper was not good news. It cannot have helped that William Brown wrote to the *Gazette* a fortnight after the last episode had been published and weighed in with his own complaint about Kelson's erroneous attribution of the famous Mar Lodge fly. Brown was a well-known angler and stated in measured tones that he had devised the pattern in 1889 based on an idea by Henry Gordon, the owner of the Manar estate on the Don.[22] Errors like this sat ill with Kelson's relentless and very public insistence on perfection, and it isn't difficult to see why they irritated Marston so much. However, the overall impact on Kelson's reputation was relatively limited. He stayed clear of journalism but remained the darling of the tackle manufacturers; for example, in 1905, Wyers Frères of Redditch were advertising not only rods and reels, but fly lines, salmon flies, and even gut casts made to Kelson's specifications.[23]

We pick up the story on 24 August 1907, six years after Kelson's second book, *Tips*, was published. *Tips* is a ragbag of advice on salmon fishing and fly dressing got up in much the same style as *The Salmon Fly*—but the new book attracted little attention from the *Gazette*. This may have been because the overall tone was slightly more modest than that of *The Salmon Fly*, but it is probable that Marston's annoyance over Kelson's desertion had cooled over the intervening decade.

Andrew Herd


TIPS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SALMON FLY,"

GEO. M. KELSON.

Veritas Eminebat Gloriam.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR,
25, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER,
AND c/o THE DANGERFIELD PRINTING COMPANY, LIMITED,
23, BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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1901.

The title page of Kelson's 1901 Tips, *with a completely gratuitous pair of ibis feathers.*

We dive into the pages of the *Gazette* when a desultory stream of correspondence on the theme of "What Is a Salmon Fly?"—which had been begun by John James Hardy in April 1907—morphed into something quite different.[24] By now Kelson was seventy-two, but his pen was as tireless as ever, and surviving letters attest that he dispensed advice privately as freely as he did in the columns of the angling press. The old boy had taken up intermittent residence on the letters page of the *Fishing Gazette*; but the editor was tolerant of Kelson's presence and made no attempt to interfere. The countdown began when Marston published a letter of Kelson's that August under the catchy title, "What Is a Salmon Fly?—Reprehensible Use of Side Issues."[25] There was nothing particularly remarkable about this missive, beyond a casual mention of a salmon fly of his own invention, the Little Inky Boy, which Kelson had introduced in *The Salmon Fly*,[26] trailed in *Tips*,[27] and now laid before his readers with the words:

> Just when the "Little Inky Boy" comes into use—and how those who know the fly look forward to the time!—one's hopes are dashed to the ground by the abominable practice of this army of unopposed irregulars, whose wrongs are numerous, whose rights are few.[28]

The longevity of the correspondence may have had something to do with the way Kelson was making heavy weather of his case and because Kelson had been accused of inconsistency by at least one writer;[29] but the grand old man of salmon fishing was unperturbed by the forces ranged against him, perhaps because his views were seldom questioned, but mostly because he was keen to promote his favorite pattern:

> "What is a Salmon Fly?" writes another old hand. "Why don't you tell them plainly that a salmon fly, and the best salmon fly, too, is the Inky Boy?"
>
> Would it be out of place, Sir, to publish as a suitable supplement to this letter some details collected from several friends showing the success of the Inky Boy? I enclose the copy made from my books on Nov. 13, 1905. No doubt a great many other gentlemen, unknown to me, could speak well of the fly. In my opinion, it is by far the best fly to use at the present day when the waters are low and the fish get together into deep holes.[30]

At this point, it pays to stand back a little and to remind ourselves that what follows was an argument about a tiny salmon fly and not about Original Sin, because reason became an early casualty of the dispute, shot out of hand in the opening skirmish. Kelson followed his introduction of the Little Inky Boy with the staggering number of salmon that had fallen to the blue-, yellow-, orange-, and red-throated versions of the pattern, adding that the yellow (furnace) throat was the original version. The total was a massive 2,379 fish, including 1,578 to his own rod,[31] which was a significant proportion of his lifetime catch of salmon. Although no timescale was given, even if we set it at six years, this had to be regarded as a stunningly successful fly, its greatest attraction being that it was reported to be at its best on dog days when the fish were stale and hard to move.

The trouble was that only Kelson and his friends seemed to be able to unlock the potential of this magic fly, which had been experimented with widely after all the publicity that Kelson had given it. There was an embarrassing shortage of other readers prepared to confirm that they had had success with it. Kelson's attitude here is hard to fathom. The reason that the Little Inky Boy had become popular was because Kelson had made it so, and he was very firmly of the opinion that the fly had to be dressed in a very specific way—but he was strangely reluctant to tell his readers how to do that. To make matters worse, it took a while before it became clear that the recipe he was using in 1907 was different than the one printed in *The Salmon Fly* a dozen years previously, and there were numerous variants of the Little Inky Boy in circulation. To give some idea of the variety on hand, of the nine different originals we have seen, only two share the same dressing, and even that is nonstandard. None conform exactly to any of the published dressings. Given that Kelson was a master of didacticism and that his book was renowned for excruciatingly fine detail, it is curious that on the one occasion in his long career when his reputation depended on giving precise instructions, he did not do so. If there is an explanation for this, it is lost in the mists of time, but to give Kelson the benefit of the doubt, it is possible that the speed with which the whole affair went bad caught him off guard.

