

Chapter TWO

THE FIRST AFRICAN ANGLING BOOK



Illustration by Helen Monro Turner Fishing the Polela in Natal which appeared in A.R.B. Haldane's reminiscences By River, Stream and Loch

ALL THE BOOKS DESCRIBED SO FAR are about fish – not how to catch them. They would have been of great interest however to any fisherman of the day and useful as an identification guide. Before 1908 though, there had not yet been a book published devoted solely to fishing in Africa (or at least I haven't found it) although there had been some articles and chapters in exploration and travel books about fishing excursions, and in English fishing publications such as *The Field* and the wonderful weekly, *The Fishing Gazette*.

The earliest article I have on trout acclimatization was in the *Cape Illustrated Magazine* of November, 1896, reporting the successful breeding of trout at Jonkershoek. Then I found a 1898 *Fishing Gazette* compilation (in a Nottingham Road antique shop) which had extremely interesting letters and photographs of the early trials and tribulations that eventually led to the Jonkershoek success. (But more about this later.)

There are also chapters in various books that recall early fishing excursions in South Africa such as one by Major H.E. Morritt who relates in *The Constant Fisherman* fishing for yellowfish during the Anglo-Boer War when he was stationed at Waterval Onder. Even earlier, in the *The Sportsman in South Africa*

(1892), by James A. Nicolls and William Eglington, there's a short chapter on sea and freshwater fish and fishing in the Cape. And in 1898 well-known Victorian fishing author, G.F. Aflalo, lists 'Sporting Fishes in South Africa and Australian Waters' in his book *Sea Fishes, An Account of Methods of Angling*.

Cecil Harmsworth M.P. (later Lord Harmsworth) gives one of the earliest descriptions of fishing for trout on the Mooi in Natal in a chapter in his book *Pleasure and Problem in South Africa* (1908) and also describes fishing for giant barbel (sawtooth catfish) in a dam on a Transvaal farm owned by a Mr Erasmus.

There are many such chapters on the early days of African fishing scattered throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian fishing literature – some I record in more detail later in this book. Much of it is about sea and inland fishing for indigenous African species which is what ninety-nine per cent of the local subsistence and sports fishermen fished for. There was (and still is) a fantastic variety of fine sporting and eating species to catch on rod and line, bait lure or fly all across the continent. So one would have thought that a good, solid 'how to' book on sea or inland fishing would have been called for. Not a bit of it ... the first book was on the new introduction ... trout.

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Trout Fishing in the Cape Colony Dumaresq W. Manning – 1908

Plate 4

Title page:

Trout Fishing / in the Cape Colony / by / Dumaresq W. Manning. J.P., F.R.G.S. / Cape Civil Service / Issued with the approval of the / Government of the Cape of Good Hope / Printed and Published by the / Argus Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd. / Cape Town 1908

This extremely rare first book written about trout and trout fishing in South Africa is a paperback measuring 155mm x 244mm. It has 97 pages, with an appendix of 33 pages. There are 39 black and white photos (mainly of the Cape trout streams and bags of fish caught in them), five black and white sketches (of how to construct trout hatching boxes, fish weirs and where to place hatching boxes in a stream).

In the appendix there is a large (880mm x 470mm) folding 'Map of South Africa / shewing (*sic*) the / Distribution of Trout / in / Cape Colony', proclaimed streams and railway lines and a stunning frontispiece full-colour engraving of a brown trout by Werner and Winter of Frankfurt, Germany. This engraving is captioned *Salmo Fario* (the brown trout) and is a reproduction of a painting of a trout supposedly taken in a trek net at Muizenberg, False Bay, and 'shewing'

the changing livery as a result of migration to the sea from the river in which it was bred.

This engraving and its inscription were later to provide ammunition for the 'pro' side of the 1920s savage debate of whether Cape trout (in that instance rainbows) travelled to sea to feed. But more about that in the next chapter – what it does show (or 'shew' as Dumaresq Manning prefers) is that you must be careful what you write in fishing circles: strong opinions can lead to fly rods drawn at ten paces!

The map is of particular interest because it illustrates the distribution of trout in the Cape as being even wider than it is today. With well-known Western and Eastern Cape streams stocked, from the Liesbeeck to the Wildebeest, plus many weird and wonderful places in-between – Kimberley, for one, as well as Carnarvon, Britstown, Colesberg and Aliwal North.

The contents of the book are of great interest, with chapters on: The early history of trout acclimatization (more about that later); Fishing results; Municipal reservoirs (on Table Mountain); The Western Province; Eastern Province; and Transkeian Territories, as well as chapters on trout species, rods and tackle and where to fish. The appendix describes how to obtain fishing and permits, trout breeding and stocking, legislation, as well as the rules and regulations of the Worcester Angling Club.

In the preface of the book, Manning writes: 'The object of the author is, however, primarily to bring into prominence the fact that acclimatization in the Cape Colony is an accomplished fact, to encourage angling and ... to supplement the information contained in the illustrated manuals and guide books intended otherwise to instruct the visitor.' Dr Bradlow felt that this meant there must have been even earlier books than Manning's on trout. He did however say that 'despite a diligent search' he was not successful in finding any. I've searched too and have managed to find an early article in the *Cape Magazine* on the first trout hatchings at Jonkershoek, the official 1895 Jonker's Hoek report to the Governor General of the Cape and (and later similar hatchery reports), a couple of articles and letters in the UK's *Fishing Gazette* (1898) but no books. That's not to say those books are not out there waiting to be discovered by a more skilful (or luckier) flyfishing bibliophile. There's bound to be more early information in the early Cape magazines and newspapers and the early UK fishing press. I barely skimmed the surface of these areas in my research.

