

## ON THE BIGGS RAB

By Stephen Dugmore

I can't quite put my finger on what makes Tony Biggs's flies so special – they simply work so well. I think it has a lot to do with the choice of stiffness of the hackle. The hackle has points stiff enough that the fly stands well out of the water but not too stiff that it becomes rigid. My problem with Coq de Leon for RABs, which is great in most other respects, is that it is just a little too soft. The first drift is often fine but on the next the hackle tends to buckle and the fly sags slightly onto the water. I firmly believe that it then becomes that little bit less enticing. Ideally you want a RAB to sit so lightly on the water that it can easily skate and dance over the surface. Tony's do just that.

I think the other thing about Tony's RABs is that he manages to balance them perfectly – the placement of the hackle and the quantity and length of the tail is spot on. For me a test of a good RAB is that, when dropped from a height, it should drift down and land upright. Tony's almost invariably do. So often a not-so-good RAB will land hook-eye down.

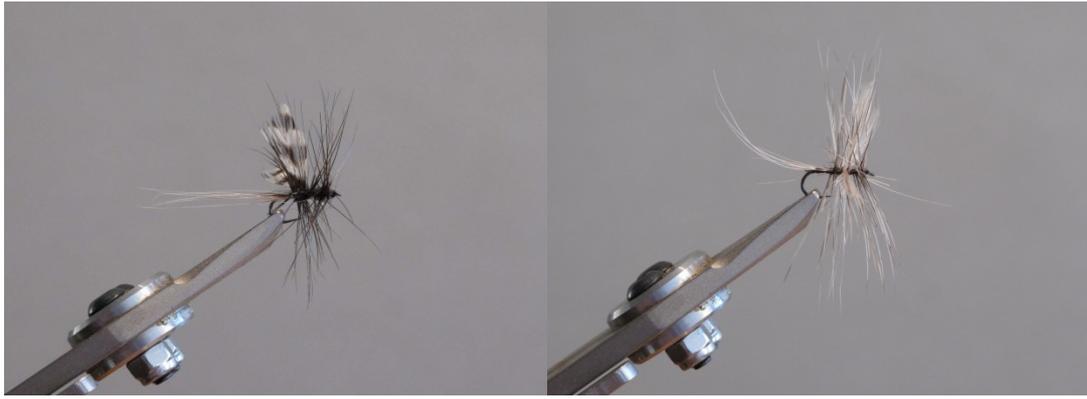
“Time and again I've witnessed trout, especially large trout, snubbing profuse mayfly hatches in favour of foraging on spent spinners although the spinners may be present in lesser numbers than the emerging insects. Nor do the relative sizes of the flies seem to alter this behaviour significantly, since more often than not I've found that trout tend to opt for small spinners over larger duns. And why not? To a trout, after all, a spinner represents *a sure thing*.

This spent dressing that knocks 'em out on the flats in the hour before dark can be used as effectively for prospecting pockets at midday. Trout are prone to bolt spent spinner patterns on fast water because these low-floating flies represent titbits that simply cannot get away. The fish are programmed with the surety of a computer to obtain maximum food for minimum effort and toward that end there is no better target than the obviously helpless spent spinner, regardless of the time of day.

The RABs that follow were all tied by Tony Biggs (photos Stephen Dugmore) and illustrate the incredible versatility of this amazing, simple and successful fly.







Biggs RABs (photos Stephen Dugmore)



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