Rumblings began on October 19, when no less authority than William Baigent wrote to ask for the correct dressing of Kelson's favorite fly:

> The supplement to Mr. Geo. M. Kelson's interesting letter, "What Is a Salmon Fly?". . . deals with the killing powers of the Inky Boy. As the dressings of this fly as generally sold vary considerably, and as I do not see it detailed in Hardy's new book, "Salmon Fishing," I shall be obliged if Mr. Kelson will kindly let me know through the columns of your valuable paper the correct dressing for the yellow, orange, red and blue throated Inky Boy.[32]

Baigent, doctor and pioneer hackle herder, had his part to play elsewhere in the history of fly fishing, but his letter sparked a cheerful reply from Kelson, which began "I am rather glad you asked me for some particulars of this little fly, because, amongst other things, I am able to explain why it fails in the hands of so many fishermen."[33] Geoffrey Bucknall has suggested that Baigent's letter might have been a plant, and it is tempting to agree, given Kelson's heavy-handed response.[34] Kelson went on to complain that when "made heavy in the wings, thick in the body, and with the wrong materials the fly is useless."[35] He added that it was an error to tie it on an eyed hook; above all, its successful use required thin gut. But this was no more than an opening salvo, for Kelson really got into his stride in the paragraphs that followed.

> Unfortunately, most of the professionals do not possess the materials which all my immediate friends insist on using. The *querula cruenta*, for example, is, as most of us know, a very expensive bird to get, and, moreover, it is a very rare one to find. But in this particular instance it so happens that the imitation is infinitely superior to natural feather. It is, in fact, so attractive to the fish that a little of it almost invariably takes the place of Indian crow in any fly turned out by our leading amateurs. These extraordinarily effective feathers abound in the tippet of the Magnifique. The tippets are carefully dyed in France, and they can be had for a few pence.

Purple-throated fruitcrow. Photo by Daniel J. Field. Used with permission.

Wompoo fruit dove. Photo by David Taylor. Used with permission.

A green turaco (T. persa). *Photo by Frans Vendewalle/Snarfel. Reproduced with permission.*

> Then again, the touracou is hardly ever seen on the professional fly bench. This bird is most useful in the present case. The crest feather, like the legs of a spider, serves as a hackle to run along the body, whilst the wing, which holds natural claret feathers, improves the appearance of the fly in no small degree. Write to Monsieur Jacquet, Marchand de Plumes, Rue Monsigny, Av. de l'Opera, and you may get as many as you want at a mere nominal price.[36]

This classic sample of Kelson hubris hinted at several birds that were unknown to the majority of tackle dealers, let alone the readers of the *Fishing Gazette*, but despite this, even Kelson was none too certain of the identity of some of the species involved, and unfortunately, as it turned out, neither was M. Jacquet. A century later, it took a huge amount of work to identify all the birds, and the correspondence in the *Gazette* leaves a strong impression that the ambiguity wasn't a whole lot different in 1907. The opening words about "professionals" perfectly encapsulate another side of Kelson's character: the conflict that underlay his strong—and mostly justified—belief that a talented amateur could always tie a better fly than a shop dresser who was governed by the need to make a profit. This oft-expressed view meant that Kelson enjoyed a love-hate relationship with professional salmon fly dressers, and in the weeks to come, it would play its part in denying him support from this fraternity; if nothing else, the saga that follows is a great example of how to isolate yourself by upsetting every single group of your supporters simultaneously.

Given Kelson's insistence that the feathers used in his variation of the pattern were so crucial, we had better discuss them now. The genus *Querula* contains a single species, the purple-throated fruitcrow, now classified as *Querula purpurata*,[37] which is a native of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, and Amazonia. Anyone who has seen a patch of its throat feathers will have no trouble understanding why Kelson was so keen on them, but skins were impressively rare in Europe in the early 1900s, which accounts for why even Kelson was keen to substitute the material.

The alluring-sounding Magnifique, which was Kelson's favored substitute for the above, is known today as the wompoo fruit dove, *Ptilinopus magnificus*, a species beloved of d'Aubenton; it is sometimes and most descriptively known as the purple-bellied pigeon. Sadly, the chances of seeing a squadron of this life-enhancing bird knocking four kinds of hell out of our raspberry patch are nil, because its natural range only extends from Queensland to New Guinea.[38] To see a wompoo fruit dove is to know that the world would be a better place if only there were more of them, but specimens of this bird, too, were hard to find in Britain in 1907 (although it is reasonably common in its home territory).