There is also a chapter of particular interest today on catching an indigenous fish, the 'wittevisch', on the fly, plus a photo of a large bag of 'wittevisch'. Manning wrote: 'This fish, a species of Barbel, and very like a Chub in appearance, runs up to several pounds in weight, and is to be found in many of the rivers of the Cape, being particularly numerous in the Breede,

which they ascend in packs during the spawning season, the latter part of November, and then rising freely to the fly.’

I certainly agree with Dr Bradlow when he writes that *Trout Fishing in the Cape Colony* is ‘a book that makes fascinating reading and leaves the reader with a feeling that we are missing a good deal today.’

I was fortunate in my early days of collecting to find a copy (map included) in good condition. But I was even more fortunate not too long ago to buy on auction in the UK a second copy – this one originally belonging to, and with the signature of, G.E.M Skues in it and dated, in his hand, I VIII 08. What is also interesting about this copy is it has an additional picture in it just before the brown trout engraving of a 6½lb trout caught by R.P.P. Myburgh in the Hex. Whether this book is a later printing it’s impossible to tell. Finding this copy is proof that there are still rarities out there to be discovered – you’ve just got to keep an eye out for them.

Dr Bradlow ends his piece by mentioning that Manning had intended to publish another book, *The Golden Rivers of the Western Province, Union of South Africa and How to Fish for Trout in Them*, through Maskew Miller Limited, but despite having issued an attractive ‘brochure’ with an order form, Manning was not able to raise ‘sufficient subsidies’ to print the book.

I’ve managed to find this brochure (if you could call it that, it’s actually a four page folded leaflet), but not the manuscript for the book. (Dr Bradlow wondered whether it had survived.) I tried to track it down and contacted one of Manning’s grandson’s in Canada, but he wasn’t able to help. I then contacted Maskew Miller, but Mike Peacock, former C.E.O., told me that unfortunately the early records and archives of the company had been lost or destroyed during one of their moves from their original central Cape Town headquarters to their current Pinelands location. So no luck there either. From the leaflet it was obvious the planned book was going to be substantial, with chapters on all the Cape rivers with trout in them and a history of trout acclimatization. The list of contents of the book states that the Foreword was to be written by the Mayor of Cape Town and a letter from the mayor (supposedly in his hand) was included in the brochure on a letterhead from ‘The Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Cape Town’:

‘I have read this book by Mr Dumaresq W. Manning entitled “The golden rivers of the Western Province, Union of South Africa and how to fish for trout in them”, with very great interest, and have pleasure in commending it to the notice of all those interested in fishing and in touring our beautiful Cape Peninsula and Western Province, with their great attractions of scenery, facilities for fishing and other recreations. (Signed) Wm. Fish, Mayor

The First African Angling Book

My research shows that the aptly named William Fish was indeed Mayor of Cape Town from 1925–1927 (Source: SA History Online) so I assume the book was to be published in one of those years. The fact though that Mayor Fish said that he had read it is intriguing – did he really? If we take him at his word (and that of the publicity department of the day at Maskew Miller), then there is indeed a manuscript, or even a book called *Golden Rivers of the Western Province* out there somewhere. What a find that would be.



The signature in my second copy of Trout Fishing in the Cape Colony

Maybe, just maybe, like the publicity leaflet claims, there's a book or at least a manuscript out there waiting to be found – I've been in touch with the Manning family in S.A. and Canada, as well as with publishers Maskew Miller, unfortunately with no luck.

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Trout Fishing in Natal

A.H. Tatlow – 1909

Plate 4

Title page (cover):

Compiled under the authority of the Acting / General Manager of Railways, by A.H. Tatlow, / Publicity Section, General Manager's Dept / Hedley Salmon, / Acting General Manager / December, 1909

A copy of this small booklet caused something of a sensation in South African fishing book collector circles earlier this year when it fetched \$1 800.00 at auction online.* Which is not surprising as it's the rarest of the rare. I'd only ever heard of five copies in existence – three in public library archives and two in private hands and both privately-owned books had gone 'walkabout'.

One of these was once in Tom Sutcliffe's library and the other was available to guests at Sue and Graham Armstrong's beautiful Engeleni Lodge at Kamberg. Tom generously offered to give his copy to me on a visit to his home in Newlands a few years ago (it would have been a prized addition to my library) but when we went to get it, it was missing. The Engeleni copy (which has a prominent 'Engeleni Lodge' and address stamped on the front) was pinched by a visitor – the person who purloined it knows who he is (there is a prime suspect) and it is hoped that they catch few fish and meet many puff adders during the rest of their fishing days. Until they confidentially return it to its rightful owners.

Trout Fishing in Natal is 120mm x 230mm and has 27 pages with 25 black and white photographs and three advertisements at the back. The first a full page ad from 'John Hardy & Co, Pietermaritzburg, Natal – Importers of High-class Fishing Tackle' (I've checked – Hardy UK know nothing about an official or unofficial shop in South Africa at the time). The others are half page ads, one for H. Singleton's Nottingham Road Hotel and a second with the headline 'An Angler's Paradise' is for a 'new' bungalow on the Mooi – everafter known simply as 'Trout Bungalow'. A month's accommodation at 'Notties' hotel (with free fishing of the lower Bungalow waters) would set you back £9 10s 0d, and a week at the Bungalow £4 10s 0d – 'with over 60 miles of water (both banks) on the Mooi River (proper) and the Little Mooi River.

