

Fly of the Month

The Watsons Fancy



- Hook :- Wet fly 14-8
- Thread :- Black
- Tail :- Golden pheasant topping
- Body :- Rear half red floss, front half black floss
- Rib :- Silver tinsel
- Hackle :- Black cock
- Wing :- Black crow wing slips
- Eye :- (Optional) Jungle cock

The Watsons Fancy is a 19<sup>th</sup> century pattern devised by a Donald Watson of Inverness. It is still widely used on Scottish lochs and rivers and is also a very successful sea run trout lure. It made its way across the sea to Ireland where they prefer to use seals fur for the body.

The Watsons Fancy is not much used in Australia but has been chosen as this month's fly because one of our members, Ian W, recently used it to good effect in Trevallyn Dam.

Tying the Watsons Fancy is fairly straightforward even if there are quite a few materials in its construction. Lay the foundation thread from the eye to opposite the barb and then tie in the whisks of pheasant tail topping, making the tail about three quarters hook length. Tie in the ribbing tinsel and leave it hanging. Take your thread halfway along the shank and then wind the red floss to the same point and secure it. Attach the black floss and then wind the thread to just behind the eye. The black floss is then taken forward and secured. *Leave enough room to tie in the hackle and wing.* Wind the tinsel rib forward in three or four turns and tie it off. Three or four turns of black hackle are next followed by a matched pair of crow wing slips which should slope back to a point just past the bend. If you have them you can now tie in the jungle cock eyes. A fairly big head is built up with the thread and varnished to finish the fly.

Minor variations are possible. Some tiers prefer a black hen hackle because it is more mobile, and if you don't have black crow wing feathers just about any dark wing feather will do the job. Golden pheasant tippets are sometimes used instead of the topping for the tail.



Alan Taylor