The third star of the show, turaco, is a collective description much like *chatterer*, and in using it Kelson meant one of the many species in the Musophagidae family, often known as louries, which includes twenty-three species, virtually all of which have spectacular crests and are part of the lore, if not the legend, of salmon-fly dressing. Many have heard of these birds, but few Old World anglers

have ever seen one. It is unlikely that Kelson had the faintest idea how diverse the turacos are, or he would have been much more careful specifying which species or color was required; turaco crests vary in color from white through gray, blue, yellow, orange, red, purple, and green. Likely candidates for Kelson's choice are the green turaco (*Tauraco persa*), Livingstone's turaco (*T. livingstonii*), or the Knsyna turaco (*T. corythaix*), which together form a superspecies with *T. schalowi*, *T. schuetti*, and *T. fischeri* and are found in West Africa, notably the Gambia. Even by the standards of the early 1900s, the most common of these materials was decidedly exotic in Europe, but whether by intention or accident, Kelson left his readers under the impression that they were readily available from at least one dealer before going on to give the following description of his pattern:

> Tag.—Silver twist and two turns of crimson Berlin wool.
> Tail.—A topping, a point of the tippet imitation of the *querula cruenta*, and a narrow strip of summer duck.
> Butt.—Black herl.
> Body.—Thick black horsehair closely coiled.
> Hackle.—From center of body touracou crest.
> Throat.—A buttercup yellow furnace hackle (this could be substituted with orange, red, or blue).
> Wings.—Golden pheasant tippet in strands, unbarred Mandarin drake, a right and left claret strand of touracou, two narrow strips of summer duck, a suspicion of gallina, and a topping.[39]

The second line of the dressing was to cause untold trouble later on. It would have saved Kelson a great deal of time, effort, and pain had he only made it clear that the dressing was *not* supposed to use *querula* tippet and his phrasing had instead been "A topping, a point of dyed Magnifique, and a narrow strip of summer duck." Another point of confusion was that the turaco used in the wing of the pattern did not come from the crest of the bird, but its primaries, and although an alert reader could have inferred this from the "right and left" instruction and the color, he or she would have needed to have seen a turaco to appreciate this. For such a small and apparently simple pattern, the Little Inky Boy was a minefield. The puzzlement caused by his choice of words was not the only cloud on Kelson's horizon, for if the publication of the dressing solved any of Kelson's readers' problems with versions of the magical fly that would cast no spells for them, there was no sign of it. In an attempt to break the impasse, Lieutenant-Colonel E. B. Bartley wrote a letter to the *Gazette* asking the questions every single one of Kelson's readers must have been aching to have answered. After a good-natured preamble, Bartley enquired:

> 1. In writing M. Jacquet for materials, should a skin of tourocou be ordered? If not, what proportions of the bird should be specified? What is the price?
> 2. "Collerette de Magnifique"; is this sufficient description?
> 3. In the wing of Inky Boy what number of strands of tippet and gallina should be used? Further, about what width should the strips of Mandarin Drake and Summer Duck be? Is this latter "barred" or "unbarred"?
> 4. Size or sizes of hook considered best.
>
> I am afraid I have asked a good many questions, but my excuse must be that during the past season, I have constantly tried the fly under, I should imagine, ideal conditions for its use, but without success.[40]

Marston followed Bartley's letter with a fateful note that included the following observation:

> If we lived a thousand years and salmon a hundred, I should believe in the necessity for the Little Inky Boy or any other fly being dressed with the extreme care and accuracy as regards colouring, etc., demanded by Mr. Kelson. As it is, I cannot; but there is always a pleasure in getting things right according to their inventors, and it adds to the interest of fly-making.[41]

By now, letters were flying back and forth between the offices of the *Gazette* and Kelson's home, the volume of post triggering a new difficulty, which was the delay between Kelson receiving each new issue of the *Gazette* and digesting the contents, and the publication of his reply, which had not been a problem when the correspondence had been proceeding at a more leisurely pace. The asynchronous element of the correspondence favored Marston, whose comments were typeset at the last moment and so always seemed fresh and relevant. By contrast, the delay had the unfortunate side effect of handicapping Kelson to the point of him seeming foolish at times, simply because his replies lagged so far behind as to appear stale or inappropriate. It did not help his cause that around this time Kelson's letters began to be peppered with ill-tempered remarks along the lines of, "I have just received two ridiculous specimens of this fly," and "I would urge those who cannot understand how to work from such information to consult some recognised authority before wasting time and materials,"[42] not to mention, "Personally, I should never dream of using any one of the samples sent, most of which are capital chub-flies."[43]

Even at this stage in the correspondence, one is left with the feeling that Kelson was riding for a fall; although he continually emphasized the need to use extraordinarily precise amounts of materials in the dressing of the Little Inky Boy, he was never quite specific enough that anyone else could dress the fly to his own satisfaction. The strong impression one gains from reading the letters is that

A Little Inky Boy variant, sold by John Bernard's shop in London, probably around 1910. This specimen is tied on a no. 4, which is approximately the correct size of hook, but as readers will be horrified to note, the pattern is wrong. Photo by Andrew Herd, copyright Andrew Herd and Sir Peter Cresswell.

A Little Inky Boy variant sold by Ogden Smith. George Kelson would definitely not have approved of this one, which is tied on an eyed hook; it is far too large and is most definitely heavy in the wing. Photo by Andrew Herd, copyright Andrew Herd and Sir Peter Cresswell.