There are no chapters as such but the text has several sub-headings in it: Trout Fishing in Natal – Introduction, Natal – The Angler's Paradise, The Trout Season comes round, Fishing Districts, Bushman's River, Mooi River at Rosetta, Mooi River – Nottingham Road, Umgeni River – Dargle, Fishing Season, Hints to Anglers, The Time to Fish, The Rod, The Line, The Reel,

The Fly, Natal Anglers' Association, What has been done in Natal for the Fly-fisherman and a railways timetable with departure times from various centres in the Transvaal and the Free State to Nottingham Road station. These seem somewhat strange – while it supposedly took just 9 hours and 51 minutes to get to Nottingham Road by train from Pretoria, it took 8 hours and 27 minutes from Harrismith (which is more than half way there). The trip, though, from Potchefstroom took 31 hours 30 minutes, and from Bloemfontein, a back-breaking 46 hours! You'd have to stay a month just to recover.

I admire the first line of the booklet: 'It is a shallow as well as a dismal scheme of life which ignores or undervalues the importance of recreation.' Something I've always tried to live up to!

The photographs are of great interest and include shots of the various rivers, the mule cart to get you to the Bungalow, and the Bungalow itself, Nottingham Road Hotel, heroic catches of fish, Bushman paintings and a card of the trout flies kept in stock at the Bungalow.

Of interest too, is that this booklet is not the first time Mr Singleton's Nottingham Road Hotel or the waters he had for guests is mentioned. An earlier report was by newspaper magnate Cecil Harmsworth M.P. (later Lord Harmsworth) in his book *Pleasure and Problem in South Africa* (1908). A chapter in the book 'On the Mooi River in Natal' describes that after arriving by train, his party set off in two vehicles for the fishing 18 miles away: 'The two ladies and the captain driven by Mr. Singleton in his 4-wheeled dog-cart' while Harmsworth went by Cape cart driven by a black 'boy'. He describes the beauty of the scenery and then the heat and dust, writing: 'Of the last two miles I can only say that to travel them in a Cape cart is a day's exercise for any man'. He had a few days fishing at the McQueen's farm, and then 'fearful of the eighteen mile drive back to Nottingham Road' spent an extra day or two fishing on another farm belonging to a Mr Dickens. His fishing did not appear to be too successful, blaming, the weather (hot and dry), the water, (too clear and low), his choice of flies (too big) and finally, his lack of skill.

Another well-known Englishman, Sir George Aston (George Southcote), wrote about the Mooi in (I think) even earlier days. In a chapter 'A Natal Trout' in his book *Mostly about Trout* (1921) he too describes the rigours of a long drive in a Cape cart from Nottingham Road to what sounds like the now disappeared Inchbrakie Falls on the Mooi (he could hear 'the subdued roar of a miniature cataract'). Why I think he was even earlier than Harmsworth is that he writes there was no accommodation to be found on the banks of the Mooi whatsoever and camping was essential. He was however more successful a fisherman and caught several trout, including a three-and-a-half pounder that fought 'like a sulky salmon'. In the same book Aston has a chapter 'Sea-fishing in Simon's Bay' where he had some exciting 'snook' fishing and also

managed to lose the tip of his thumb when he stuck it in a small elf's mouth to unhook it. Like many fishermen before and since, he learnt about the razor-sharpness of elf teeth the hard way.

Trout Fishing in Natal is, as I've mentioned, extremely rare. Fortunately though, the entire booklet has been included (virtually unchanged in text, with a few different pictures and an added map of the 'trout district') as a chapter in the large general handbook, *Natal Province* (1911) – which is not that scarce. *Natal Province*, which covers all aspects of life and industry in Natal in 1911, is a fascinating read in its own right. The book was brought out, again under A.H. Tatlow's editorship, by the South African Railways.

* On March 12, 2015 on AntiquarianAuctions.com, a copy in very good condition sold for \$1 800. The vendor, Clarke's Africana and Rare Books of Cape Town, is one of South Africa's top booksellers who had put a reserve on the book of only \$50! Nice surprise for them. The picture of *Trout Fishing in Natal* shown in Plate 4 is the book that was auctioned. Congratulations to whomever bought it, it's a real prize.

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Trout Fishing for South African Boys

G. E. Pennington – 1911

Plate 5

Title page:

Trout Fishing / for / South African Boys / with Reminiscences / by / G. E. Pennington. / Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis and Sons, Longmarket Street / 1911. / Copyright. (There is a small engraving of a lake between the G. E. Pennington and Pietermaritzburg.)

The cover of this small book (105mm x 158mm) is mid-brown woven cloth on boards with 'Trout Fishing' stamped in black on the upper front cover and on the spine. The end papers front and back are an attractive pale green floral design. There are 168 pages including advertisements for Ford Bros. of Pietermaritzburg selling trout rods, reels and 'Special Mounted Casts and the Specially Dressed Flies as recommended by Canon Pennington.' Which, as Dr Bradlow says in his article 'tells us at least what the author's occupation was.' There are two full-page plates, which are both black and white line drawings of, firstly, trout flies and, secondly, knots and what looks suspiciously like an early version of a Devon spinner or spoon. There are also six tiny but attractive engravings at the ends of some of the chapters.

There are eleven short chapters including an introduction entitled Apology, the others are Rod, Reel and Line; The Cast; Flies; Throwing; A Day Out; Men You Will Meet; Memories; Night Fishing and Minnow and Worm. As Dr

Bradlow says in his article: 'obviously the Canon was no purist'.

