

Lite-Brite Kate

One for changeable days on wild lochs.

*Tied by **Rob Denson***



TYING TIPS

- It's a Kate Maclaren with a pinch of gold dubbing in front of it. It really is that simple.
- Dub the Lite-Brite or Ice-Dub as finely and tightly to your thread as possible, then wrap the rope as tightly as you can to form the head. This will make a more durable fly.
- As always, when using seal fur and Ice-Dub, give the dubbing a good raking with velcro to bring the pattern to life.
- To accentuate the natural curve of the golden pheasant topping, wet the selected feather, then place it on the corresponding curve of the neck of a wine bottle and leave it to dry.

Hook Size 12-14 Kamasan B170, 175, or FM 31531 Black Nickel
Tail Golden pheasant topping **Rib** Medium to fine oval silver
Body Black seal fur **Body hackle** Black, furnace or Greenwell hen
Head hackle Brown hen **Head** Gold Lite-Brite or Ice-Dub



ROB DENSON

has fly-fished for trout for 25 years, visiting all four corners of Britain and Ireland, combining his love of fly-tying, photography and a rolling wave. Web: robdenson.co.uk

IN NOVEMBER 2015 IN THIS column, I shared the stupefying news that the Kate Maclaren had been improved. I suspect some of you are still shocked. Well, sit yourself down and take a deep breath because here comes another Kate variant.

If you read my Improved Kate piece at the time, you'll recall that the so-called improvements were just minor tweaks that harmonised the colours and, to my mind at least, made the fly a viable option in a wider variety of situations. My confidence in the pattern was renewed and boosted - an improvement for me, heresy for some.

This variant, the Lite-Brite Kate, was lifted from the box of friend and *T&S* contributor Colin Riach on our first Orkney trip in 2011. Colin wasn't sure of its exact origins, saying it was just one of those patterns that had been passed around. Most of our research on flies prior to that Orkney trip had revealed a strong bias towards colourful, vibrant flies, many with hot or fluorescent colours, often with a leaning towards modern mini-lures, too. Like good little visiting anglers, most of the prescribed patterns were tied and neatly arranged in our boxes. Much the same as any trip, some worked, a few excelled, and some were a waste of a hook.

On the final evening, we sat around the dinner table and put forward our most successful flies of the trip. The number of relatively drab, simple

traditional patterns that were pushed towards the centre of the table was striking: Alex Ferguson's Grey Monkey Dabbler, Jimmy Millar's Kate Muddler, a Hare's Ear Dabbler from me, and Colin's Lite-Brite Kate, which by all accounts had the Orkney brownies doing back-flips on just about every loch we fished. I duly relieved Colin of one or two for research purposes.

It's all too easy to let the magpie in us take over and add flies to our collection simply because they have done well for others. This, no doubt, goes a long way to explaining why many of us have double the number of flies we should have. I'm as guilty as the next man, but I do try to avoid inducting new patterns without good reason.

After fishing the Lite-Brite Kate for a few years, the decision to recruit on a lengthy contract was very easy. I noticed that it excelled in a couple of situations that often make fly selection a headache: the middle dropper; and days when the weather can't make up its mind - bright sunshine one minute, brooding and dark the next. It's a real boon to have such a weapon in one's box, making difficult choices easy.

In the eight years since that trip, the Lite-Brite Kate has become a firm favourite of mine for wild browns, working well for me on later Orkney trips, as well as Skye, Malham and Cow Green, but it has also scored well on upland reservoirs such as Brenig, Vyrnwy and Stocks with rainbows and browns. **T&S**