Kelson was annoyed that his readers were not as talented at fly tying as he and his inner circle were; this betrayal of his normally avuncular approach was not calculated to endear him to his audience and was another factor in the draining away of his support. To make matters worse, Kelson did not spot the warning implied in a short footnote after the "chub-fly" letter, in which the publisher wrote, "Mr. 'G.M.K.' tells us where the Inky Boy won't catch salmon, but it would be more useful to tell us where it will do so!"[44]

A supporter of Kelson did enter the lists on 16 November 1907,[45] when John James (J. J.) Hardy confirmed that one of his company's clients had caught fish in Newfoundland using copies of the Inky Boy supplied by the Alnwick tackle maker. Had Kelson only known of the storm that was about to break out around him, he would have lain down his pen at this point—but he did not. For that, we will have to wait until the next issue.

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24. John James Hardy, "What Is a Salmon Fly?," *The Fishing Gazette* (vol. LIV, 20 April 1907), 299.
25. George M. Kelson. "What Is a Salmon Fly?—Reprehensible Use of Side Issues," *The Fishing Gazette* (vol. LV, 24 August 1907), 179–80.
26. George M. Kelson, *The Salmon Fly*, 214–15. The Little Inky Boy is rather hard to find because the dressing has been put in the section of flies whose names begin with *T.*
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Stephen Zeh: Basket Maker

by John Mundt

Trout creel by Stephen Zeh. Photo by Stephen Zeh. Used with permission.

It is because the creel, once so common and utilitarian, has faded from view that its history and beauty should be saved.
—Hugh Chatham and Dan McClain
The Art of the Creel

The creel: once ubiquitous in the angling world, it has now become a quaint reminder of our sport's past. Most would immediately recognize what one is, but it would be the rare occasion to spot one in actual use on today's streams. Catch-and-release practices and the use of less-expensive canvas or nylon satchels have rendered the traditional woven creel all but obsolete.

Thankfully, the art of making such creels is alive and well at Stephen Zeh's workshop in Temple, Maine. Zeh developed his craft over years of working a Maine trapline and refined his skills under the tutelage of Eddie Newell, a Penobscot Indian basket maker. Since about 1978, Zeh has wandered the northern Maine forests in search of select brown ash trees to harvest for his workbench. Similar to the bamboo rod maker's selection of culms, only one out of a hundred ash trees can provide the proper grain and flexibility for Zeh's work.

A Stephen Zeh trout creel is a work of art, yet it is fully functional for its originally intended purpose. Each creel is painstakingly produced from choice Maine ash, English bridle leather stitched with Irish linen thread, copper clench nails, brass hardware, and a shearling shoulder pad. As with all fine creations, the price is dear and the wait is long: $8,500 and six months or more is what it will take to add one of his limited-edition signed, dated, and numbered masterpieces to your kit.

Zeh describes his creels as being "made in the same way the antique baskets were made, with a time-intensive process that precisely follows the grain of the brown ash. This preserves the natural strength and durability of the wood, making the basket very strong but light weight."[1] His tools and methods are the same as those once used by Maine woodsmen, Shakers, and Native American basket makers: the draw knife, shaving horse, ax, froe, hornbeam, maul, and knife.

Zeh states that his inspiration comes from "memories of fine days stalking trout on clear-running streams, and fishing high mountain ponds."[2] He informed me that although the majority of his clients are collectors of his creels as works of art, they are in fact built to be used.

The widespread acclaim and awards recognizing Zeh's work since 1983 are indicative of the passion and expertise he brings to his efforts. A Zeh enthusiast remarked about one of the creels, "It's spectacular. It reminds me of the way Shaker furniture can have a baroque beauty despite its utter simplicity. Imagine the patina after thirty years of carrying your lunch."[3]

Stephen Zeh is a true keeper of the flame who has kept sacred traditions alive for another generation. The heritage of our sport continues to be preserved and enriched by dedicated craftsmen like him. For more information about Mr. Zeh's work, visit www.stephenzeh.com.

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John Mundt is a former trustee of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Stephen Zeh working. Photo by Roxanne Rowe. Used with permission.

Saving Lee Wulff's Pool

Lee Wulff inscribed, "For Maxine. With pleasant memories of days on the Battenkill. Lee Wulff" on this undated photo from Maxine Atherton's collection. In the nearly fifteen years that the organization has been in existence, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance has made some incredible strides in preserving the fishery. This includes more than twenty-one projects that have directly affected and improved the area's wildlife habitat. The AMFF proudly supports and thanks the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, Trout Unlimited, Bonefish Tarpon Trust, American Rivers, and others who delivered presentations at our first annual Conservation Symposium on March 14–15.

Izaak Walton once said, "Angling may be said to be so much like the Mathematicks, that it can ne'r be fully learnt."[1] He would have done just fine on the Batten Kill.

Much like high school calculus, fly fishing the Batten Kill in Manchester, Vermont, is challenging and requires gratuitous study. In fact, according to author John Merwin, the Batten Kill "might just be the most technically difficult fly-fishing stream in America. . . . Some fly fishermen will resent my having said this; most Battenkill veterans will agree with it."[2] The river tests even the most avid angler's skill and patience, draining whatever sanity is left after a day's work and perhaps a previous night's fly tying in hopes of enticing a fish. The Batten Kill's wily trout are doctorate scholars in discerning the tied fly from a real meal, to the point that one wonders how the river's famous brown trout get so big by not eating. A lackadaisical cast or the usual clunky misstep in waders can spell doom to one's chances for the day. Even when one drops in the perfect cast or manages not to disturb the crystal-clear water, the food is scarce and the fish-per-mile ratio slim.