I think Dr Bradlow was a little harsh on the good reverend. The Canon does say in the chapter on worm fishing: 'I have no love for it' and 'is it worth while encouraging worm fishing when so many [trout] can be caught on fly?' Also I have learnt from Rex Pennington, (of school-mastering fame and G. E. Pennington's grandson) that the Canon was born in and fished England's Lake District and Yorkshire, so it's not surprising that he'd cover worm fishing as it was an accepted method in those areas for both trout and grayling. T. E. Pritt, the great Yorkshire angler, who would have been a contemporary of the young Canon Pennington, writes in 1888 about the skill required to fish a worm upstream in clear water in his famous *Book of the Grayling*.

Trout Fishing for South African Boys is one of the most prized books in my collection. It is chock full of wisdom, not only on how to fish but really about the 'why' to fish. Little snippets such as 'a fully equipped fly fisher is not a human packhorse' or 'I never knew a skilful fisherman who was not worth talking to', or 'the man who wants a specialist for every kind of repair is not the man for the veld', ring as true today as when the Canon wrote his book all those years ago.

Pennington's chapter on fly tying and the need for perfection becomes a parable for living. He writes: 'If there is one tendency more than any other to blast the future of our boys, it is that found in the words "It will do". This pride-less, inert spirit means comfortless homes, lives without ambition, slack appearance, untidy habits, loose gates, bad fences, ill-fitting doors and dangerous harness.' Whew! And earlier in the same paragraph he was describing how to tie a red spinner correctly.

But then the Canon was an Anglican priest and a Victorian to boot, so sermonising was as natural as breathing. In fact his motivation in writing *Trout Fishing* is articulated in the first line of the book: 'My only plea ... is a desire to encourage the youth of Natal in the pursuit of the purest form of sport our country affords.'

The influence fishing had on his own life was that 'it took me away to hill and dale, far from the smoky, beery vapour of the haunts of men; it kept me out of the streets, where brag and vulgar swagger claimed their victims and led them to the brinks of deeper pits.' I wonder what he would have made of an average Saturday night's festivities in one of the pubs in Dullstroom, or at 'Notties' hotel on a corporate flyfishing 'challenge'.

Rex Pennington, to whom I'm indebted for sharing reminiscences of his grandfather and allowing me to quote from his family's biography, remembers his grandfather, then promoted to Archdeacon, giving Rex his first casting lesson 'dressed in his Archdeacon finery, with his black skin-tight gaiters and his black buttoned topcoat as we'd left the church in a hurry'.



*Canon Pennington dressed in his
'Archdeacon finery'*

Rex told me that Jarge (as Canon Pennington was known by his wide circle of friends and family) was a great naturalist and intensely knowledgeable about flora and fauna. And because of his upbringing in the Lake District his first love was trout fishing. He was also almost always the envy of his compatriots on the water because of his skill.

He went on to say that the secret of Jarge's success probably lay in the habit of taking his fly tying kit with him, spending half-an-hour netting flies on the water and then tying their replicas. Rex said that Jarge was truly a remarkable man and that his mother, in her scrapbook of memoirs, summed up the Canon's attributes as follows:

'He was a very sporting man, excellent at all games, he rode, was an excellent shot, and as life went on, good at everything else, an excellent preacher and businessman of the church.

I think he started church pensions, was an authority on birds, seashells, land shells, ferns and gardening. He trained choirs, produced cantatas, even made a perfect bit of embroidery while he was in the Siege of Ladysmith, with the officers' signatures and mottoes with the background of all the hills round Ladysmith. Plus

other odd accomplishments, like playing musical glasses or superb whistling.

You name it – he excelled at it. After thirty-five years as vicar of Greytown, he was posted to St Saviours Cathedral in Maritzburg where he finally became an Archdeacon. While there he served on the Board of Governors of Michaelhouse, Cordwalles, St Anne’s and the Council of The Natal University College. The quality of his service to these educational institutions enabled him to send his five sons to Michaelhouse and then to university.’

Trout Fishing for South African Boys is extremely rare – in all the years I’ve been collecting I’ve only come across five or six copies other than my own. Dr Bradlow’s own copy was the only one he knew of. Rex Pennington has a much-treasured copy handed down in his family. Tom Sutcliffe had one (before he traded it for a very expensive camera lens) and there are two others I know of in private collections. There still may be the odd copy in public libraries (in a letter to Dr Bradlow dated March 30, 1974, Dr A. M. Lewin Robinson, Director of the South African Library said there were copies in the Johannesburg, Durban and the Natal Society Libraries). A few years back though I received an email from a gentleman in England who attached a photograph of his own copy passed down to him by his father – this one beautifully bound in full leather.

You can check it out in ‘Plate 5’. John, if you ever want to part with it ...

9

Description of fishes from the coast of Natal

J.D.F. Gilchrist and W. Wardlaw Thompson – 1911 *Plate 5*

This 29 page paper published in the *Annals of the South African Museum* in 1911 is the first substantial report I can find on the fish of the Natal coast by South African-based marine biologists.

Also collecting fish from Natal at the time was Romer Robinson, who was to later (with J.S. Dunne) co-author *Salt Water Angling in South Africa* (1923). His researches were later published in a 3 page paper titled *Fishes from Natal collected by Mr. Romer Robinson* (1916) by C.T. Regan in the *Annals of the Durban Museum*.

I’ve have only read Gilchrist and Thompson’s article online and have not found the one by C.T. Regan. But as they are two of the earliest descriptions of the fish found along the Natal coast they are important although the Gilchrist and Thompson report is not illustrated at all.

