

Election Special

Rob Denson dabbles with politics



Hook Size 10-14 Kamasan B175 or 170 **Tail** Bronze mallard
Rib Fine gold wire **Body** 50/50 mix
 - hare's ear and pearl Ice Dub
Body hackle Furnace hen
Cloak and throat Bronze mallard
Thread Black or olive

TYING TIPS

- The Election Special is a Dabbler, therefore pay attention to cloaking the wing correctly. There are plenty of videos on the web that will help you.
- Experiment with hook weights and sizes, at the vice and on the water. Heavy hook for fast sink rate; light hook for slow.
- Work the body with velcro to bring out the hare's ear and Ice-dub. Before you add the cloak.



ROB DENSON

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FOR A LONG TIME, I TENDED to think of the Election Special as a new pattern, to the extent that on several recent occasions, I decided against selecting it for this page on the grounds of inexperience. Then I did the maths. The frightening truth is that Gordon Brown was Prime Minister the night this Dabbler was created. Two days, one llyn, one lake and 250 miles later, Brown was removed by a relatively fresh-faced David Cameron. That was ten years ago, folks, and unlike Messrs Brown and Cameron, the Election Special is still around and still - with me and the trout at least - achieving high approval ratings.

The road trip started on May 5, 2010 - the eve of the general election. I departed at silly o'clock to drive the 100 miles or so to meet Alex Ferguson, his father, and George Barron on the banks of Tal-y-llyn and complete a foursome. The Election Special (along with the Slip-Wing Mallard & Claret, *T&S* April 2017) had been tied during a couple of last-minute tying sessions on the run-up to the trip. The Tal, as she is fondly known, is home to good olive hatches, and with the timing of the trip, olives were uppermost in my thoughts for both patterns. For once, everything came together - light but steady winds, overcast and a very fine on-off drizzle. The olives duly obliged and a good day was had by all. Both of my newly fettled patterns performed well, taking good numbers of wild and stocked browns in the top 12in of water. A slow-intermediate line, and

simple, classic, loch-style technique was all that was needed to get the Tal's residents snapping at our "olives". The Election Special was deployed on the middle dropper, allowing the fly to work as soon as possible, with water moving the soft hen hackle and picking up the shimmering Ice Dub, suggesting the gases of an olive nearing the surface and eclosion.

Next stop, Bristol. What better way to spend election day than drifting the hallowed waters of Blagdon? I say drifting, but the lack of wind on the first day meant that we spent much, if not all, of it fishing Buzzers in quiet bays. The wind picked up on the second day and a damp Election Special got its chance to prove itself with Blagdon's rainbows. There were no olives that morning, but the Election Special is nothing if not wonderfully vague, and therefore versatile. Tied on a size 10, 12 or 14, it can suggest most things that swim in the UK and Ireland. Its first victim was, of course, a brown. A few rainbows followed, but at an ounce short of 3lb, the silvery, overwintered brown was my fish of the trip.

The Election Special has continued to travel well. It's popular with brown trout and has become an automatic choice for me when targeting wild fish. Seldom off my cast on Malham Tarn, it has accounted for many fish of 5lb-plus. The Orkney lochs have also been a happy hunting ground. Rainbows, too, are vulnerable to its charms, and it has form just around the corner from Blagdon at Chew, and on Grafham, Stocks and Brenig. Vote "Vague"! You know it makes sense. 