All of these endearing features are part of what attracts the best of the best to experience the Batten Kill. It is a veritable outdoor hall of fame where the sport's legends are honored with pools instead of plaques. Wulff's Pool, named after perhaps the best fly fisher the river has seen, fell on hard times in the early 2000s.[3] The river channel had become overwidened and shallow, and a flood channel was cutting off an important meander. Before the famed fishing hole was lost forever, the Clearwater and Adirondack Trout Unlimited chapters, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the fledgling Batten Kill Watershed Alliance swooped to the rescue. Using backhoes and other heavy equipment, they installed a series of rock vanes to preserve the meander by redirecting the main force of the flow and recreating Lee Wulff's favorite pool. In the decade since, the structures have functioned properly and have withstood a battering from Hurricane Irene (2011) and numerous other rain and snow events, proof positive of a job well done. Even though it did not occur during spawning season, Hurricane Irene still could have been catastrophic to the Batten Kill's recovering wild trout population had there not been years worth of structure already in place to stabilize and maintain their habitat.

In 2006, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance initiated a program that proved critical to preventing major loss of property and riparian habitat during Irene. A group of workers planted trees along the riverbanks to displace runoff water and keep it from flowing freely across wetlands and into public property. In a report on the post-Irene state of the Batten Kill, Vermont Fish and Wildlife biologist Ken Cox noted that "the new concrete arch bridge that replaced two old undersized culverts on Benedict Hollow Brook . . . designed to provide trout access to spawning habitat came through the flood fine and conducted water and any debris downstream without incident."[4]

April showers may bring May flowers elsewhere, but in Manchester it brings trout. As is a long-standing tradition, anglers awake from their off-season hibernation, cast aside their fly-tying vises, and flock to the Batten Kill's hallowed grounds to ply their trade once again. So as you take part in the opening-day rush and maybe find a fish or two, just stop, take a moment, and appreciate the hard work that some really good people have done to keep the river running.

Tight lines and safe wading this season!

—Peter Nardini
Communications Coordinator

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From W. Shaw Sparrow, Angling in British Art *(London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Limited, 1923), facing page 64.*

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Patrick Boland
Leonard Busby
Cathi Comar
Sandi Cristofano
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Curtis Duffield
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Robert Feitler
Lloyd Fields
Russell Fisher
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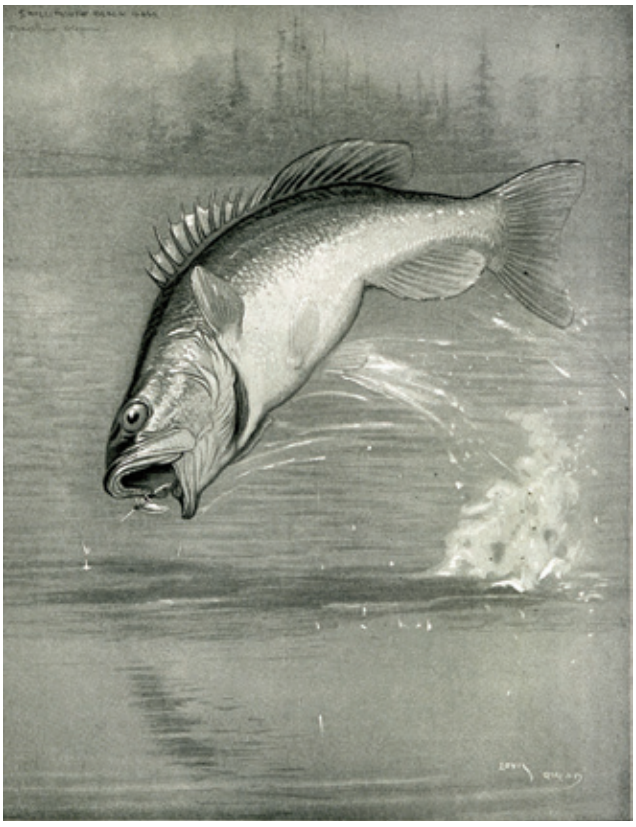

From Louis Rhead, Fisherman's Lures and Game-Fish Food *(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), facing page 60.*

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Joan Wulff
Jeff Wyman

Charles "Buzz" Eichel
1932–2014

Our museum has lost a valued associate and a dear friend. Charles "Buzz" Eichel was called from mortal life on Christmas day after an extended struggle with cancer.

A gifted businessman and prominent attorney, he was a pillar in the Manchester, Vermont, community and volunteered his services as legal counsel to the museum for many years. Elected to the board of trustees in 1979, he was elevated to trustee emeritus in 2003.

