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Subject: : Print, Video, Audio Discussions

Topic: : Good Flies, by Gierach

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published in 2000. Lyons Press. 178 pages.

If you are going to put out a book about flies, as in the entire book is about the flies you use with a bit of background on why, you damn well better put in photographs of those flies. Instead we get line drawings so amateurish I'm fairly sure a high school art student could do better.

We do get the recipes, but as anyone who has seen more than one hare's ear can tell you, one man's hare's ear can be quite plain, dismissed with a shrug and left in the box, while another man's hare's ear has something just right about it that makes you want to fish it. But short of holding it in your hand, it takes a good photograph to tell the difference. As one who has been trying to figure out how to tie Hen Hackle tip parachutes and defeat the twisting that goes with that attempt, I would have loved to have seen something more informative and detailed than an incredibly average line drawing of the completed fly, though he does offer a few generic tips.

It's as if the "presentationist" in him didn't allow for making too much of his own flies, or his way of tying them.

Gierach is a friend and colleague of A.K. Best; the influence is readily apparent in fly style preferences.

You don't actually pick up a Gierach book just to get nuts and bolts. But the organizing structure being around flies does not allow much of an opportunity for flair and humour, though there is some.

No index. This would have been useful in a book mainly about fly patterns.