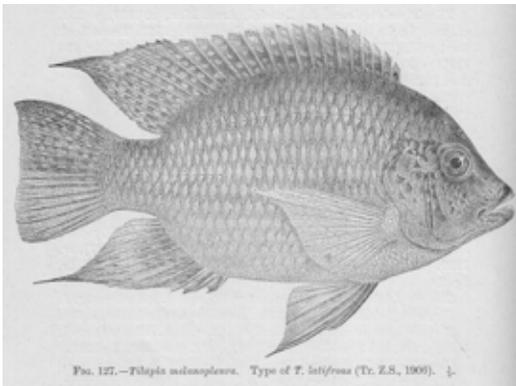
10 **The Freshwater Fishes of South Africa (parts 1/2)**
J.D.F. Gilchrist, W. Wardlaw Thompson – 1913/1917 Plate 5

Description:

Both parts of The Freshwater Fishes of South Africa were published in the Annals of the South African Museum Volume XI – the first part in 1913 (pp321 – 463) and the second in 1917 (pp 465 – 575).

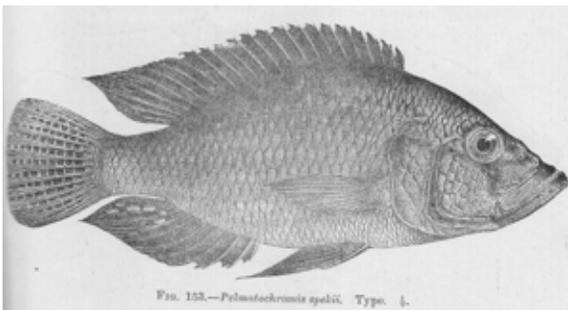
While this book (or more accurately book in two parts) was published with scientists in mind it must have been of interest to amateur fish biologists and even freshwater fishermen as a guide to identifying their catches. As with many of the scientific books of the time, the illustrations (in black and white) are extremely detailed and quite attractive.

I have only managed to find the second (1917) part of this book, however both parts are available online at the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL).



*From The Freshwater Fishes of South Africa
by Gilchrist and Wardlaw Thompson*

Tilapia melanopleura



Pelmatochromis speki

11 **Sea Fisheries of the Cape Colony**
W. Wardlaw Thompson – 1913

Plate 5

Title page:

*The / Sea Fisheries of / The Cape Colony / from van Riebeeck's Days / to the Eve of the Union / with a chapter on Trout and Other / Freshwater Fishes / by W. Wardlaw Thompson, F. Z. S. / T. Maskew Miller / Cape Town and Pretoria / 1913 (The T. Maskew Miller imprint of a sailing ship, possibly the *Dromedaris* is between the author's and the publisher's names.)*

This 125mm x 185mm book has a cover of green cloth on boards with the title, a drawing of a 'sole', and the publisher's imprint expensively embossed in gold on the front cover and spine. There are 166 pages of text including an introduction, five appendices and an index. There are no illustrations. Although published by T. Maskew Miller it was quality printed in England by William Clowes and Sons Limited, London and Beccles. So well produced was it that my copy and many others I've seen look as if they were printed yesterday.

The chapters are: The Early Days; The Inshore Fisheries; The Steam-trawling Era; Colonial Markets and Export; The Whale and Seal Fisheries; Trout and other Freshwater Fishes; Oysters. There is also an appendix of import/export figures and a list of the common fish species.

Sea Fisheries of the Cape Colony takes a fascinating look at the trial and tribulations (mainly because of government interference) of the setting up of the South African fishing industry. It is a particularly good source on the history of commercial sea fishing generally and for the chapter of 19 pages on trout and other freshwater fish. Which gives one of the best and probably most accurate – Wardlaw Thompson wrote an article about it in the Cape Magazine in 1895 – histories of the acclimatization of trout in South Africa, the attempts to introduce salmon, and records of freshwater fish taken from journals of early travellers.

This book used to be quite common. It's sturdily produced so many copies have survived. I haven't seen many around recently though and it is worth a place in your library.

* * *

W.W. Hoy, the railwayman who published fishing books

Between 1909 and 1938 the South African Railways publicity department was responsible for most of South Africa's tourism advertising: commissioning and publishing books, booklets and brochures on South Africa as the place to visit for the scenery, game viewing, healthy climate, golf, holiday resorts and ... fishing. Most of which could be accessed from the comfort of a luxuriously appointed railway carriage or one of the fine hotels that were built adjacent to the local railway station. Much of this promotional material was aimed at well-heeled British tourists and carried additional advertising for hotels like Cape Town's famed Mount Nelson and the Nottingham Road Hotel near the Mooi River in Natal. There were also advertisements for fishing tackle dealers, outfitters, clothing, and boot retailers.

That there was some publicity about South African fishing in those days is not surprising – the fishing in the early 1900s was extraordinary. Trout had been recently introduced and were thriving. And more and more indigenous freshwater and saltwater fishing was easily accessible thanks to the rapidly expanding South African road and rail network after South Africa became a Union in 1910. That there was so much written and published about fishing is, however, a little surprising – until you do some background research into the man responsible for most of the Railways publicity, General Manager W.W. (Sir William) Hoy.

S.J. du Toit, South African historian, writes in *Hermanus Stories* that Hoy was a farmer's son, born in a croft at Arnot Mill in Kinross-shire, Scotland. His early life was extremely frugal and at the age of twelve he left school to seek his fortune in Edinburgh. He found it with the North British Railways as a clerk earning the princely sum of twelve shillings a week. He learnt Pitman's shorthand as part of his training and became so skilled that he earned extra money teaching it at night school. In 1890, a recruiting officer from the Cape Government Railways arrived in Edinburgh and Hoy, then in his early twenties, applied for a post and was accepted. While working for the Railways in Cape Town he entered a shorthand writing competition for public servants and won easily, becoming known as Hoy – the fastest writer in South Africa.