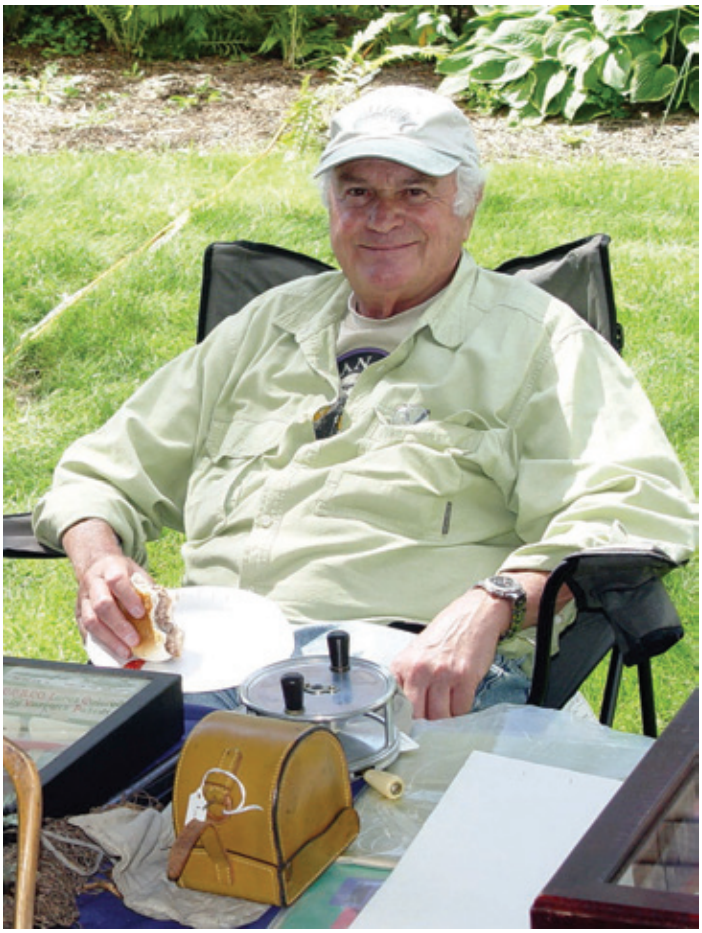
An enthusiastic outdoorsman, Buzz said that fishing was the best part of his life. He loved trout fishing on his beloved Batten Kill, and he fly fished Alaska for salmon and steelhead. He had a condominium in Key Largo, where he enjoyed wading the salt flats for bonefish and permit. With a smile, he told the story of being investigated by a far-too-aggressive shark that had to be beaten off with his fly rod.

Buzz was a born collector. It has been said that either you're not a collector or you're dragging things home by the age of four. He surrounded himself with reels, rods, and artifacts; his office and his home bulged with collectibles.

With his wife, Annaick, Buzz owned Owl's Head Antiques in Manchester, specializing in preowned fishing tackle, books, artwork, and pipe tobacco. He was a fixture at various tackle auctions and collector shows from southern Vermont to the English Midlands, and he always had a vendor's table at the museum's annual Fly-Fishing Festival.

Sensing that Annaick was spending an inordinate amount of time in the store, her daughter once said, "Mother, you need a hobby." Annaick replied, "I have a hobby: Charles!"

Jim Hardman



Buzz Eichel at the museum's annual Fly-Fishing Festival in August 2008.

Buzz loved skiing. Although he once broke his leg in ten places and had to spend two years on crutches, he never gave up on the sport. He served with the Bromley Ski Patrol for fifty years and was declared to be the oldest ski patrol member in the country.

Even into his eighties, Buzz was an endless source of energy and ideas, and our museum was the beneficiary of both his experience and counsel. He partnered in the founding of *Rod & Reel* magazine. He was a justice of the peace and married members of his family. For a time he managed the Green Mountain Village Shopping Center in Manchester, and for fifty years he ran a thriving law practice. Although quiet at home, Buzz had "fire in his belly" and the gift of wisdom that served him—and those around him—very well indeed.

He was a champion of truth. He stood for honesty and transparency, and he said that truth would always come to the surface. In the words of singer-songwriter Malvina Reynolds, quoted with a little artistic license:

Hurrah for the grass that grows through the crack.
They roll the concrete over it to try and keep it back.
The concrete gets tired of what it has to do.
It breaks and it buckles and the grass grows through.

Buzz leaves his wife, Annaick, and their family.

And he leaves us somewhat empty, but far better off for having known him.

—Jim Hardman
Dorset, Vermont

Museum News

Matt Kiedaisch of Outsider Media

On February 7, the museum hosted its seventh annual Fit to Be "Tyed" program. This year we featured eight tiers from Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York and offered fly-tying sessions for beginners, intermediates, and advanced tiers. Rhey Plumley, responsible for ushering Vermont to approval of the nation's first official state fly (see page 9), was on hand to demonstrate the Governor Aiken pattern. We sincerely appreciate the dedicated tiers who volunteered their time to participate in our program, including Kelly Bedford, George Butts, Mike Hulvey, Rhey Plumley, Brian Price (pictured), Chris Samson, Paul Sinicki, and our own Deputy Director Yoshi Akiyama.

AMFF at Somerset

Executive Director Cathi Comar participated in the Women's Fly Fishing Showcase at the Fly Fishing Show in Somerset, New Jersey, in January. This was the first year that show organizers developed a presentation series dedicated to women in the sport, and Comar was asked to discuss the museum's exhibition program, *A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Presentation attendees were thrilled to hear details about our groundbreaking gallery exhibition and online exhibition. The Somerset show was a great opportunity to connect with so many of the museum's supporters throughout the fly-fishing industry. Plans are under way to secure an AMFF booth in 2016!

