

THE HOBBLER

*Rob Denson introduces
a meaty autumn pattern that's
part-Hopper and part-Dabbler*

I THINK IT was Dick Walker who decreed that a new fly should not be named until it has produced 50 fish. It's not a rule I'm fond of. The naming of flies can be tricky enough without rules to adhere to. The first name that pops into one's head is usually as good as anything, and that often happens at the vice. Then again, I've plenty of flies that have caught hundreds of fish and remain nameless. I can see Mr Walker's point, to a degree, but names don't maketh the fly; if they did, then surely George Barron would have laughed me out of town, several years ago, when I suggested a name for his latest confection.

George had been getting a good reaction to a new pattern - a Dabbler with legs, or, depending how you looked at it, a Hopper with a wing - and sent me a couple to photograph for publication. The only problem was that the pattern had no name... until I suggested "Hobblor". Yes, well, perhaps not my finest hour, or finest 30 seconds, but the name stuck, and it's a great fly nevertheless.

The Hobblor had worked well for George in several conventional wet-fly colour schemes, but the samples he sent me were unusual... magenta. As it happened, I was away to Chew the following weekend, and, being aware of the proclivity of some southern trout for colours in the pink/magenta region of the spectrum, I was eager to give the magenta Hobblor a swim. I can tell you that it was taken with alacrity, for two days, until I lost it on a sizeable fish that made a powerful run when my fly-line was looped around my reel. That was the end of that, but just the start of my interest in George's new baby. Now, neither I, nor I suspect you, are daft enough to believe that adding a few knotted pheasant-tail legs to a Dabbler constitutes a game-changer. What it does do is give a variation in profile, a little more bulk, and add a little extra bugginess to a Dabbler - credentials that are particularly useful when one is concentrating one's efforts in the top few inches of water. The extra bulk



The heavily dressed
Heavy Hobblor.

Hook Kamasan B170 or B175 **Thread** "Wine" UTC **Tail (optional)** Bronze mallard or cock hackle fibres **Butt** Red or "Wine" holographic **Rib** Twisted fine red/wine holographic **Body** Seal fur mix: black, claret and fiery brown **Body hackle** Furnace cock **Shoulder hackle** Burnt orange hen **Legs** Knotted pheasant tail **Cloak** Bronze mallard



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and drag introduced by the addition of legs will hold the pattern higher for longer, exactly where leggy, buggy items of food are to be found by the fish.

Most of my subsequent variations of the Hobblor have remained faithful to the "lean but leggy" ethos of George's original (apart from my removal of the tail - an unnecessary appendage, lost among the legs) but there's one version I'd very much like to share with you - the Heavy Hobblor.

Originally tied as an autumnal offering, the Heavy Hobblor is simply what it says on the tin, or to put it another way, an over-dressed Hobblor - a means to several ends. Much like last month's fly, the Hog, it offers a substantial, meaty-looking mouthful, which will fish dry in a very natural way for a moment or two, prior to the commencement of the retrieve. As a top dropper, it will stay higher for longer, creating a whole lot more fuss than its leaner brethren due to the extra air trapped within its bulkier frame. Last, but by no means least, it makes a great tail fly, too, holding slimmer wet-flies, or indeed slimmer Hobbors high in the water on floating or slow-sinking lines, or introducing a "sweep" to the cast on faster-sinking lines.

I'm not sure how many fish the Hobblor had nobbled before I named George's pattern, but I can tell you that it's caught 50 fish many times over for me. **T&S**



A Black & Red
Hobblor. The
Hobblor's legs
hold the fly higher
in the water
than a Dabbler.

TYING TIPS

- The tail is optional in the leaner versions, but for me undesirable in the Heavy Hobblor.
- For the Heavy Hobblor, use cock hackle in close turns for extra bulk and stiffness.
- Try to keep the legs below the body - there's not much point adding them if they get lost in the wing.