With a sobriquet like that, how could he fail! After two years in the country he became chief clerk in Kroonstad, then Transvaal agent for the Railways. During the Anglo-Boer War he had complete charge of all British military railways in South Africa aged just twenty-eight. In 1910 he became the youngest ever General Manager of the S. A. R. and was knighted in 1916 for services to his adopted country.

By the time ill-health forced him to take early retirement in 1927, he had also set up the Rhodesian Railways and the S. A. R. road transport division, as

well as his ubiquitous publicity department.

Hoy was something of an autocrat and so dominated the South African transport industry that South African Railways was apparently often referred to more simply as W. W. Hoy Limited.

In his spare time Hoy fished. He commanded his train drivers to carry tanks of trout fingerlings from the Jonkershoek hatchery in the Cape Province, the length and breadth of South Africa, releasing them wherever they judged suitable water to be. He was a renowned saltwater fisherman with several records to his name, and doubtless cast a line at the end of every track his trains went to. However these trains never arrived at, perhaps, the best saltwater fishing destination of all – Hermanus in the Cape which, at the time, was South Africa's premier saltwater fishing resort. This despite the fact that plans to bring the railway to Hermanus were at a stage so advanced that the town fathers had built a railway station ready to welcome the first passengers. The stumbling block was Hoy himself – he had his holiday home in the town overlooking his personal favourite fishing spot and wasn't keen to share it with the hoi polloi arriving en masse to bother 'his' fish so he refused to sign off on the tracks coming through.

Hoy died in 1930 and is buried with his wife on the koppie that bears his name, overlooking famous-for-whale-watching Walker Bay at Hermanus. They never did bring the tracks to Hermanus, but the station remains, waiting patiently.

* * *

12 Trout Fishing in South Africa *South African Railways – 1913*

Plate 6

Title page:

South African Railways / Official Illustrated Guide / to / Trout Fishing / in / South Africa / Issued by the General Manager / South African Railways / No effort has been spared to vouch for the accuracy of the information / contained in this pamphlet, but the Administration cannot be held responsible for / loss or inconvenience which may result from any errors unwittingly made. It will / be appreciated if inaccuracies discovered be immediately reported to the Manager, / Publicity Department, South African Railways, Johannesburg. / Publicity Department / South African Railways / Johannesburg / W. W. Hoy / General Manager. / February, 1913.

This was W.W. Hoy's (he became General Manager of the South African Railways in 1910) first foray into publicising trout fishing in South Africa to

the local and UK market.

Dr Bradlow did not know of its existence in his original article, in fact he believed that the later 1916 edition of *Trout Fishing in South Africa* was the original first edition and so did I – until I went back and re-read the letter he received from Dr Lewin of the South African Library in response to his original article. Dr Lewin wrote that *Trout Fishing in South Africa* was also found in an earlier 1913 edition and was in the Mendelssohn Collection, the State Library and the Port Elizabeth Public Library.

It seemed to make sense that there would be this earlier edition as it seems doubtful that a book on trout fishing would have been written and published in the middle of the First World War. To have actually produced a reprint in 1916 was quite surprising – I naturally assumed that this reprint would be a virtual copy of the original with perhaps a couple of minor changes – although I had never seen the 1913 original or even knew anyone who had. (André and Moira van Winkle, designers of the Nedbank Guides, once described to me a cover of a book that may have been the 1913 edition but couldn't recall where they'd seen it.)

So in my almost final draught of my previous *Fishing the Margins* I decided to combine the 1913 and 1916 editions and to suggest that if a 1913 edition had, indeed, ever existed it would be the joint third book published (I've listed it as fourth simply for ease of reference) and would be a significant and valuable find, but it would be, except for some updated fishing reports, identical to the 1916 edition.

Imagine my joy and surprise, when at a meeting to discuss the book with Ed Herbst and Tom Sutcliffe at Tom's Newlands, Cape Town, home one morning, Ed produced a plastic bag containing a dozen or so of his own books, one of which had a cover I'd never seen. It was indeed the 1913 edition of *Trout Fishing in South Africa*. And although I was correct in that much of the content of the book would be similar to that in the 1916 edition, I was completely wrong about the look and feel of it. The cover for example is quite different, the paper used much flimsier – which is why, I suppose, it is so rare today. But thanks to Ed and his plastic bag, there is now at least one more copy saved for posterity!

Trout Fishing in South Africa is a paperback (131mm x 214mm) and has extremely attractive full colour front and back covers that are identical. The title *Trout Fishing in South Africa* is in red reversed out of yellow. Most of the cover is taken up by illustrations of an angler playing a fish, a brown trout, and a fishing reel which looks strangely like a Penn Jigmaster, but is more likely an out-of-perspective depiction of an early Hardy or even Vom Hofe salmon reel.

There are 118 pages of text including preliminaries, twelve additional pages of advertisements and a one page South African Railways map, making 131

printed pages in all.

There are also 46 additional pages of photographs or photographic montages showing large bags of fish (no catch and release in those days), fishermen and fishing scenes countrywide and 36 additional individual photographs illustrating the text, plus four maps of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Natal and Transvaal fishing areas.