THE Fly FISHING Show

Upcoming Events

Events take place on the museum grounds in Manchester, Vermont, unless otherwise noted.

April 24
Heritage Award Event honoring Tom Brokaw
Racquet & Tennis Club, New York City

April 25
Board of Trustees Meeting
The Anglers' Club of New York, New York City

May 5
Fishing Trip and Cookout at the Potatuck Club
Newtown, Connecticut

May 25–September 7
Blue Star Museums Program
Free admission for active military personnel and their families

June 3–17
Online Auction

July 1–31
Angling & Art Benefit Sale and Public Programs

July 11
Canvas 'n' Cocktails
A paint-and-sip event

July 19
Celebrate National Ice Cream Day!
Fly-fishing activities and free ice cream
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

August 8
8th Annual Fly-Fishing Festival
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

September 12
Members-Only Event: Rare Reel Rendezvous
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

September 24
The Anglers' Club of New York Dinner and Auction
New York City

September 26
Smithsonian magazine Museum Day Live!
Free admission with a Museum Day Live! ticket

October 17
Annual Membership Meeting

October 22–23
Friends of Corbin Shoot at Hudson Farm
Andover, New Jersey

November 15–20
Fly-Fishing Trip to Belize

December 5
Gallery Program: Hooked on the Holidays
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Always check our website (www.amff.com) for additions, updates, and more information or contact (802) 362-3300 or events@amff.com. "Casting About," the museum's e-mail newsletter, offers up-to-date news and event information. To subscribe, look for the link on our website or contact the museum.

Recent Donations to the Collection

Joan Wulff of Lew Beach, New York, donated Lee Wulff's Cine Kodak K-100 movie camera and its tripod, as well as photos of Charles Ritz and Joe Brooks. **Lefty Kreh** of Hunt Valley, Maryland, gave us fourteen 35mm slides of Hoagy B. Carmichael building a fly rod. **Kathleen Bauer** of Seattle, Washington, donated a journal of George F. Keough, written while he was developing the braided fast line, sinking line, and epoxy splice.

Carmine Lisella of New City, New York, sent us a 1976 7-foot, 5-inch, two-piece Weir & Son fly rod (serial no. M763.2) and a Weir & Son company brochure. **Kevin Flanagan** of Branchville, New Jersey, gave us two Horrocks-Ibbotson reels: a Vernley trout reel and an automatic Utica, N.Y. H-I reel. **Andrew Warchawer** of East Windsor, New Jersey, donated a set of size 3/0 saltwater streamers: a Feather Fleye, a Bulkhead Deceiver, and a Hollow Fleye Rhea. And **Richard Soper** of East Dorset, Vermont, gave us a three-piece collapsible landing net.

Jim Heckman of Manchester, Vermont, donated a collection of *New Yorker* magazines to be used in an upcoming exhibit. **Gary Sherman** of Short Hills, New Jersey, gave us an original Stanley Meltzoff oil painting, *Striper 14—Deal Pilings, Rooting for Shedders*. **Warren Kappenberg** of Calverton, New York, and **Terry Biggar** of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, each donated a collection of books; for detailed listings, contact the museum.

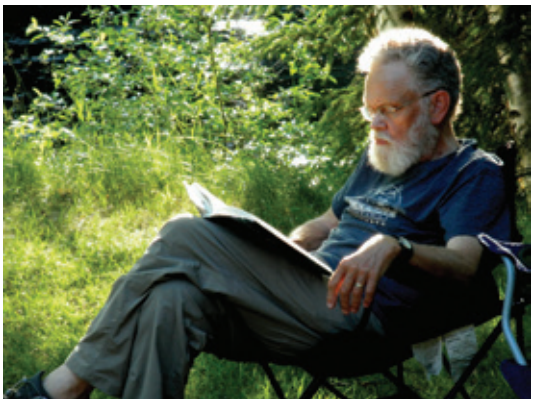
CONTRIBUTORS

Barbara Herd, MD, FRCP

Andrew Herd works three days a week as a family practitioner in County Durham. The remainder of the time he fishes, writes about fishing, or takes photographs of other people fishing, notably for Hardy & Greys in Alnwick, for whom he has worked for several years.

Herd has published many books, including his *History of Fly Fishing* trilogy (Medlar Press), and he is the executive editor of *Waterlog* magazine. His most recent work (with Keith Harwood and Stanley David) is *Gear & Gadgets*, a lighthearted look at some of Hardy's more harebrained products, and next to press will be *The Anglers' Bible*, a detailed examination of the *Hardy's Anglers' Guides* up to 1914. Right now he is working with Hermann Dietrich-Troeltsch on another trilogy, this time about the incomparable Mr. William Blacker.

Sheila Reid



Rhey Plumley is the retired manager of the Classic Outfitters, a former fly-fishing shop, located in South Burlington, Vermont. An International Federation of Fly Fishers–certified casting instructor and longtime fly-tying teacher, Plumley has authored and coauthored several articles for fly-fishing magazines and the book *Flyfisher's Guide to Northern New England*. He coproduced the DVD *Figuring Out Fly Fishing: Trout*. Plumley has led groups to the Green River in Utah to fish for trout and to the Sand Hill in Labrador for Atlantic salmon. He has been active with Trout Unlimited for many years and more recently with Casting for Recovery. Plumley resides in South Burlington with his best fishing buddy and life partner, Sheila.

Jana Varchaver

Catherine Varchaver is senior stewardship officer at World Wildlife Fund's headquarters in Washington, D.C., where she writes extensively about global conservation programs to inspire individual philanthropy. In her third career now, Varchaver worked as an international education and development professional, holistic nutrition counselor, and as a writer focusing on socially progressive philanthropy. A lifelong fan of fly fishing and its history, Varchaver's only true credential is as the granddaughter of John and Maxine Atherton, who helped shape the art and science of fly fishing over the decades. Varchaver was born in France and spent most of her childhood on the Hudson River forty minutes north of New York City. She received her bachelor's degree at Oberlin College, her master of arts in teaching at the School for International Training in Vermont, and certification as a holistic health counselor at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition in New York. Varchaver and her seventeen-year-old son, Sasha Tidwell—who enjoys fishing, camping, baseball, and writing—live in Takoma Park, Maryland, on the border of Washington, D.C.

It Takes a Village . . . of Anglers

A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow *can now be viewed online. Simply go to www.amff.com and either click on the slide show or on the exhibitions pull-down tab and its online link. You can also type www.agracefulrise.amff.com into your browser.*

The American Museum of Fly Fishing is pleased to announce the launch of its first online exhibition. *A Graceful Rise: Women in Fly Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* went live at the end of 2014, and the feedback has been positive and enthusiastic.

We selected *A Graceful Rise* for several reasons. First, the content from this groundbreaking gallery exhibition was already on file, and we had maintained connections with all of the participants. Second, the book that accompanied the exhibition sold out, and we wanted to develop an online program featuring this history. And third, we were confident that all original participants would readily provide permissions to include their materials. Our reasoning was spot on!

The museum wishes to thank the Orvis Company for their support of this special project. After submission of a funding proposal in early 2014 and a follow-up meeting with the company's branding and corporate marketing team, Orvis agreed to donate project funding. This contribution allowed us to work with the Cavallaro Group to develop a multilayered and well-organized digital program.

Many thanks to the following village of anglers for lending their collections, allowing us to use their still and moving images, and agreeing to participate in this important undertaking:

John Bailey
Susan Damone Balch
Dotty Ballantyne and Fitz Coker
Charles Barnes
Cathy and Barry Beck
Peggy Brenner
Casting for Recovery
Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum (Livingston Manor, New York)
Mary Dette Clark
CODEPINK Women for Peace
Kristi Denton Cohen
Selene A. Dumaine
Debbie Elmer
Rachel Finn
Lyla Foggia
Karen Graham
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Annette McLean
Maggie Merriman
Diane Michelin
Lori-Ann Murphy
Judith Frances O'Keefe
The Orvis Company
Margot Page
Phillips Historical Society (Phillips, Maine)
Portland Press Herald
R. L. Winston Rod Company
Diana Rudolph
Annette Lilly Russ
Kathy Scott
Molly Semenik
Sisters on the Fly
Eric Steel
Rhea Topping
University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center
The Woman Fly Fishers
Joan Salvato Wulff
Nancy Zakon

Take some time, go online, and visit www.agracefulrise.amff.com to see our digital exhibition!

Cathi Comar
Executive Director

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Mission

The american museum of fly fishing is the steward of the history, traditions, and practices of the sport of fly fishing and promotes the conservation of its waters. The museum collects, preserves, exhibits, studies, and interprets the artifacts, art, and literature of the sport and uses these resources to engage, educate, and benefit all.

The museum provides public programs to fulfill its educational mission, including exhibitions, publications, gallery programs, and special events. Research services are available for members, visiting scholars, students, educational organizations, and writers. Contact Yoshi Akiyama at yakiyama@amff.com to schedule a visit.

Volunteer

Throughout the year, the museum needs volunteers to help with programs, special projects, events, and administrative tasks. You do not have to be an angler to enjoy working with us! Contact Sarah Foster at sfoster@amff.com to tell us how we would benefit from your skills and talents.

Support

The American Museum of Fly Fishing relies on the generosity of public-spirited individuals for substantial support. Please contact us if you wish to contribute funding to a specific program, donate an item for fund-raising purposes, or place an advertisement in this journal. We encourage you to give the museum consideration when planning for gifts, bequests, and memorials.

Join

Membership Dues (per annum)

Patron	$1,000
Sponsor	$500
Business	$250
Benefactor	$100
Associate	$50

The museum is an active, member-oriented nonprofit institution. Membership dues include four issues of the *American Fly Fisher;* unlimited visits for your entire family to museum exhibitions, gallery programs, and special events; access to our 7,000-volume angling reference library; and a discount on all items sold by the museum on its website and inside the museum store, the Brookside Angler. To join, please contact Samantha Pitcher at spitcher@amff.com.

Scan with your smartphone to visit our collection online!