The advertisements are interesting – mostly for hotels near good fishing – including the Nottingham Road, Dargle and Rosetta hotels and the Trout Bungalow in Natal, the Ceres Hotel in the Western Cape, the Waterval Boven Hotel and the Transvaal Arms (then headquarters of the Rand Piscatorial Society), plus a host of now out-of-business tackle dealers, the most notable (and probably most missed) being J. F. King's of 345 West Street, Durban. It was there I bought my first decent fly rod; the salesman was that doyen of Natal flyfishermen, Jack Blackman.

This book began a tradition of fishing guide books sponsored by South African Railways under the then general manager, W. W. (later Sir William) Hoy. A tradition carried forward by many corporate sponsors including companies such as South African Breweries, I&J, Stellenbosch Farmer's Wineries, Sappi and Nedbank

The introduction to this edition of *Trout Fishing in South Africa* is somewhat flowery: 'At last, after years of work and expense, trout fishing, perfect in every respect, is to be had in our land within easy distance of all; the incredulous hope of many a year is realised, and the South African angler has now reached the highest pinnacle of bliss.' It goes on to describe the best fishing in each province, whom to apply to for permission to fish and local provincial rules and regulations.

There's also a useful chart identifying the town closest to the fishing, nearby hotels, costs and, naturally, the nearest railway station to both hotel and stream.

Hotel prices certainly make interesting reading: if you wanted to fish the Eerste River, the Masonic in Stellenbosch would set you back 8/6d a night, fish the Berg or the Dwars and stay at the Royal in Paarl for 7/6d. The Central in Maclear was 8/6d and the famous Trout Bungalow on the Mooi would cost you 12/6d.

If you wanted to climb Table Mountain (no cable car then) to fish the reservoirs on top – apparently many anglers did – the Mount Nelson would set you back fifteen bob a night. I googled the Nellie prices online to check what a suite would cost me during the Christmas break (December 2014), just in case I decided to give those reservoirs a whirl and the price quoted was a mere R15 325 per night single, breakfast included (but not a helicopter). As my dad used to say, a bargain – if they were serving humming bird tongues.

13 Trout Fishing in South Africa
South African Railways – 1916

Plate 7

Title page:

South African Railways / Official Illustrated Guide / to / Trout Fishing / in / South Africa / Issued by the General Manager / South African Railways / No effort has been spared to vouch for the accuracy of the information / contained in this pamphlet, but the administration cannot be held / responsible for loss or inconvenience which may result from any errors / unwittingly made. Any readers discovering inaccuracies in the information contained herein are requested to report same to the / Manager, Publicity Department, South African Railways and Harbours / Johannesburg / Publicity Department / South African Railways / Johannesburg / September 1916 – W. W. Hoy / General Manager.

This 1916 ‘Official Illustrated Guide’ *Trout Fishing in South Africa* is a slightly bigger, better version of the 1913 book. It is much more robust, which is why there are, although scarce, a few more copies around than its predecessor.

Trout Fishing in South Africa in this edition is a dark green paperback (138mm x 215mm) with a stunning illustration on its cover of a gentleman angler in a Norfolk suit, wicker creel and long handled landing net at the ready, playing a fish in a mountain stream. This illustration and the title appear on the front and back of the book.

There are 124 pages of text, 58 pages of superb photographs, many the same as in the previous edition but just six pages of advertisements at the back – the war obviously having an effect on the media selling business at the time.

The advertisements are similar to the 1913 edition too, some of the same hotels and tackle dealers but with one quite wonderful addition – a marvellously snooty ad from Hardy Bros. Ltd., of Alnwick and Pall Mall England.

In true British Empire style addressing colonials, it begins: ‘To South African Anglers and dealers who do not seem to have developed that taste for fine quality in their rods reels etc.’ and goes on to say that every angler in ‘Europe, America, New Zealand, Australia and India knows that ...’ well, basically it’s just not done to catch any fish on anything other than Hardy tackle.

The introduction of this edition begins with a more simple statement that ‘South Africa at the present time affords the most perfect trout fishing within easy access of all anglers.’ The rest of the text, maps, etc., are virtually the same as in the previous edition with a short (updated in 1915) section on rules and regulations for the various provinces.

Dr Bradlow believed that ‘thousands of copies of this elaborate guide book must have been distributed to promote travel on the S. A. R. – that is if we are to judge by the numbers of copies that survive.’

Survived in 1974 when his article came out that is. Today they’re like hen’s teeth. And not cheap.

14 **Bottom Fishing in Cape Waters** *A.C.M. Orrey – 1917*

Plate 8

Title page:

Bottom Fishing in Cape Waters / A Collection of Hints for the / Guidance of the Amateur, and / Particularly Applicable to / Hermanus / T. Maskew Miller / Cape Town / 1917

This small book of 68 pages is the first real sea angling book I’ve found that concerns South Africa. It includes not only tackle tips and tactics on how to catch galjoen, red roman, stumpnose, kabeljauw, geelbek, steenbras and albacore but has a map with the fishing spots marked for many miles east and west of the Marine Hotel.

Interestingly it also has an advertisement in it from Thurston & Co, the snooker table and accessories specialists, for fishing tackle – and one for Fitzsimon’s (*sic*) ‘The Only Genuine Cure’ snake bite serums! This last ad obviously was quite timely, as Maskew Miller had just released the second edition of F.W. Fitzsimmons’ *The Snakes of South Africa*. Note though, that the purveyors of the serum got his name wrong on their product – or perhaps more likely the proofreader had gone fishing that day.

Bottom Fishing in Cape Waters was quite rare (and expensive) up to a few years ago when Maskew Miller, the publishers, found a few dozen remainders in their basement during a ‘clear-out’ and donated them to Cafda, the charity shop in Newlands, Cape Town. The lot were snapped up for next to nothing by a couple of collectors/book scouts who got in quick but fortunately these copies are now finding their way into the dealer network at more reasonable prices than they once were.

It is a foundation stone to any serious South African sea fishing library so if you’ve just started collecting I suggest you buy a copy while you can. I see that right now (Feb 2015) there are no less than eight on sale online through ABE books.

15 **Catalogue of Fishes of the Cape Province** **W. Wardlaw Thompson – 1918**

Plate 8

Title-page:

Union of South Africa. / Province of the Cape of Good Hope. / Catalogue of Fishes / of the / Cape Province. / (Reprinted from Marine Biological Report No.4) / By W. Wardlaw Thompson, F.L.S., F.Z.S / Cape Town / Cape Times Limited. Government Printers. / 1918.

Catalogue of Fishes of the Cape Province is a 153 mm x 245mm paperback with 103 numbered pages of text but unfortunately no photographs or drawings of the fish. The book, which was reprinted separately from the *Marine Biological Report No.4*, is a listing of fish with their scientific names by division, family and species. Included is the common name of the fish, thus, *Sciaena Aquila* is recorded as being known by fisherman in the Cape as kabeljaauw, but as cob or kob in East London and as salmon in Natal. There are some notes on where each fish was most abundant or chiefly caught. These common names linked with the notes must have been of some value to commercial fishermen and anglers.

Needless to say, times have changed – the galjoen (which is now on the Red List of endangered species) is recorded as being plentiful in the Western Division of the Cape Colony at the time.

16 **Fishing in Egypt** **'Fluker' – (circa 1919)**

Plate 8

Title page:

Fishing / in Egypt / by "Fluker" / of the "Egyptian Gazette" and author / of Egyptian Snakes and Snake-Charmers." / Publishers: / The Anglo-Egyptian Supply Association, / P.O.B. 330 – Alexandria

Written as a series of articles in the *Egyptian Gazette* in the early 1900s, *Fishing in Egypt* (published circa 1919) is one of the earliest and rarest books on sport fishing in Africa. It is also the only book I have come across that is solely dedicated to fishing in that country until Barrie Rickards and Tim Bailey wrote *Nile Perch* in 2008. The few others I know about have chapters on fishing (*Sport in Egypt*, 1938 – J. Wentworth Day) or are half shooting/half fishing (*Shooting and Fishing in Egypt*, 1949 – Egyptian State Tourism Dept.). There are also many references to Egypt as a fishing destination in

old, (mainly) British fishing magazines and catalogues – *The Fishing Gazette*, *Hardy's Guides* etc., etc.

Although Fluker (possibly D.A. Cameron, editor of the *Egyptian Gazette* at the time) was obviously an extremely keen fisherman and amateur biologist, his fishing methods leave much to be desired from a 'sporting' perspective. The book is more about harpooning large catfish from a boat or subduing giant sharks on a handline or catching hundreds of tilapia at a time on a cane pole than presenting a fly or artificial lure to the great local game fish, the Nile perch.

Fluker was based in Alexandria so much of his fishing was in the Mediterranean or on the Suez Canal and Red Sea shores. He does give a brief glimpse though of what the fishing for Nile perch must have been like on a trip he made to Assouan (Aswan) where he caught a couple of smallish perch (the largest 17lb) but was broken up several times fishing a heavy 'bamboo' with live bait on 'a stout sea-line'. He wrote that, 'I don't think it is wise to attempt to use a rod for "big stuff" in freshwater fishing in this country.' Fluker reckoned that there were fish in the southern reaches of the Nile that went over two thousand pounds and that he had seen a photograph of a Nile perch that took six men to carry. But then in the book he also wrote of tarpon in the Caribbean that were so big that when hooked they were only seen for the first time after three days of strenuous fighting.

Like many journalists Fluker didn't worry too much about the facts getting in the way of a good story and *Fishing in Egypt* also contains a very nicely embellished version of the fishing 'competition' Cleopatra had with Mark Antony as described by Wm. Shakespeare in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Fluker's version:

Marc Antony was a great fisherman of sorts and there was a tale to the effect that he kept a special tank of fish and divers who swam down and hooked them on his line for him when things were going slow. He beat the immortal Cleopatra at many fishing competitions, but she found out his secret in the end and at one competition poor Marc could only manage to catch cooked fish, much to his astonishment and the amusement of onlookers.

Shakespeare's version was a little more likely – it was about a fish that Cleopatra had a diver attach to Mark Antony's line – a fish that had been salted.

While not fishing-related, another interesting snippet in the book of interest to us 'modern' folk who think we invented everything, is Fluker's statement that publishers (because of a shortage of paper as a result of the

war) were thinking of introducing what we would describe as 'text speak'. His suggestions were 'FrsCo' for San Francisco, 'Snople' for Constantinople and (very nice) 'Tmb2' for Timbuktu.

Fishing in Egypt is a small book (115mm x 150mm) of 140 pages. There are 15 chapters: How to Spear Bayad; Catching Lubia; Sport in Alexandria; Spearing Crabs and Catching Ragad; Shark Fishing; How Pelicans Catch Fish; Birds as Fishers; Catching Leitza; Animal Fishermen; The Sole or Samak Moussa; Poisonous Fishes; Some Fish Parasites; Sport at Lake Karoun; Fish Intoxicants; The Economic Side.

Sadly there are no photos or illustrations in the book.

